



# Prevention of Collision at Sea – At the Crossroads



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You've seen me reference Captain George Eldridge's navigation poem before. What did he have to say when two boats are about to cross each other's paths?

**"But if to starboard Red appear, it is my duty to keep clear - to act as judgment says is proper, to port or starboard, back or stop her..."**

This column is all about that...

### Overview

As noted prior, there are only three conditions of vessels meeting on the waters – head-on, crossing or overtaking situations. The Rules govern how the skippers are to interact with each other through helm control and sound (or radio) signals. This is about two power-driven vessels about to cross each other's paths – a possible collision course.

### Rule 15 - Crossing Situation

When two vessels appear to be heading across each other's paths, this is by definition a crossing situation – and, like in your car – a collision needs to be avoided! But how can you tell if you are actually on a collision course.

There are 3 ways – with the 3rd method, as usual, always winning out:

1. At night, if you see a red light and a white light above it and trailing behind, you are crossing each other's path and she is the stand-on vessel. You are thus the give-way. If you see a green and a white light above it and trailing behind, you have a crossing situation where you are the stand-on vessel – but keep an eye on her always! You don't want to be "dead right!" During the day, you can obviously see if the vessel is crossing your path on your starboard side (you are give-way) or on your port side (you are stand-on.)

2. Mark the other boat's progress against something fixed on your boat – a cleat, a stanchion, the anchor – anything that is traveling with you. If the opposing boat continues to hover on or around that fixed mark as you both continue your course and speed, a collision is about to happen!

3. When in doubt, assume you are on a collision course and act accordingly.

In this situation, the give-way vessel is, by preference, to turn to starboard (towards the stand-on boat) and go behind her (go "under her

stern"). Remember – take "early and substantial" action so that your maneuver is "telegraphed" to the other skipper.

But what if you see that you cannot turn to starboard because of (1) traffic conditions, (2) rocks, (3) shallows, etc...? Rule 15 clearly says that the give-way vessel "shall avoid crossing ahead of the other vessel", i.e., do not speed up and try to cross ahead! The stand-on skipper may be doing the same thing because he hasn't seen you take early and substantial action to keep clear of him! If you don't have substantial time and distance to telegraph such a proper maneuver, just slow down or even stop! Let the approaching vessel pass ahead of you, just as you would allow a sail boat to pass ahead.

Well, this seems pretty easy – if she is on my right, she goes ahead. So, what's the catch?

Naturally, there are (at least) three catches:

1. What if a vessel constrained by the nature of their work (say a dredger or a commercial fishing vessel) is on your port side? You are on their right so you should go ahead, no? No. Rule 18 comes into play. Any power-driven vessel approached on its port side by a hampered vessel must keep clear.

You can increase speed to pass ahead though, if conditions clearly permit.

2. If you are crossing a narrow channel, Rule 9(d) governs. "A vessel shall not cross a narrow channel or fairway if such crossing impedes the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within such a channel or fairway." How can you tell the other boat can't navigate outside the channel? Assume the worst...

3. Lastly, if you are in a "traffic separation scheme," and if you fish the Canyons you may be, Rule 10(j) prohibits a boat of less than 20 meters (roughly 65 feet) from impeding the safe passage of a power-driven vessel following the traffic lane.

Boats claiming the special rights implied above must by shapes or lights declare those rights. If she doesn't, it will matter to the Admiralty Board when you both appear to explain how you ran into each other... but, remember, it is never 100-0!

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at USCGAUX2006@aol.com or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."

## Tide Chart - July 2007

Day	High	Low	High	Low	High
Sun 1		2:15 AM/0.01ft	8:15 AM/2.72ft	2:09 PM/0.28ft	8:24 PM/3.48ft
Mon 2		2:56 AM/-0.06ft	8:57 AM/2.77ft	2:53 PM/0.26ft	9:05 PM/3.46ft
Tue 3		3:35 AM/-0.09ft	9:42 AM/2.83ft	3:36 PM/0.26ft	9:50 PM/3.40ft
Wed 4		4:15 AM/-0.10ft	10:31 AM/2.91ft	4:21 PM/0.30ft	10:39 PM/3.30ft
Thu 5		4:56 AM/-0.07ft	11:22 AM/3.01ft	5:12 PM/0.36ft	11:32 PM/3.18ft
Fri 6		5:40 AM/-0.02ft	12:13 PM/3.12ft	6:13 PM/0.43ft	
Sat 7	12:26 AM/3.04ft	6:32 AM/0.05ft	1:06 PM/3.24ft	7:23 PM/0.45ft	
Sun 8	1:23 AM/2.90ft	7:31 AM/0.11ft	2:01 PM/3.33ft	8:35 PM/0.39ft	
Mon 9	2:24 AM/2.78ft	8:34 AM/0.13ft	2:59 PM/3.41ft	9:40 PM/0.27ft	
Tue 10	3:30 AM/2.71ft	9:34 AM/0.12ft	4:02 PM/3.49ft	10:40 PM/0.14ft	
Wed 11	4:37 AM/2.72ft	10:33 AM/0.09ft	5:04 PM/3.58ft	11:37 PM/0.01ft	
Thu 12	5:40 AM/2.80ft	11:30 AM/0.06ft	6:02 PM/3.66ft		
Fri 13		12:32 AM/-0.09ft	6:37 AM/2.90ft	12:25 PM/0.04ft	6:54 PM/3.70ft
Sat 14		1:25 AM/-0.17ft	7:29 AM/2.98ft	1:19 PM/0.04ft	7:43 PM/3.68ft
Sun 15		2:13 AM/-0.20ft	8:19 AM/3.02ft	2:09 PM/0.06ft	8:30 PM/3.60ft
Mon 16		2:58 AM/-0.19ft	9:07 AM/3.01ft	2:56 PM/0.13ft	9:15 PM/3.45ft
Tue 17		3:39 AM/-0.12ft	9:56 AM/2.99ft	3:41 PM/0.23ft	10:01 PM/3.27ft
Wed 18		4:18 AM/-0.01ft	10:44 AM/2.95ft	4:24 PM/0.37ft	10:46 PM/3.08ft
Thu 19		4:56 AM/0.13ft	11:30 AM/2.92ft	5:08 PM/0.52ft	11:31 PM/2.87ft
Fri 20		5:33 AM/0.29ft	12:15 PM/2.89ft	5:56 PM/0.66ft	
Sat 21	12:15 AM/2.68ft	6:13 AM/0.44ft	12:58 PM/2.87ft	6:52 PM/0.76ft	
Sun 22	1:01 AM/2.52ft	6:59 AM/0.56ft	1:42 PM/2.87ft	7:55 PM/0.79ft	
Mon 23	1:49 AM/2.39ft	7:53 AM/0.64ft	2:29 PM/2.88ft	8:56 PM/0.75ft	
Tue 24	2:42 AM/2.30ft	8:50 AM/0.65ft	3:20 PM/2.92ft	9:51 PM/0.64ft	
Wed 25	3:42 AM/2.29ft	9:43 AM/0.61ft	4:15 PM/3.00ft	10:42 PM/0.51ft	
Thu 26	4:43 AM/2.35ft	10:34 AM/0.53ft	5:08 PM/3.14ft	11:31 PM/0.36ft	
Fri 27	5:37 AM/2.47ft	11:24 AM/0.43ft	5:56 PM/3.29ft		
Sat 28		12:19 AM/0.20ft	6:25 AM/2.63ft	12:14 PM/0.32ft	6:40 PM/3.44ft
Sun 29		1:04 AM/0.05ft	7:09 AM/2.79ft	1:02 PM/0.21ft	7:22 PM/3.55ft
Mon 30		1:48 AM/-0.09ft	7:51 AM/2.93ft	1:50 PM/0.11ft	8:04 PM/3.61ft
Tue 31		2:30 AM/-0.21ft	8:34 AM/3.07ft	2:36 PM/0.05ft	8:46 PM/3.59ft

## Boating Safety A Must

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Detachment 18-06 is offering the required Boating Safety Course for all persons 10 years of age and older at:

**Hampton Bays Library,  
52 Ponoquogue Avenue, Hampton Bay, NY 11946  
July 21, 10am to 5pm & July 22, 1pm to 4pm.**

The course includes 7 lessons during the required 8 hrs. There is a test as part of the course that has a nearly 100% success rate. The fee is \$50.00. The Boaters Safety Class is required of all persons under the age of 18 (10-18) who operate a boat and all persons regardless of age who operate a personal water craft. (ie. Jet ski or wave runner).

*All classes require registration. Please call 631-960-5295 or E-mail: uscgaux1806@yahoo.com*

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