

Collision Regulations General

Station 60 – Comox Valley
Crew Course



This is a video on collision regulations for RCM SAR Station 60.

Collision Regulations



In this video we will cover a number of general or over-riding issues. Other videos in the series will cover some specific issues.

- > The collision regulations are the result of international agreements.
- > For Canadian waters, these are implemented through the Canada Shipping Act.

Canadian Collision Regulations

- In legislation under the Canada Shipping Act
 - https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/c.r.c.,_c._1416/FullText.html
 - Or Google search: Canadian collision regulations
- Canada Shipping Act legislation has additional material:
 - Definitions: e.g., 'give-way vessel', 'traffic lane', 'trawling'
 - Legal justification for "Search and Rescue" protocols
- "Inland Rules" are for US only, e.g., on the Mississippi River (not for Canadian waters)
- There are Canadian modifications to COLREGS
- Notices to Mariners and Navigation Warnings (formerly Notices to Shipping)



The Act includes some additional material that applies only for Canadian waters. This includes additional definitions and the protocols for SAR.

> You may see the term "Inland Rules" from time to time. These are rules only for inland waters of the United States, like the Mississippi River.

> There are several Canadian modifications to the COLREGS. Some set rules on the Great Lakes that are compatible with the US "Inland Rules".

> Mariners should be aware of Notices to Mariners and Navigation Warnings (covered later in the video).

General Points

- Every vessel has a responsibility to avoid collisions
- If every vessel follows the rules, there cannot be a collision
- Even if these rules require another vessel to keep out of your way, you must be ready to take action yourself
- If you are in a collision, you will always be partly to blame
- “Rule 2” There is no right of way – Everyone is responsible for avoiding a collision
- COLREGS never use the term “Right of Way”



First some general points.

> Every vessel must act to avoid a collision. And, if everyone abides by the rules, there can be no collision.

> Even if one vessel fails to abide by the rules, the other vessel must act to avoid a collision... even if it would normally be allowed to proceed.

> There is no "right of way" granted by the rules. No one may proceed without acting to avoid collision. If a collision were to occur, you cannot be absolved by claiming "I only followed the rules". Rule 2 says you would still be at least partly to blame.

General Points

- All actions must be clear, in good time, and significant enough so other vessels will understand your intentions
- Generally alterations of course are more obvious than alterations of speed, but never hesitate to slow down to give yourself thinking time or more room
- But it may be wrong to “Stop the boat!” in some conditions: “Stand-on Vessel” maintains course and speed



Every vessel should respond to the apparent intentions of other vessels. To make those unambiguous to others, actions should be clear, implemented in time for others to react, and significant enough that other vessels can interpret them correctly.

> On the water, it is easier to see changes of heading, than speed. So it is usually best to steer to port or starboard to show others of your intentions.

> Consider stopping the boat to avoid trouble. But be aware there are times when the COLREGS require that you maintain course and speed.

Night Vision

- At night keep lighting within your own vessel to a minimum; it preserves your night vision
- Use dimmed red lights for reading when possible
- Use spotlights only where it is vital to pick up an unlit object (mooring buoys for instance or searching for MOB)
- Spotlights may be used to illuminate a tow or tow line (since we do not use yellow tow lights)
- Respect other mariners' night vision



It is generally harder be situationally aware at night than during the day. So, many of the examples we will use in the videos will be of nighttime conditions.

> To ensure that others can more clearly see what is happening at night, use "light discipline": keep lighting to the minimum, in particular use red lighting for reading or using navigation displays.

> Avoid shining spotlights when and where they are not needed. Of course, you may need them to find aids to navigation or a man overboard - MOB.

> Develop a habit of respecting the night vision of others.

Extra Care at Night

- Many navigation aids are unlit, and there are many other potential hazards, so keep your speed down. See Rule 6 “Safe speed”
- Get to know what your surroundings and landmarks look like at night: lights for navigation, lights that might be misidentified, towers with safety red lighting, known obstructions (floating fish farm pens)



Take extra care when on the water at night. Things will look a lot different than in daytime.

- > Get to know what our area of responsibility looks like at night. Apart from the aids to navigation that are lit, there are others that are not. And there are many other lights that might be confused with those navigation lights.
- > Be aware of the many hazards you could encounter. And, as required by Rule 6 of the COLREGS, always maintain a safe speed.

RCM-SAR Requirements

RCM-SAR requires that at all times:

1. Radar, if available, is to be in use to improve safety (as required by COLREGS!)
2. Appropriate navigation lights are to be displayed
3. Other lighting is to be kept to a minimum
4. If in doubt: stop, assess, plan (SAP)



Both RCM SAR procedures and the COLREGS require you to use radar when it is available. That's under Rule 5 on "Look Out". RCM SAR also requires the use of your boat's navigation lights, while keeping other lighting to a minimum.

> RCM SAR emphasizes that, if you are in doubt about the situation, STOP ACCESS PLAN.

Rule 2

- “Nothing in these Rules shall exonerate any vessel...”
- Actions must still conform to “the ordinary practice of seamen” (good seamanship is expected from all mariners)
- There could be conditions “which may make a departure from these Rules necessary to avoid immediate danger”



Let's return to Rule 2. The one that indicates that you will NOT be exonerated of responsibility for a collision by claiming "I only followed the rules"... and that no one is ever granted a RIGHT of way.

> Mariners are still expected to follow "the ordinary practice of seamen" and to use common sense. Good mariners are expected to understand they must depart from the COLREGS if it is the ONLY way to avoid a collision.

> Generally that is when there is no action by the other vessel that will avoid a collision, so YOU must act.

Section I – Rule 3

- Some definitions in COLREGS
- Vessel – every type of water craft capable of or a means of transportation on the water
- Power Driven – propelled by machinery
- Sailing Vessel – propelled by sail
- Underway – not at anchor, or made fast to the shore, or aground
- Making Way – a vessel moving through the water
- Restricted Visibility – restricted by fog, mist, heavy rainstorms, snow, hail, sandstorms or similar causes (no specific numbers, use judgement)



Rule 3 of the COLREGS has a number of definitions. Some are shown here, but you should be familiar with them all since they help interpret the rules.

> Some may seem illogical. If you are in a small boat and throw lines into the water to catch some salmon, you are not "engaged in fishing" in terms of the COLREGS -- that is for vessels fishing is a way that they are substantially less manoeuvrable.

> And a sailboat running on its diesel engine with the mainsail flapping is NOT a sailing vessel; it is a power-driven vessel until the diesel is no longer used for propulsion.

Some Canadian definitions

- *direction of traffic flow* means the direction for traffic on a route that is indicated by arrows on a reference chart
- *give-way vessel* means a vessel that is required by these regulations to keep out of the way of another vessel
- *separation zone* or *separation line* means a zone or line separating routes in which vessels are proceeding in opposite or nearly opposite directions or separating a route from the adjacent inshore traffic zone
- *traffic lane* means a route within which there is one direction of traffic flow
- *traffic separation scheme* means a routing measure that provides for the separation of opposing streams of traffic by appropriate means and by the establishment of traffic lanes
- *trawling* means fishing by dragging through the water a dredge net or other fishing apparatus
- For the purposes of these Regulations, every reference to "vessel" shall ... include a reference to a seaplane when it is on or over the water.



There are a number of definitions that need to be considered in addition to those under Rule 3. Many of them are shown here and are related to vessel separation schemes.

- > Parts of the COLREGS distinguish between vessels engaged in fishing by trawling and by other means, so trawling is defined for clarification.
- > Also in Canadian applications the term "vessel" is to include a seaplane when on or over the water (left ambiguous in the international version of the COLREGS).

Notices to Mariners and Navigation Warnings

- Every vessel shall navigate with particular caution where navigation may be difficult or hazardous and, for that purpose, shall comply with any instructions and directions contained in *Notices to Mariners* or *Navigation Warnings* (formerly *Notices to Shipping*) that are issued as a result of circumstances such as
 - (a) unusual maritime conditions;
 - (b) the undertaking of marine or engineering works;
 - (c) casualties to a vessel or aid to navigation; or
 - (d) changes to hydrographic information.
- *Notices to Mariners* are issued monthly and annually
- *Navigation Warnings* (NAVWARNS) are urgent and issued as required



Apart from the Canada Shipping Act, other federal legislation, the COLREGS, other international agreements, and assorted rules and regulations, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans issues Notices to Mariners monthly and annually.

> More urgent information is in the form of Navigation Warnings (formerly Notices to Shipping). For us, these are broadcast by Victoria Coast Guard Radio along with weather broadcasts for our area.

> Check regularly on Notices to Mariners, and listen to appropriate radio broadcasts for NAVWARNS. They can also be found on the Internet.

Rule 17 – Stand-on Vessel

- “Where one of two vessels is to keep out of the way, the other shall keep her course and speed.”
- The vessel that is required to maintain course and speed is known as the stand-on vessel
- Note: the stand-on vessel DOES NOT have any RIGHT of way because, if collision is imminent, she “shall take such action as will best aid to avoid collision”



One matter that may need clarification is the role of the "stand-on vessel". The COLREGS specify that the "give-way vessel" MUST keep out of the way of the other vessel -- for example, a power-driven vessel must keep clear of a sailing vessel.

> The vessel that does not have to give way, is the stand-on vessel, and it must still assume some responsibilities: specifically to maintain course and speed. It has no RIGHT of way to do as it pleases.

> Back to Rule 2: the stand-on vessel must still take action (even a departure from the COLREGS) to avoid collision in and only in extreme situations.

Rule 18 – Responsibilities between Vessels

Except where Rules 9 (“Narrow Channel”), 10 (“Traffic Schemes”) and 13 (“Overtaking”) otherwise require:

(a) A power-driven vessel underway shall keep out of the way of:

- (i) a vessel not under command,
- (ii) a vessel restricted in her ability to manoeuvre,
- (iii) a vessel engaged in fishing,
- (iv) a sailing vessel.

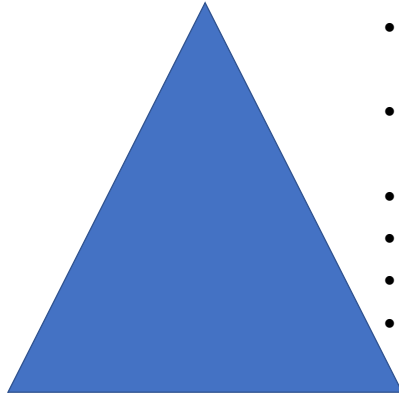


One other rule that dominates many other COLREGS is Rule 18. Look at it first from the perspective of a power-driven vessel... since for RCM SAR operations, that will be the case for your boat.

> Rule 18 requires a power-driven vessel to keep clear of most other types. For example, you must keep clear of a sailing vessel when they are crossing in front, whether from port or starboard. Same for a vessel engaged in fishing.

> The principle around Rule 18 is that more manoeuvrable vessels should give way to less manoeuvrable boats.

Rule 18 “Pyramid of Privilege”



- Vessels not under command
- Vessels restricted in their ability to manoeuvre
- Vessel engaged in fishing
- Sailing vessels
- Power-driven vessels
- Seaplanes (when on the water)



Here we see what I call the "PYRAMID OF PRIVILEGE". If your type is high in the pyramid you don't have to give way to much. Types low on the list, must give way to most other types.

> Seaplanes are anomalous: though limited in manoeuvreability, they must give way to all others. Presumably this is because they on the water only briefly and have a choice to be there or not.

> There are times when the pyramid does not apply, the rule on traffic schemes (Rule 10) overrides the pyramid, and any vessel overtaking another (Rule 13) is always the give-way vessel.

Questions?
Comments?



That concludes this video. If you have questions or comments on this video or any other material, please let us know.