

Different Rules

Inland Only

International Only

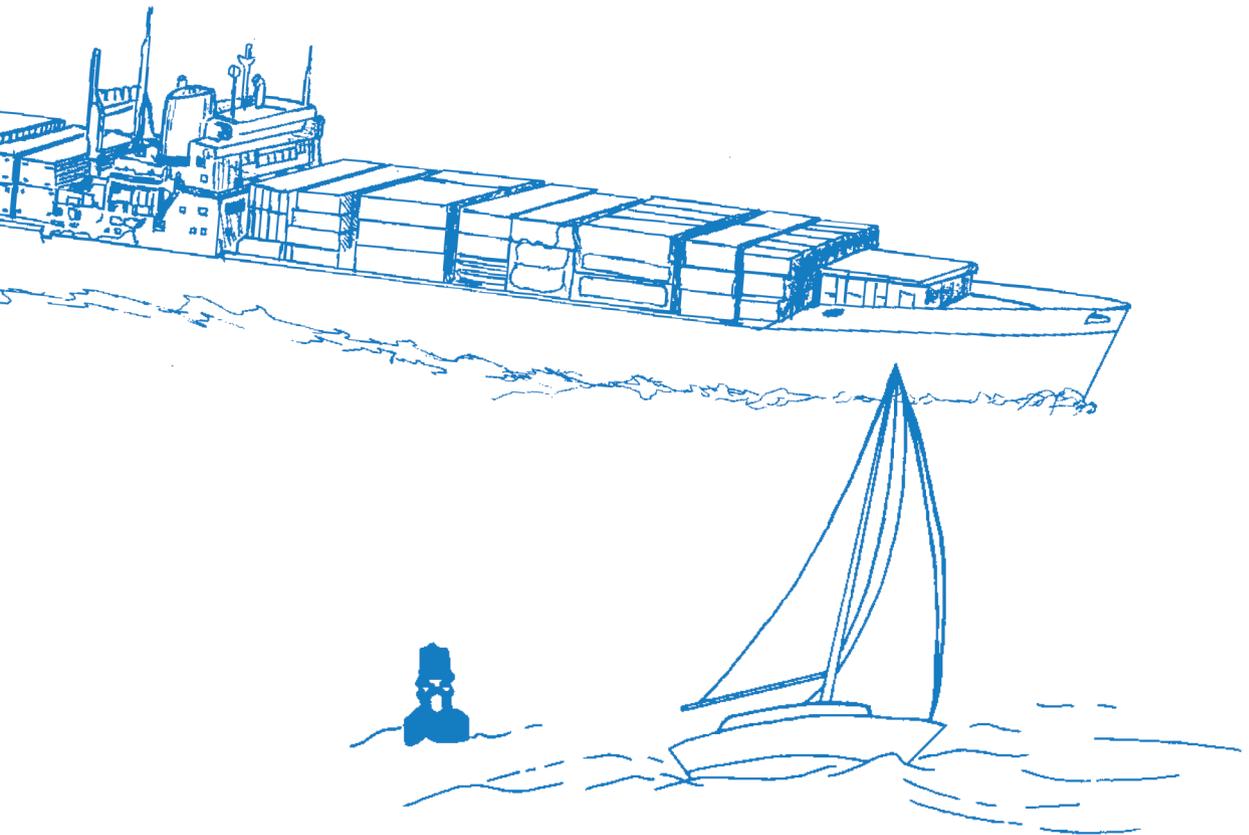
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U.S. Department
of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard



ANNOTATED NAVIGATION RULES

A Complete Up-to-date Copy of the Navigation Rules with
All Differences between International and US Inland Rules
Clearly Marked and Color-coded by Significance



**Ideal resource for those who sail both Inland and Coastal waters
and for USCG license exam prep**

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The Annotated Rules Color Codes

This set of the Navigation Rules have been marked to show the differences between the US Inland and the International versions of the Rules using the following codes.

Yellow means the rules are different

Orange means the rule is unique to Inland Rules

Blue means the rule unique to International Rules

Green means different wording, but no practical difference

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We would like to thank Daniel Cline for his extensive work on this project.

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INTRODUCTION

International Rules

The International Rules in this book were formalized in the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, and became effective on July 15, 1977. The Rules (commonly called 72 COLREGS) are part of the Convention, and vessels flying the flags of states ratifying the treaty are bound to the Rules. The United States has ratified this treaty and all United States flag vessels must adhere to these Rules where applicable. President Gerald R. Ford proclaimed 72 COLREGS and the Congress adopted them as the International Navigational Rules Act of 1977.

The 72 COLREGS were developed by the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) which in May 1982 was renamed the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In November 1981, IMO's Assembly adopted 55 amendments to the 72 COLREGS which became effective on June 1, 1983. The IMO also adopted 9 more amendments which became effective on November 19, 1989. The International Rules in this book contain these amendments.

These Rules are applicable on waters outside of established navigational lines of demarcation. The lines are called COLREGS Demarcation Lines and delineate those waters upon which mariners shall comply with the Inland and International Rules. COLREGS Demarcation Lines are contained in this book.

Inland Rules

The Inland Rules in this book replace the old Inland Rules, Western Rivers Rules, Great Lakes Rules, their respective pilot rules and interpretive rules, and parts of the Motorboat Act of 1940. Many of the old navigation rules were originally enacted in the last century. Occasionally, provisions were added to cope with the increasing complexities of water transportation. Eventually, the navigation rules for United States inland waterways became such a confusing patchwork of requirements that in the 1960's several attempts were made to revise and simplify them. These attempts were not successful.

Following the signing of the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, a new effort was made to unify and update the various inland navigation rules. This effort culminated in the enactment of the Inland Navigational Rules Act of 1980. This legislation sets out Rules 1 through 38—the main body of the Rules. The five Annexes were published as regulations. It is important to note that with the exception of Annex V to the Inland Rules, the International and Inland Rules and Annexes are very similar in both content and format.

The effective date for the Inland Navigation Rules was December 24, 1981, except for the Great Lakes where the effective date was March 1, 1983.

LEGAL CITATIONS

72 COLREGS

International Navigational Rules	Public Law 95 - 75;
Act of 1977	91 Stat. 308;
	33 U.S.C. 1601 - 1608
COLREGS Demarcation Lines	33 CFR 80
72 COLREGS: Implementing Rules	33 CFR 81
72 COLREGS: Interpretative Rules	33 CFR 82
Amendments to 72 COLREGS effective	48 FR 28634
June 1, 1983	

INLAND RULES

Inland Navigational Rules Act of 1980.....	Public Law 96 - 591;
 94 Stat. 3415;
 33 CFR 83
Annex I: Positioning and Technical	33 CFR 84
Details of Lights and Shapes	
Annex II: Additional Signals for Fishing	33 CFR 85
in Close Proximity	
Annex III: Technical Details of Sound	33 CFR 86
Signal Appliances	
Annex IV: Distress Signals	33 CFR 87
Annex V: Pilot Rules	33 CFR 88
Inland Navigation Rules: Implementing Rules.....	33 CFR 89
Inland Navigation Rules: Interpretative Rules	33 CFR 90

VESSEL BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE

Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act	Public Law 92-63;
 85 Stat. 164;
 33 U.S.C. 1201 - 1208
Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone	33 CFR 26
Regulations (Coast Guard regulations)	
Other FCC regulations pertaining to vessel	
bridge-to-bridge radiotelephone	
communications are contained in various	
sections of 47 CFR 80.....	47 CFR 80.1001 - 80.1023
Boundary Lines	46 CFR 7
Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) Call Signs,	33 CFR 161
Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas	

CONVERSION TABLE

Conversion of Metric to U.S. Customary/Imperial Units

<i>Metric Measure (approx.)</i>	<i>U.S. Customary/ Imperial Measure (approx)</i>
1000 Meters (M)	3280.8 ft.
500 M	1640.4 ft.
200 M	656.2 ft.
150 M	492.1 ft.
100 M	328.1 ft.
75 M	246.1 ft.
60 M	196.8 ft.
50 M	164.0 ft.
25 M	82.0 ft.
20 M	65.6 ft.
12 M	39.4 ft.
10 M	32.8 ft.
8 M	6.2 ft.
7 M	23.0 ft.
6 M	19.7 ft.
5 M	6.4 ft.
4.5 M	14.8 ft.
4.0 M	13.1 ft.
3.5 M	11.5 ft.
2.5 M	8.2 ft.
2.0 M	6.6 ft.
1.5 M	4.9 ft.
1 M	3.3 ft.
.9 M	35.4 in.
.6 M	23.6 in.
.5 M	19.7 in.
300 Millimeters (mm)	11.8 in.
200 mm	7.9 in.

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NAVIGATION RULES

INTERNATIONAL—INLAND

—INTERNATIONAL—

General

PART A—GENERAL

RULE 1

Application

(a) These Rules shall apply to all vessels upon the high seas and in all waters connected therewith navigable by seagoing vessels.

(b) Nothing in these Rules shall interfere with the operation of special rules made by an appropriate authority for roadsteads, harbors, rivers, lakes or inland waterways connected with the high seas and navigable by seagoing vessels. Such special rules shall conform as closely as possible to these Rules.

(c) Nothing in these Rules shall interfere with the operation of any special rules made by the Government of any State with respect to additional station or signal lights, shapes or whistle signals for ships of war and vessels proceeding under convoy, or with respect to additional station or signal lights or shapes for fishing vessels engaged in fishing as a fleet. These additional station or signal lights, shapes or whistle signals shall, so far as possible, be such that they cannot be mistaken for any light, shape or signal authorized elsewhere under these Rules¹.

¹ Submarines may display, as a distinctive means of identification, an intermittent flashing amber (yellow) beacon with a sequence of one flash per second for three (3) seconds followed by a three (3) second off-period. Other special rules made by the Secretary of the Navy with respect to additional station and signal lights are found in Part 706 of Title 32, Code of Federal Regulations (32 CFR 706).

—INLAND—

General

PART A—GENERAL RULE 1

Application

(a) These Rules apply to all vessels upon the inland waters of the United States, and to vessels of the United States on the Canadian waters of the Great Lakes to the extent that there is no conflict with Canadian law.

(b)

(i) These Rules constitute special rules made by an appropriate authority within the meaning of Rule 1(b) of the International Regulations.

(ii) All vessels complying with the construction and equipment requirements of the International Regulations are considered to be in compliance with these Rules.

(c) Nothing in these Rules shall interfere with the operation of any special rules made by the Secretary of the Navy with respect to additional station or signal lights and shapes or whistle signals for ships of war and vessels proceeding under convoy, or by the Secretary with respect to additional station or signal lights and shapes for fishing vessels engaged in fishing as a fleet. These additional station or signal lights and shapes or whistle signals shall, so far as possible, be such that they cannot be mistaken for any light, shape, or signal authorized elsewhere under these Rules. Notice of such special rules shall be published in the Federal Register and, after the effective date specified in such notice, they shall have effect as if they were a part of these Rules¹.

¹ Submarines may display, as a distinctive means of identification, an intermittent flashing amber (yellow) beacon with a sequence of one flash per second for three (3) seconds followed by a three (3) second off-period. Other special rules made by the Secretary of the Navy with respect to additional station and signal lights are found in Part 706 of Title 32, Code of Federal Regulations (32 CFR 706).

—INTERNATIONAL—

General

RULE 1—CONTINUED

(d) Traffic separation schemes may be adopted by the Organization for the purpose of these Rules.

(e) Whenever the Government concerned shall have determined that a vessel of special construction or purpose cannot comply fully with the provisions of any of these Rules with respect to the number, position, range or arc of visibility of lights or shapes, as well as to the disposition and characteristics of sound-signaling appliances, such vessel shall comply with such other provisions in regard to the number, position, range or arc of visibility of lights or shapes, as well as to the disposition and characteristics of sound-signaling appliances, as her Government shall have determined to be the closest possible compliance with these Rules in respect to that vessel.

—INLAND—

General

RULE 1 — CONTINUED

(d) Traffic separation schemes may be established for the purposes of these Rules. Vessel traffic service regulations may be in effect in certain areas.

(e) Whenever the Secretary determines that a vessel or class of vessels of special construction or purpose cannot comply fully with the provisions of any of these Rules with respect to the number, position, range, or arc of visibility of lights or shapes, as well as to the disposition and characteristics of sound-signaling appliances, the vessel shall comply with such other provisions in regard to the number, position, range, or arc of visibility of lights or shapes, as well as to the disposition and characteristics of sound-signaling appliances, as the Secretary shall have determined to be the closest possible compliance with these Rules. The Secretary may issue a certificate of alternative compliance for a vessel or class of vessels specifying the closest possible compliance with these Rules. The Secretary of the Navy shall make these determinations and issue certificates of alternative compliance for vessels of the Navy.

(f) The Secretary may accept a certificate of alternative compliance issued by a contracting party to the International Regulations if he determines that the alternative compliance standards of the contracting party are substantially the same as those of the United States.

—INTERNATIONAL—

General

RULE 2

Responsibility

(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.

RULE 3

General Definitions

For the purpose of these Rules, except where the context otherwise requires:

(a) The word “vessel” includes every description of water craft, including nondisplacement craft, **WIG craft** and seaplanes, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water.

(b) The term “power-driven vessel” means any vessel propelled by machinery.

(c) The term “sailing vessel” means any vessel under sail provided that propelling machinery, if fitted, is not being used.

(d) The term “vessel engaged in fishing” means any vessel fishing with nets, lines, trawls or other fishing apparatus which restrict maneuverability, but does not include a vessel fishing with trolling lines or other fishing apparatus which do not restrict maneuverability.

(e) The word “seaplane” includes any aircraft designed to maneuver on the water.

(f) The term “vessel not under command” means a 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.

—INLAND—

General

RULE 2

Responsibility

(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.

RULE 3

General Definitions

For the purpose of these Rules **and this Chapter**, except where the context otherwise requires:

(a) The word “vessel” includes every description of water craft, including nondisplacement craft and seaplanes, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water;

(b) The term “power-driven vessel” means any vessel propelled by machinery;

(c) The term “sailing vessel” means any vessel under sail provided that propelling machinery, if fitted, is not being used;

(d) The term “vessel engaged in fishing” means any vessel fishing with nets, lines, trawls, or other fishing apparatus which restricts maneuverability, but does not include a vessel fishing with trolling lines or other fishing apparatus which do not restrict maneuverability;

(e) The word “seaplane” includes any aircraft designed to maneuver on the water;

(f) The term “vessel not under command” means a 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; vessels restricted in their ability to maneuver include, but are not limited to:

—INTERNATIONAL—

General

RULE 3—CONTINUED

(g) (continued) The term “vessels restricted in their ability to maneuver” shall include but not be 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 mineclearance operations;
- (vi) a vessel engaged in a towing operation such as severely restricts the towing vessel and her tow in their ability to deviate from their course.

(h) The term “vessel constrained by her draft” means a power-driven vessel which, because of her draft in relation to the available depth and width of navigable water is severely restricted in her ability to deviate from the course she is following.

(i) The word “underway” means that a vessel is not at anchor, or made fast to the shore, or aground.

(j) The words “length” and “breadth” of a vessel mean her length overall and greatest breadth.

(k) Vessels shall be deemed to be in sight of one another only when one can be observed visually from the other.

(l) 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.

(m) The term “Wing-In-Ground (WIG) craft” means a multimodal craft which, in its main operational mode, flies in close proximity to the surface by utilizing surface-effect action.

—INLAND—

General

RULE 3—CONTINUED

(g) (continued)

(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 mineclearance 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 their course.

(h) The word “underway” means that a vessel is not at anchor, or made fast to the shore, or aground;

(i) The words “length” and “breadth” of a vessel mean her 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;

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—INTERNATIONAL—

General

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—INLAND—

General

RULE 3—CONTINUED

(l) “Western Rivers” means the Mississippi River, its tributaries, South Pass, and Southwest Pass, to the navigational demarcation lines dividing the high seas from harbors, rivers, and other inland waters of the United States, and the Port Allen-Morgan City Alternate Route, and that part of the Atchafalaya River above its junction with the Port Allen-Morgan City Alternate Route including the Old River and the Red River;

(m) “Great Lakes” means the Great Lakes and their connecting and tributary waters including the Calumet River as far as the Thomas J. O’Brien Lock and Controlling Works (between mile 326 and 327), the Chicago River as far as the east side of the Ashland Avenue Bridge (between mile 321 and 322), and the Saint Lawrence River as far east as the lower exit of Saint Lambert Lock;

(n) “Secretary” means the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating;

(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.

—INTERNATIONAL—

Steering and Sailing Rules

PART B—STEERING AND SAILING RULES

Section I—Conduct of Vessels in Any Condition of Visibility

RULE 4

Application

Rules in this Section apply to 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.



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