



Prevention of Collisions at Sea: Finishing the Rules

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We haven't written about the COLREGs (Rules to Avoid Collisions at Sea or the "Nav Rules") since the Spring as we've used the intervening period to speak specifically about important seamanship issues or issues as they arose in the course of the traditional boating season. Now, with winter hard set in, we can use this period to close out the knowledge base on other important topics. It is hard to find topics more important than the COLREGs!

We'll get to the Annex's to the COLREGs in a future column but let's use this one to finish up the Rules themselves. There are three Rules left:

Rule 10 - Traffic Separation Schemes

In highly trafficked waters, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopts traffic separation schemes (TSS) which are "lanes" for in-bound and out-bound commercial vessels to use. Like our asphalt roads, these roads also have a "median divider" to separate the in-bound from the out-bound lanes. You can find them in magenta on your charts. Take a look at the Ambrose Channel coming out of New York/Newark harbors on your charts.

Guess what? All vessels in-bound or out-bound to the designated harbors "shall" (means: must) use them. They are directed to enter and exit them at the two terminuses or, if not practical, to enter or leave them at as small an angle as practicable. If such vessels need to cross the TSS, they shall do so at as close to a right angle as is practical, i.e., get across as quickly as possible, subject to the COLREGs - Rule 15 (see SSP, "At the Crossroads", 7/11/2007.) All COLREGs apply within the TSS. Guess what else? You are most likely exempt as sailboats, motored vessels less than 20 meters

(~60 feet) and boats engaged in fishing with nets or lines. So, why bother?

1. If fishing (and they mean commercial fishing boats, not guys with Penn reels and a Grady White), the vessel must move in the general direction of traffic AND not impede the passage of any other boat using the lane. This has implications for Rule 18 (see SSP, "After You, Alphonse", 8/8/2007) and the priority of vessels in various rungs of the "pecking order."

2. If fishing with nets near a TSS (or in a TSS for that matter), the vessel's nets cannot extend into the TSS and impede the traffic of any other boat using the lane.

3. You need to know what the other skipper is thinking about and acting on, especially when near the behemoths that traffic in the TSS's.

Rule 12 - Sailing Vessels

Since sailboats can't sail into the wind, there are special rules which guide us and them as to priorities and protocols (see SSP, "After You, Alphonse", 8/8/2007.) But what about sailboat vs sailboat? Rule 12 rules as follows. First, the vessel with the wind on her port side shall keep out of the way of the other, i.e., if the windward side (which by convention and most cases is the side opposite to that which the mainsail is on) is your port side, you are the give-way vessel (see SSP, "Rules, Rules, Rules", 1/9/2008.) Second, if both sailboats have their mainsail trimmed to the starboard side (opposite the wind and thus both boats have the wind on their port side), the boat furthest upwind is



the give-way vessel. In fact, in all conditions, if both sail boats have the wind on the same side (i.e., even starboard), the boat furthest upwind is the give-way vessel (see SSP, "Dead Right? Just Plain Dumb!", 1/8/2008.)

What about conflicting or overriding Rules? There is only one - Rule 13 (Overtaking) overrules Rule 12 when one sailboat is overtaking the other, i.e., from more than 22.5 degrees abaft (behind) the beam (see SSP, "Overtaking, a Meeting", 5/30/2007.) Then, the overtaking sailboat, regardless of where the wind is from, is the give-way vessel.

Rule 38 - Exemptions

If there are Rules, there are exemptions. You've seen that already in a number of the columns, including this one (re: Rule 10 above.) Rule 38 basically says that any boat whose keel was laid before a particular version of

the Rules went into force is exempt with respect to the Rule 22 (see SSP, "More Lights and Shapes", 2/13/2008) for a specified number of years before they must retrofit to the Rules. The exemptions run from 4 to 9 years - except (an exemption to the exemption!) vessels of less than 20 meters (~60 feet) are permanently exempt! In short, our boats can keep whatever USCG standards there were at the time her keel was laid.

So, there you have it! All the columns on the COLREGs can be had by emailing me below or going to www.atlanticmaritimeacademy.com/seamanshiparticles.html#colregs.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com or go direct to Lisa Etter, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing."

Mazzei vs. Lesko For Brookhaven Supervisor?

continued from front page

Brookhaven the Lawrence Aviation case and asphalt contract scandals in Suffolk, cannot declare candidacy to an elective office unless he retires or resigns from his current position.

Schaffer asserts Lesko is one of the front-runners for the Democratic line in the special election which will likely be held in March. "Mark Lesko brings a fresh face which is what is needed, because the last one and a half years has been nightmarish for Brookhaven residents, and it's not fair to anybody because we need to get town government running again," Schaffer explained. "He would bring a change in atmosphere with a prosecutor's background, and he's not been political in the past."

Schaffer said Lesko is expected to arrive at a decision on whether to run within the next two weeks.

Commenting on a potential GOP ticket for Mazzei, the Democratic county leader stated, "Tim Mazzei and his Republican crew have spent all their time rolling back the reforms which Brookhaven Town made and they have not been productive, whereas Mark would be coming in carrying on Brian's (Foley) reforms and a sense of semblance."

Schaffer said if Lesko is not a candidate, other officials under consideration for the post include Patchogue Village Mayor Paul V. Pontieri, whom he says "handled himself brilliantly"



Photo of Mark Lesko who is presently Chief Deputy US Attorney in the Eastern District of New York, is unavailable as of press time.

during the recent slaying of an Ecuadorian immigrant. Also on the short list on the Democratic side of the aisle is New York State Assemblyman Marc Alessi. "Our goal is to bring back the Democratic majority to the town board this year," asserts Schaffer.

The timeline for the special election is such that the election will be held a minimum of 60 days, and a period not to exceed 90 days from the date Foley steps down and the vacancy is declared. Officials estimate the election will be held anytime between March 7 and April 7. Nominations for candidates by their respective parties are expected to be announced the later part of January.