



Prevention of Collision at Sea

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Every boater has (hopefully) heard of the rule of "red, right, return" meaning to keep the red buoys on your right when returning from sea. What many don't realize is that this old chestnut is one of many that represent the embedded knowledge of centuries of seafaring know formally as the "International Regulations for the Prevention of Collision at Sea" and the largely parallel United States Inland Rules. Sometimes referred to by the old salts as the "COLREGS" or simply "The Rules", it has been estimated that less than 10% of today's boaters are familiar with them... And the IMO (International Maritime Organization, global governing body) estimates that 80% of all collisions at sea are due to "pilot error"... So, this column starts a series of articles on The Rules that have one simple goal: Safety of Life at Sea...

Overview

First, back in the day, vessels were designated as "privileged" and "burdened." The privileged boat would hold her course and speed and the burdened boat would take "early and substantial" action to avoid the collision. What the Coast Guard noticed through court cases though was that skippers involved in collisions would claim that

they had "the right of way" or that they had "privileges." This implied something that doesn't exist in The Rules - that you have no affirmative obligation to avoid a collision at sea, no matter how much "in the right" you are. So, The Rules were changed to remove this unintended subtlety. Just about every reference to the term "right of way" was removed from The Rules and the terms "privileged" and "burdened" were changed to "stand-on" and "give-way", respectively. Their courses of action were retained - the stand-on vessel would hold her course and speed and the give-way vessel would take early and substantial action to avoid a collision - plus one caveat. Under Rule 17(b), if the closing conditions between the two* vessels has deteriorated to the point that action by the give-way vessel solely can no longer avoid a collision at sea, the stand-on vessel is "required" to take the best action it can to avoid the collision. Rule 2 also clearly states that a skipper "may make a departure from these Rules necessary to avoid immediate danger."

Secondly, unlike in the US Court system where everyone is innocent until proven guilty, all parties in front of an Admiralty Board or a Court of In-

quiry is guilty. The Board will simply apportion blame and it will never be 100-0. So, even if a guy plows directly into you, see 17(b) above...

Three, 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.

In that this column is the first in a series, I will give you some quick rules of thumb** now and come back to you with more in depth information in the weeks ahead.

Rule 13 - Overtaking

Bottom line, if you are overtaking another vessel, you are the give-way vessel. You cannot turn it into a stand-on crossing situation by speeding ahead and than cutting across the overtaken vessel's starboard bow.

Rule 14 - Head On

If you see a boat steaming towards you in a head-on situation, "both" captains are required to turn to starboard (showing their red port-side light) and return to their respective compass headings once an appropriate passing

lane has been established between them. Under the Rules, they are "both" give-way vessels.

Rule 15 - Crossing

OK, I will use the term. If another boat is crossing your bow from your right-hand (starboard) side, she has the "right of way." Turn to starboard and go behind her (called "going under her stern"). If you can't, stop your boat until she passes.

Here lies the body of Michael O'Day Who died maintaining his Right of Way.

He was right, dead right, as he sailed along, But he's just as dead as if he'd been wrong.

More to follow in the weeks ahead...

* All the Rules apply to only those conditions where two boats, and two boats only, are involved. When more than two boats are involved in a potential collision, "common sense must be prevail."

** The term "rule of thumb" came from days when a sailing captain would never draw closer to shore than the width of his thumb on the chart...

Moriches Inlet Tide Table May 40.7650°N, 72.7533° W

Date	Day	Time/Ht	Time/Ht	Time/Ht	Time/Ht
1-May	Tue		05:43/0.03	11:37/0.51	23:55/0.60
2-May	Wed		06:24/0.02	12:14/0.50	
3-May	Thu	00:28/0.60	07:03/0.01	12:50/0.49	
4-May	Fri	01:00/0.59	07:41/0.02	13:26/0.47	
5-May	Sat	01:33/0.58	08:19/0.03	14:03/0.46	
6-May	Sun	02:08/0.57	08:56/0.04	14:45/0.44	
7-May	Mon	02:50/0.55	09:36/0.06	15:34/0.44	
8-May	Tue	03:40/0.54	10:22/0.07	16:28/0.44	
9-May	Wed	04:37/0.54	11:19/0.07	17:24/0.46	
10-May	Thu	05:36/0.53	12:24/0.06	18:22/0.49	
11-May	Fri		00:47/0.12	06:37/0.53	19:22/0.52
12-May	Sat		01:59/0.08	07:41/0.54	20:22/0.57
13-May	Sun		03:00/0.04	08:46/0.55	21:20/0.62
14-May	Mon		03:57/-0.00	09:47/0.56	22:14/0.67
15-May	Tue		04:53/-0.04	10:43/0.57	23:05/0.70
16-May	Wed		05:48/-0.06	11:37/0.58	23:55/0.71
17-May	Thu		06:41/-0.08	12:29/0.57	
18-May	Fri	00:45/0.71	07:33/-0.07	13:22/0.56	
19-May	Sat	01:36/0.68	08:23/-0.05	14:18/0.54	
20-May	Sun	02:30/0.64	09:13/-0.02	15:16/0.52	
21-May	Mon	03:26/0.60	10:04/0.01	16:14/0.50	
22-May	Tue	04:22/0.56	10:59/0.04	17:09/0.49	
23-May	Wed	05:16/0.53	11:56/0.07	18:03/0.49	
24-May	Thu		00:08/0.14	06:08/0.50	18:54/0.49
25-May	Fri		01:12/0.14	07:00/0.48	19:46/0.51
26-May	Sat		02:09/0.12	07:53/0.46	20:36/0.52
27-May	Sun		02:59/0.10	08:46/0.46	21:23/0.55
28-May	Mon		03:46/0.08	09:38/0.46	22:06/0.57
29-May	Tue		04:31/0.06	10:25/0.47	22:47/0.59
30-May	Wed		05:15/0.04	11:08/0.47	23:24/0.

SUFFOLK COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE WINS LONG ISLAND SOFTWARE & TECHNOLOGY AWARD (LISTNET)

Suffolk County Clerk Judith Pascale proudly accepted the 2007 Long Island Software Award at the Garden City Hotel in Garden City, New York.

"I am proud to accept this award on behalf of the 1.5 million residents of Suffolk County. The honor bestowed upon the Suffolk County Clerk's Office is not only validation of our hard work and vision, but is a testimonial to how government can now be seen as innovative, progressive and cost effective. In addition, it serves as a dramatic example of how successful implementation of information technology benefits our residents in a very real way," commented Suffolk County Clerk Judith Pascale.

The objective of LISTnet is to promote Long Island as one of the national centers of excellence for Software and Technology solutions. This is achieved by facilitating collaborations between companies, establishing forums and events for the exchange of information, improving the quantity of the labor force and partnering with companies that provide the High technology Centers necessary for the growth of L.I. software and technology companies

The Suffolk County Clerk's Office is responsible for warehousing massive amounts of original paper



(l to r) Nicholas Botes, Global Management Inc., Suffolk County Clerk, Judith Pascale, Thomas O'Brien, RGC Inc., Peter Schlussler, Director of IT Suffolk County Clerk's Office

records, real property records and court records, such as mortgages, deeds, judgments, etc. The digital solution implemented in the Clerk's Office enables over 35 million images of paper documents to be readily accessible and available to the public in a manner that is not only efficient but effective.

