



## Prevention of Collision at Sea – Beep-Beep! Not the Road Runner!

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This column is, like last week's, a "two-fer." Rule 34 is about what are the proper maneuvering and warning signals – how to communicate in the absence of radio or voice signals. Rule 33 is what equipment specifications are necessary to send those signals in a consistent way. I am going to emphasize the Inland aspects of these Rules – for obvious reasons!

### What Does Rule 34 Say?

Rule 34, Section A-i, says: "When power-driven vessels are in sight of one another and meeting or crossing at a distance within half a mile of each other, each vessel underway, when maneuvering as authorized or required by these Rules shall indicate that maneuver by the following signals on her whistle:

1. one short blast to mean 'I intend to leave you on my port side';
2. two short blasts to mean 'I intend to leave you on my starboard side';
3. three short blasts to mean 'I am operating astern propulsion'."

Section A-ii goes on to say that the opposing vessel is either to return the same signal (safe to proceed) or issue the danger signal, i.e., 5 short blasts (No go! Danger ahead for YOU!). This is the essence between the International Rules – which require no response from the opposing vessel (unless danger is ahead) – and the Inland Rules which seek to ensure that the opposing vessel understands your signal. Given the close quarters of Inland conditions, you can readily understand the seamanship reasons

for this double-check. Rule 34, Section B, goes on to say that you can supplement your whistle signals with corresponding light signals.

Rule 34, Section C-i, says: "When in sight of one another, a power-driven vessel intending to overtake another power-driven vessel shall indicate her intention by the following signals on her whistle:

1. one short blast to mean 'I intend to overtake you on your starboard side';
2. two short blasts to mean 'I intend to overtake you on your port side'."

Section C-ii, like A-ii, goes on to say that the power-driven vessel about to be overtaken shall, if in agreement, sound a similar signal. If in doubt she shall sound the danger signal.

Rule 34, Section E, requires that a vessel nearing a bend or an area of a channel or fairway where other vessels may be obscured by an intervening obstruction shall sound one prolonged blast. Such signal shall be answered with a prolonged blast by any approaching vessel that may be within hearing around the bend or behind the intervening obstruction. Rule 34, Section F, requires when a power-driven vessel is leaving a dock or berth, she shall sound one prolonged blast.

### What Does This All Mean?

If you aren't issuing all these sound signals, are you in violation of the Rules of Navigation? After all, all these rules and sections use the word "shall" again and again – and "shall" means "must!" But can you imagine all the boats in

Moriches Bay constantly issuing these sound signals? I can't... But what about when conditions deteriorate? Wouldn't it be great to know how to signal intent? Of course.

Of note, Rule 34, Section F, gives us a modernized "out" – "A vessel that reaches agreement with another vessel in a head-on, crossing, or overtaking situation, as for example, by using the radiotelephone as prescribed by the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radio-telephone Act (85 Stat. 164; 33 U.S.C. 1201 et seq.), is not obliged to sound the whistle signals prescribed by this Rule, but may do so. If agreement is not reached, then whistle signals shall be exchanged in a timely manner and shall prevail."

If you are trailing the "Rosie", for example, down the Forge River and you want to pass her on your way to sea, here is how you'd do it in a professional fashion:

1. "Motor Vessel Rosie, ahead, this is the Motor Vessel 'Charlie' on your stern."
2. "Charlie, this is Rosie. Pass your traffic."
3. "Rosie, I'd like to pass you on two whistles."
4. "Charlie, this is Rosie. There is upbound traffic passing me to port. I suggest you pass me on one whistle."
5. "Rosie, this is Charlie. Thank you, skipper. Passing you on one whistle. Initiating power-up. Have a great day fishing. Motor Vessel Charlie, out."

What just happened? In #1, Charlie gets Rosie's attention – like she would have by issuing 2 short blasts on her whistle as required by Rule 34, Section C-i-2. #4 is Charlie issuing 5 or more short blasts – danger ahead for YOU – don't go! Rosie goes one step further in suggesting a safe passage – on one whistle or as prescribed in 34-C-i-1. And Charlie does, increasing speed to do so... Using more modern technology – a radio – and using the language of the sea...

### What Does Rule 33 Say?

Rule 33, Section A, says a vessel of 12 meters (40 feet) or more in length shall be provided with a whistle and a bell, and a vessel of 100 meters (330 feet) or more in length shall, in addition be provided with a gong, the tone and sound of which cannot be confused with that of the bell. Section B says that vessels under 12 meters are not obliged to carry the "sound-signaling appliances" prescribed in 33-A – but still must have some "other means of making an efficient sound signal." So, even you, Bunky, with the 13' skiff, have to be able to communicate like the battle wagons!

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at USCGAUX2008@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..."

## Suffolk to Offer Small-Business Series

"Small businesses are essential to the prosperity and the vibrancy of our nation," says Legislator Jay Schneiderman (R-Montauk). "They create nearly all of the new jobs on the East End and account for more than half of the output of the U.S. economy." That's why Suffolk County is kicking off a series of free workshops with advice for entrepreneurs eager to start their own.

From 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., a representative from the New York State Small Business Development Center will visit Suffolk's "One-Stop Employment Center" at 725 Veterans Memorial Highway in Hauppauge to discuss the considerations necessary in becoming a small-business owner or embarking on a new career path.

The Center serves as a complete "human resources facility" which brings employers and job seekers together, and provides a "one-stop approach" to the search. Staffed with employment professionals from private and public entities, the Center supplies the visitor with the tools necessary for a self-directed or staff-assisted search, and provides employers with facilities and workforce support.

As part of that effort, the upcoming seminars will focus on those who want to work for themselves. A small-business owner himself,

Schneiderman expects the series to have an uplifting tone. "One of the primary roles of government is to foster an environment which promotes innovation, risk-taking and equal opportunity," he said. "It is here where people who have a dream of owning a business are able to do so if they have a good idea and are willing to work hard for it."

Space is limited so those interested should reserve a place as soon as possible and plan to arrive early. For more information, or to reserve a spot at the session, the Suffolk County Department of Labor may be reached at 853-6600.

### Suffolk County "Starting Your Own Business" Seminar Schedule

- February 20
- March 26
- April 23
- May 14
- June 18

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