

The plan is to cover inland rules since this is what affects the Chesapeake Bay. I will not include comments about the Canadian Waters, Western Rivers, or Great Lakes. Of course, the Neptune Race is International Rules, most of which are the same but there are differences so read and dog ear your copy. 😊 Unlike the Racing Rules of Sailing series, this will be **basic highlights and notes only**.

Blue font are my comments

Red font are items I wanted to highlight

Black font is the text from the rules

A few words about the rules and how they are set up.

The Rule Book starts with an introduction, describing the evolution of the rules, followed by a nice meter to feet conversion table.

Part A is titled “General” and covers application, responsibility, and general definitions.

Part B is titled “Steering and Sailing Rules”. It is broken into 3 sections covering how to pilot a vessel. Those 3 sections are:

1. Conduct of Vessels in Any Conditions of Visibility
2. Conduct of Vessels in Sight of One Another
3. Conduct of Vessels in Restricted Visibility

This is the meat of the “rules of the road” in action.

Part C is mammoth and titled “Lights and Shapes”. It is 74 pages long and covers

Rule 20 Application

Rule 21 Definitions

Rule 22 Visibility of Lights

Rule 23 Power Driven Vessels Underway

Rule 24 Towing and Pushing

Rule 25 Sailing Vessels Underway and Vessels Under Oars

Rule 26 Fishing Vessels

Rule 27 Vessels Not Under Command or Restricted in Their Ability to Maneuver

Rule 28 Vessels Constrained by Their Draft

Rule 29 Pilot Vessels

Rule 30 Anchored and Aground Vessels

Rule 31 Seaplanes

This section is critical because it enables vessels to identify other vessels and then use that information to figure out Responsibilities Between Vessels (Rule 18). Basically, the hierarchy of right-of-way, or to quote the rules, “Give-way” and “Stand-on” vessels as described in Rules 16 and 17.

Part D is titled “Sound and Light Signals”. 12 pages covering

Rule 32 Definitions

Rule 33 Equipment for Sound Signals

Rule 34 Maneuvering and Warning Signals

Rule 35 Sound Signals in Restricted Visibility

Rule 36 Signals to Attract Attention

Rule 37 Distress Signals

Part E is Rule 38, 4 pages, titled “Exemptions”.

Finally the rule book concludes with:

ANNEX I - Positioning and Technical Details of Lights and Shapes
ANNEX II - Additional Signals for Fishing Vessels Fishing in Close Proximity
ANNEX III - Technical Details of Sound Signal Appliances
ANNEX IV - Distress Signals
ANNEX V (33 CFR 88) - Pilot Rules
INTERPRETATIVE RULES
COLREGS DEMARCATION LINES
PENALTY PROVISIONS
 Violations of International Navigation Rules and Regulations
 Violations of Inland Navigation Rules and Regulations
 Penalties for Negligent Operations
 Duties Related to Marine Casualty Assistance and Information
 Duty to Provide Assistance at Sea
 Injunctions
ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE
WATERS SPECIFIED BY THE SECRETARY
VESSEL BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE REGULATIONS

PART A—GENERAL

RULE 1: Application

- (a) apply to all vessels upon the inland waters of the United States
- (b)
 - (i) These Rules constitute special rules within the meaning of the International Regulations.
 - (ii) All vessels complying with the construction and equipment of the International Regulations are compliance with these Rules.
- (c) Shall not interfere with the operation of any special rules made by the Secretary of the Navy with respect to
 - a. additional station or signal lights and shapes or
 - b. whistle signals for ships of war and vessels proceeding under convoy, or
 - c. by the Secretary with respect to additional station or signal lights and shapes for fishing vessels engaged in fishing as a fleet.
 - d. additional station or signal lights and shapes or whistle signals shall, as possible, cannot be mistaken for any light, shape, or signal authorized under these Rules.
 - e. Notice of such special rules shall be published in the Federal Register

Very legalesek. Covers all nuances, “light, shape, or signal”. Why I recommend dog earing your copy.

RULE 2: Responsibility

The wording in Rule 2 is rather important so the whole quote.

(a) **Nothing in these Rules shall exonerate** any vessel, or the owner, master, or crew thereof, from the consequences of **any neglect** to comply with these Rules **or** of the **neglect of any precaution** which may be **required** by the **ordinary practice of seamen**, or by the special circumstances of the case.

(b) In construing and complying with these Rules **due regard shall be had to all dangers of navigation and collision** and to any **special circumstances**, including the limitations of the vessels involved, which **may make a departure from these Rules necessary to avoid immediate danger**.

Good headwork and seamanship is required!

I wanted these definitions on one page since these are the types of vessels described in the rules.

These are the vessels that **RULE 18, Responsibilities Between Vessels**, covers to establish which vessels yield right-of-way to whom

RULE 3: General Definitions

- (a) “**vessel**” every description of **water craft**, including nondisplacement craft **and seaplanes**
- (b) “**power-driven vessel**” vessel **propelled by machinery**;
- (c) “**sailing vessel**” vessel **under sail, propelling machinery not in use**;
- (d) “**vessel engaged in fishing**” fishing with nets, lines, trawls, or other fishing apparatus which **restricts maneuverability**. Does not include a vessel fishing with trolling lines or other fishing apparatus which **do not restrict maneuverability**;
- (e) “**seaplane**” any aircraft designed to **maneuver on the water**;
- (f) “**vessel not under command**” vessel which through some **exceptional circumstance** is **unable to maneuver** as required by these Rules and is therefore **unable to keep out of the way of another vessel**;
- (g) The term “**vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver**” means a vessel which from the **nature of her work** is restricted in her ability to maneuver as required by these Rules and is therefore **unable to keep out of the way of another vessel**; included, but are not limited to:
 - (i) a vessel engaged in laying, servicing, or **picking up a navigation mark, submarine cable, or pipeline**;
 - (ii) a vessel engaged in **dredging, surveying, or underwater operations**;
 - (iii) a vessel engaged in **replenishment or transferring persons, provisions, or cargo while underway**;
 - (iv) a vessel engaged in the **launching or recovery of aircraft**;
 - (v) a vessel engaged in **mine clearance operations**; and
 - (vi) a vessel engaged in a **towing operation** such as **severely restricts the towing vessel and her tow in their ability to deviate from course**.

Navy, generally. Go Navy, beat Army!

RULE 3: General Definitions (continued)

Three periods ... means I deleted some verbiage while keeping the topic sentence details

- (h) “underway” ... not at anchor, or made fast to the shore, or aground;
- (i) “length” and “breadth” ... length overall and greatest breadth;
- (j) Vessels shall be deemed to be in sight of one another only when one can be observed visually from the other;
- (k) The term “restricted visibility” means any condition in which visibility is restricted by fog, mist, falling snow, heavy rainstorms, sandstorms, or any other similar causes;

Skipped, l, m, n. Western Rivers, Great Lakes, and the definition of the Secretary

- (o) “Inland Waters” means the navigable waters of the United States shoreward of the navigational demarcation lines dividing the high seas from harbors, rivers, and other inland waters of the United States and the waters of the Great Lakes on the United States side of the International Boundary;
- (p) “Inland Rules” or “Rules” mean the Inland Navigational Rules and the annexes thereto, which govern the conduct of vessels and specify the lights, shapes, and sound signals that apply on inland waters; and
- (q) “International Regulations” means the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, including annexes currently in force for the United States.