

Boating Tips

Boating and Rules of the Road

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Why do we drive on the right side of the road? Because ships pass port to port, on each other's left. Before roads and cars waterway were our main transportation mode so rules of navigation were adapted to today's roadways.

How many Rules are there for navigation on the water? 38. What other rules of the road are important? Every rule is important given a specific situation such as returning to port.

Most everyone remembers red right returning. That is correct in 95% of the situations until you change waterways such as from a river to a canal. The red buoy may change sides in some cases so having a chart and paying attention to it is critical.

Another vessel is approaching from the right or starboard side at an angle of 25 degrees. Who has right of way? The boat approaching has the right of way. You are required to alter your course to avoid a collision. If that vessel is approaching from the right rear at an angle of 125 degrees then you have the right of way. This is because it is over taking you from the rear at an angle greater than 90 degrees.

When are you required to sound your horn one prolonged blast then 2 minutes of silence? Anytime of reduced visibility. In reduced visibility you are also required to reduce speed along with post a watch. The silent 2 minutes is to listen for the horn or bell of another boat or navigation aid.

On which side should you pass a sail boat no matter which direction the two of you are traveling. Pass on the leeward side, away from the wind so you don't take the wind from their sails. You should always reduce speed to not rock the sail boat.

Reducing speed when overtaking any vessel is both a courtesy as well as the rule. You don't like being rocked. Demonstrate your knowledge and slow down, so lead by example to other boaters.

What does a black can indicate? It's like the yellow line on the road. A black can indicates the center of the river.

You approach a channel marker tower with both red and green on it. To which side of the tower is the primary channel. For instance, if green is on top, the primary channel is to starboard or the

right of the tower. A secondary channel may be to port or it may be shallow and be avoided, hence the necessity of a good chart.

I believe rules 2 and 17 of COLREGS (collision regulations) note that you may forego all rules to avoid a collision with another vessel or fixed object. In a collision, in a court of maritime law, you must clearly demonstrate that you took appropriate collision avoidance action.

You are legally responsible for knowing the rules of the road when on the water. Those rules keep you as well as other boaters like other drivers safe by playing (boating) by the same rules.

Now is an excellent time to brush up on the rules of the road via a seminar or reading the United States Coast Guard Navigation Rules and Regulations Handbook As with driving on the right side there are interesting as well as fun correlations between boating and driving.

This article is given courtesy of the Pamlico Sail & Power Squadron, America's Boating Club™. The Squadron is partnering with the Estuarium providing a two week presentation on safe boating and will present a 2-hour seminar on Rules of the Road on July 28. To register for the seminar in advance, email Linda, our Education Officer at psps@gmail.com or contact her at 252-964-3009. Learn more about this event at:

http://www.pamlicosailandpowersquadron.org/images/documents/PSPS.Estuarium_Safe_Boating_Flyer.pdf