

# FIRST BOAT

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## [Vin Pica: What's With All The Rules!?](#)

*Vin Pica runs down the list of some of The Rules that don't require too much explanation...*

### The Rules for Prevention of Collision at Sea - *Rules, Rules, Rules!?*

As we continue to build a body of work on the Rules of Navigation, many of the Rules don't deserve a full article but do deserve to be noted. This week's column looks to get those Rules behind us and into your sea log...



Rule 1 says - "These Rules shall apply to all vessels upon the high seas and in all waters connected therewith navigable by seagoing vessels."

Rule 1 means - The COLREGs apply to all of the oceans and bodies of connected to them with respect given to the United States Inland Rules which apply to the Great Lakes, Western Rivers and all the waterways and bays inside the magenta line COLREGs demarcation line printed on your charts. Many boaters think that the Inland Rules apply uniformly anytime they are within 3 nm of shore. Not so! The demarcation line runs along the south shore of Long Island from Montauk Point to New York Harbor - right across the Inlet mouths...

Rule 3 says - "For the purpose of these Rules (and this Act), except where the context otherwise requires,

the word 'vessel' includes every description of water craft, including non-displacement craft, WIG craft and seaplanes, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water."

Rule 3 means - Don't be surprised if the US Coast Guard comes alongside to inspect your home-made raft, inner-tube or a log you're tied to...

Rule 4, Section 1, Conduct of Vessels in any Condition of Visibility, says - "Rules in this Section apply to any condition of visibility."

Rule 4, Section 1, Conduct of Vessels in any Condition of Visibility, means - "Neither Rain, Nor Sleet, Nor gloom of night" shall matter in applying Rules 5-10 to the facts of a case or in the interpretation of their use by the master of a vessel.

Rule 11, Section 2, Conduct of Vessels in Sight of One Another, says - "Rules in this Section apply to vessels in sight of each other."

Rule 11, Section 2, Conduct of Vessels in Sight of One Another, means - Rules 12-18 apply to the facts of a case or in the interpretation of their use by the master of a vessel if the vessels can see each other - the use of radar here is not implied since the word "sight" is explicitly used.

Rule 16 says - "Every vessel that is directed to keep out of the way of another vessel shall, so far as possible, take early and substantial action to keep well clear."

Rule 16 means - Just that. If you are the give-way vessel, telegraph your move to clear well clear. See Rule 8, [Prevention of Collision In Our Bays and Creeks](#), for the prescribed way.

Rule 20, Section 4, Lights and Shapes, says - "Rules in this Section shall be complied with in all weathers, shall be complied with from sunset to sunrise, in restricted visibility and may be exhibited in all other circumstances when it is deemed necessary."

Rule 20, Section 4, Lights and Shapes, means - Rules 21-31 apply to the facts of a case or in the interpretation of their use by the master of a vessel.

Rule 32, Section 5, Sounds and Light Signals, says - "The word 'whistle' means any sound producing appliance capable of producing the prescribed blasts."

Rule 32, Section 5, Sounds and Light Signals, means - Rules 21-37 apply to the facts of a case or in the interpretation of their use by the master of a vessel. It defines a short blast as being approximately one second and a prolonged blast as being of four-six seconds.

This reference will link you to [all the prior columns on the COLREGs](#). With thanks to Andrew and his staff for providing the forum to get the information out to you!

Ok, this still leaves a few Rules to cover in the weeks ahead. When we're done, you'll have a good grounding. I doubt whether the USCG would accept a fistful of articles as evidence that you have a copy of the Rules aboard but hopefully these articles are easier to understand than the legal language!

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at [JoinUSCGAux@aol.com](mailto:JoinUSCGAux@aol.com) or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at [DSO-HR](#) and we will help you "get in this thing..."