

—INLAND— Steering and Sailing Rules

**PART B—STEERING AND SAILING RULES**

**Subpart I—Conduct of Vessels in **Any Condition of Visibility****

The fun part. Rules that are used for maneuvering vessels on the water

This section covers:

RULE 4 Application  
RULE 5 Look-out  
RULE 6 Safe Speed  
RULE 7 Risk of Collision  
RULE 8 Action to Avoid Collision  
RULE 9 Narrow Channels  
RULE 10 Traffic Separation Schemes

**RULE 4: Application**

Rules in this subpart apply in **any condition of visibility**.

**RULE 5: Look-out**

Every vessel shall at **all times** maintain a proper look-out by **sight and hearing** as well as by **all available means** appropriate in the **prevailing circumstances and conditions** so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision.

I know this says rule 5 but it is really rule number 1 in action!  
See and Avoid!

## PART B—STEERING AND SAILING RULES

### Subpart I—Conduct of Vessels in **Any Condition of Visibility**

#### RULE 6: Safe Speed

... proceed at a safe speed so that she can take **proper and effective action to avoid collision** and be **stopped** within a **distance appropriate** to the **prevailing circumstances and conditions**.

In determining a safe speed the following **factors** shall be among those taken into account by all vessels:

- (i) **visibility**;
  - (ii) **traffic density**;
  - (iii) **maneuverability**, with special reference to stopping distance and turning ability;
  - (iv) at **night**, the presence of **background light** or from back scatter of own lights;
  - (v) the state of **wind, sea, and current**, and the proximity of **navigational hazards**;
  - (vi) the **draft** in **relation** to the available **depth of water**.
- (b) Additionally, by vessels with **operational radar**:
- (i) the characteristics, efficiency and **limitations of the radar equipment**;
  - (ii) any **constraints** imposed by the radar range **scale in use**;
  - (iii) the effect on **radar** detection of the sea state, weather, and other sources of **interference**;
  - (iv) possibility that small vessels, ice and other floating **objects may not be detected by radar** at an adequate range;
  - (v) the number, location, and movement of vessels detected by radar; and
  - (vi) the **more exact assessment of the visibility** that may be possible when **radar** is used to **determine the range** of vessels or other objects in the vicinity.

Radar plot density can overwhelm an operator

If there is doubt, there is no doubt. Proceed as if there is a risk of collision!

## **RULE 7: Risk of Collision**

- (a) Every vessel shall use **all available means** appropriate to the **prevailing** circumstances and **conditions** to determine **if risk of collision exists**. If there is any **doubt** such risk shall be **deemed to exist**. (b) **Proper use** shall be made of **radar** equipment if fitted and operational, including long-range scanning to obtain early warning of risk of collision and radar plotting or equivalent systematic observation of detected objects.
- (b) Assumptions ... not made on ... **scanty information**, especially scanty radar information.
- (c) ... **if risk of collision exists** the following considerations shall be among those **taken into account**:
- (d) such risk shall be deemed to exist if the **compass bearing of approaching vessel does not appreciably change**; and
- (ii) **risk sometimes exist** when **appreciable bearing change is evident**, particularly when approaching a **very large vessel or a tow** or when approaching a vessel **at close range**.

### **RULE 8: Action to Avoid Collision**

- (a) ..., **be positive**, made in **ample time** and with due regard to the observance of **good seamanship**.
- (b) **alteration of course or speed** ..., be **large enough** to be **readily apparent** ...; a succession of **small alterations** of course or speed should be **avoided**.
- (c) If **sufficient sea room**, **alteration of course alone may be effective** ... **made in good time**, is **substantial** and does not result in another close-quarters situation.
- (d) ... **result in passing at a safe distance**. ... **action** shall be **carefully checked** until other vessel is **past and clear**.
- (e) If necessary to **avoid collision** or allow **more time to assess** the situation, a vessel shall **slacken her speed** or **take all way off by stopping or reversing** her means of propulsion.
- (f)
  - (i) A vessel which... is **required not to impede the passage** or safe passage of another vessel shall, ... , **take early action** to allow **sufficient sea room** for the **safe passage** of the other vessel.
  - (ii) A vessel **required not to impede the passage** or safe passage of another vessel is **not relieved of obligation** if approaching the other vessel so as to involve risk of collision and shall, when taking action, **have full regard to the action** which may be **required by the rules** of this part.
  - (iii) A vessel, the **passage of which is not to be impeded** remains **fully obliged to comply with the rules** of this part when the two vessels are approaching one another so as to involve risk of collision.

give way vessel responsibilities for (i) and (ii).

Stand on vessel must avoid collision “as soon as it becomes apparent to her that the vessel required to keep out of the way is not taking appropriate action in compliance with these Rules”. From rule 17, Action by the Stand On Vessel.

## RULE 9: Narrow Channels

(a)

- (i) ... shall keep as near to the outer limit ... which lies on her starboard side as is safe and practicable.
- (ii) ... power-driven vessel operating in narrow channels or fairways on the Great Lakes, Western Rivers, or waters specified by the Secretary, and proceeding downbound with a following current shall have the right-of-way over an upbound vessel, shall propose ... passage, and shall initiate the maneuvering signals ... The vessel proceeding upbound against the current shall hold as necessary to permit safe passing. This is because up current has more control over vessel

(b) A vessel of less than 20 meters in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel that can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway.

(c) A vessel engaged in fishing shall not impede the ... any other vessel navigating within a narrow channel or fairway.

(d) ... shall not cross a narrow channel or fairway if crossing impedes passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within that channel ... The latter vessel use the danger signal ... if in doubt of intentions of the crossing vessel.

(e)

- (i) ... when overtaking, the power-driven vessel intending to overtake another power-driven vessel shall ... sound appropriate signal ... to permit safe passing. The power-driven vessel being overtaken, if in agreement, shall sound the same signal and may, if specifically agreed to take steps to permit safe passing. in doubt ... sound the danger signal...

(ii) This Rule does not relieve the overtaking vessel of her obligation under Rule 13. RULE 13: Overtaking. Overtaking is the give-way

(f) A vessel nearing a bend or an area of a narrow channel or fairway where other vessels may be obscured by an intervening obstruction shall navigate with particular alertness and caution and shall sound the appropriate signal prescribed in Rule 34(e). one longed, answered by one long

(g) Every vessel shall, if the circumstances of the case admit, avoid anchoring in a narrow channel.

**RULE 10: Traffic Separation Schemes**

(a) This Rule ... **does not relieve any vessel of her obligation under any other Rule.**

(b) A vessel using a traffic separation scheme shall:

(i) **proceed** in the appropriate traffic lane in the **general direction of traffic flow** ...;

(ii) so far **as practicable keep clear of a traffic separation line or separation zone**;

(iii) **normally join or leave** a traffic lane at the **termination** of the lane, but when **joining or leaving from either side** shall do so at as **small an angle** to the **general direction of traffic flow** as practicable.

(c) A vessel shall, so far as practicable, **avoid crossing traffic lanes** but if obliged to do so shall **cross** on a heading as nearly **as practicable at right angles** to the general direction of traffic flow.

(d)

(i) .... **However**, vessels < 20m in length, **sailing vessels**, and vessels engaged in fishing **may use the inshore traffic zone**.

(ii) Notwithstanding para (d) (i), a vessel **may use an inshore traffic zone** when **enroute** to or from a **port**, offshore **installation** or structure, **pilot station**, or any **place situated in the inshore traffic zone**, or to **avoid immediate danger**.

(e) A **vessel** other than a crossing vessel or a vessel joining or leaving a lane shall **not normally enter a separation zone** or **cross a separation line except**:

(i) in **cases of emergency to avoid immediate danger**; or

(ii) to **engage in fishing within a separation zone**.

(f) A vessel navigating in areas near the **terminations** of traffic separation schemes shall do so with particular **caution**.

(g) A vessel shall so far as practicable **avoid anchoring in a traffic separation scheme** or in areas near its **terminations**.

(h) A vessel **not using** a traffic separation scheme **shall avoid** it by as wide a margin as is practicable.

(i) A vessel **engaged in fishing** shall **not impede the passage** of any vessel following a traffic lane.

(j) vessel <20m or a **sailing vessel** shall **not impede the safe passage** of a power-driven **vessel following a traffic lane**.

(k) A vessel **restricted in her ability to maneuver** when **engaged** in an operation for the **maintenance of safety of navigation** in a traffic separation scheme is **exempted** from complying with this Rule to the extent necessary to carry out the operation.

(l) A vessel **restricted in her ability to maneuver** when **engaged** in an operation for the **laying, servicing, or picking up of a submarine cable**, within a traffic separation scheme, is **exempted** from