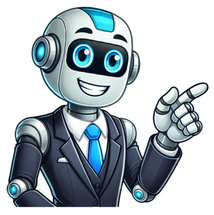
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Rules of the road

The COLREGs, or International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, is an international treaty published by the IMO to govern navigation rules and prevent collisions between ships. It's like having a set of "traffic laws" for the sea! The COLREGs were created from a multilateral treaty signed in 1960 and are now followed by over 160 countries.They outline specific rules for safe navigation, including who has right-of-way, how to use lights and shapes to avoid collisions, and what to do when encountering other vessels or obstacles. The COLREGs also cover more complex scenarios like anchoring, dredging, and towing operations.Interestingly, the COLREGs don't apply directly to inland waterways, but countries are encouraged to adopt similar rules for their own internal waters. This is where local regulations come in each country gets to decide how its own vessels should navigate, as long as they align with the international standards set out by the COLREGs.The 41 Rules and four annexes of the COLREGs provide a comprehensive framework for safe navigation. Rule 1 sets the stage by stating that the COLREGs should be applied universally in other words, everyone on the high seas is expected to follow these rules to avoid accidents!The Colregs (Collision Regulations) consist of ten rules that govern vessel behavior on the high seas. Rule 2 emphasizes responsibility, allowing masters to deviate from rules in emergency situations, while exercising good seamanship. Rule 3 defines key terms like "power-driven vessels" and "vessel restricted in her ability to manoeuvre". Rules 4 and 6 stress safe speed and lookout, considering circumstances such as visibility and traffic. Rules 7 and 8 focus on risk of collision and action to avoid it, requiring vessels to use all means available, including marine radar. Rule 9 addresses narrow channels, dictating that smaller vessels yield to larger ones and prohibiting anchoring unless necessary. Finally, Rule 10 concerns Traffic Separation Schemes (TSS), aiming to ensure safe navigation by separating vessel traffic.Follow designated traffic lanes and stay within defined paths to ensure safe navigation.TSS lanes are depicted on charts and can be monitored for accurate positioning, enabling ships to chart their course within the system.Additionally, TSS zones separate vessels into restricted areas, while inshore-traffic zones require adherence to specific rules.Certain vessel types, such as small fishing boats and vessels under 20m in length, must give priority to larger or other vessels to avoid impeding safe passage.Rule 11 outlines procedures for interacting with other sailing vessels when meeting, taking into account wind direction to ensure safe passing.When vessels have the wind on opposite sides, the vessel with the port side wind should yield to the other.In situations where both vessels have the same wind direction, the vessel to leeward must keep out of the way of the vessel to windward.If unsure about the wind direction, a vessel with the port side wind should prioritize avoiding collision and taking action accordingly.Rule 13 governs overtaking situations between different vessels, requiring them to maintain clearance from each other at all times.For sailing vessels, Rule 13 takes precedence over Rules 12 and 18, emphasizing the importance of safe overtaking practices.Rule 14 requires power-driven vessels meeting head-on to alter course to starboard and pass 'port to port' to avoid collision.This rule assigns equal responsibility to both vessels involved in a potential collision.Rule 15 addresses actions for vessels in crossing situations, requiring the vessel with another on their starboard side to yield and give way under Rule 17.The stand-on vessel is responsible for maintaining their course and speed, but may take evasive action if necessary.Rule 16 dictates that the give-way vessel must take early and substantial action to maintain a safe distance from the other vessel.Rule 17 requires the stand-on vessel to follow their original course and speed, while also being prepared to take action in case of uncertainty.The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS) set forth rules and guidelines for vessel operations to minimize collisions and ensure safe navigation. Rule 18 establishes an order of priority between vessels, with power-driven vessels required to keep clear of other vessels, including sailing and fishing vessels, unless they are subject to restrictions such as being not under command or constrained by draft. Rule 19 addresses collision avoidance in restricted visibility conditions, requiring vessels to proceed at a safe speed and take action to avoid collisions.The regulations also cover vessel shapes, lighting requirements, and equipment for sound signals. Vessels must meet specific visibility ranges for their lights, with longer vessels requiring more visible distance. Additionally, rules govern towing, pushing, sailing, fishing, and maneuvering in restricted areas.The COLREGS also include provisions for exemptions, verification of compliance, and technical details for lighting, sound signals, and distress signals. Annexes I-IV provide further guidance on specific topics such as positioning, technical details, addition signals for fishing vessels, and distress signals.Overall, the COLREGS aim to promote safe navigation and prevent collisions between vessels, ensuring the protection of life and property at sea.Prior to the establishment of universal maritime regulations, various nations had their own methods of signaling ships at night. For instance, the "N.C." flag signal with red lights and an orange smoke signal were commonly used, alongside morse code's "SOS" distress signal. However, these practices led to inconsistencies in navigation lighting, resulting in a higher risk of unintended collisions between vessels.[41] In particular, sailing ships often failed to display proper navigation lights, adding to the confusion. The advent of steam-powered vessels in the 19th century necessitated the development of additional guidelines for power-driven ship navigation. Unlike sailboats, which are limited by their inability to sail directly into the wind, steamships can maneuver freely in all directions.[42] The Trinity House rules, enacted by Parliament in 1846 and included in the Steam Navigation Act, marked a significant step towards standardizing maritime regulations. By 1864, over thirty countries had adopted these international guidelines, with the US implementing its own version as "Rules to prevent Collisions at Sea." Further refinements were made in the subsequent decades through legislation and government initiatives by prominent nations like the UK and US.[43]By 1880, the 1863 international articles had been enhanced with whistle signals, and in 1884, new global regulations were put into effect. The United States hosted the first international maritime conference in Washington, D.C. in 1889 to further establish international collision rules, including requirements for lighting and shapes. These rules were adopted in 1890 and took effect in 1897, with minor adjustments made during the 1910 Brussels Maritime Conference. Some proposed changes were not ratified at the 1929 International Conference on Safety of Life at Sea. However, by 1935, all maritime nations had informally agreed to reference the direction of a turn by the rudder instead of the helm or tiller. The 1948 S.O.L.A.S. conference made several recommendations, including recognizing radar, which were eventually ratified in 1952 and took effect in 1954. Further recommendations were made at the 1960 SOLAS Conference in London, which became effective in 1965. The International Maritime Organization adopted the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea as a convention on October 20, 1972, which entered into force on July 15, 1977. These regulations aimed to update and replace the 1960 Collision Regulations, particularly with regard to Traffic Separation Schemes. As of June 2013, 155 states, representing 98.7% of the world's merchant fleets' tonnage, had ratified the convention. The international regulations have undergone several amendments since their adoption, including changes to rules regarding dredging or surveying in traffic separation schemes, vessels of special construction, and the positioning of lights on vessels. In 2001, new rules were added for wing-in-ground-effect craft, and in 2007, the text of Annex IV was rewritten. The 2013 amendments added a new part F to the convention, allowing the Organization to verify compliance with the provisions under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme. Each member country must adopt the COLREG laws within their jurisdiction and designate an authority to oversee their implementation.Vessels under national jurisdiction must comply with the COLREG convention's provisions as implemented by individual governing bodies through legislation and national navigation laws. These regulations are responsible for implementation and enforcement on ships within their legal authority. Administrations can also enact modifications to vessels in waters under their jurisdiction, provided they align with the COLREGs.When a situation arises where avoiding collision by the actions of one vessel alone is no longer possible, vessels must take steps to avoid colliding with each other.For example, two power-driven vessels approaching head-to-head are both considered "give way" and must alter their course to avoid collisions. Neither vessel has the right of way in such a situation.In recent years, the IMO, States, and other interested parties have assessed the COLREGs with the goal of future amendment to facilitate Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships. This includes reviewing the applicability of the COLREGs for autonomous ships.The Racing Rules of Sailing, which govern yacht and dinghy racing, are based on the COLREGs but differ in certain matters, such as overtaking and right of way near turning marks in competitive sailing.This text appears to be a collection of references and citations related to maritime law, specifically the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS). The sources listed include books, articles, and court decisions that provide insight into various aspects of COLREGS, including collision avoidance rules, navigation lights, and lookout duties.Reports in Law and Equity, volume 2, page 564. Additionally, there are references to judicial decisions, international maritime regulations, and national laws related to preventing collisions at sea.Judicial decisions include Newton v. Stebbins (51 U.S. 586) from December 1850, as well as cases decided by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in July 1854.International maritime regulations mentioned include the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS).August 2012. Retrieved 26 March 2017.USCG Amalgamated Navigation Rules International & U.S. Inland (21 May 2020). Retrieved 22 September 2024.Understanding COLREGS (Royal Yachting Association). Archived from the original on 19 August 2018. Retrieved 18 August 2018.COLREGS Rule 2 - Responsibility (PDF) (Archived from the original on 8 April 2017).COLREGS Rule 17 - Action by Stand-On Vessel (PDF) (Archived from the original on 12 July 2017).COLREGS Rule 14 - Head-on Situation (PDF) (Archived from the original on 8 April 2017).Stpie, Barbara (2 April 2024). Towards a New Horizon: 1972 COLREG in the Era of Autonomous Ships. Ocean Development & International Law. 55 (12): 170184. doi:10.1080/00908320.2024.2359908.The Collision Regulations and Autonomous Shipping. Norton Rose Fulbright. 18 September 2024. Retrieved 22 September 2024.Autonomous Cargo Ships and New Collision Regulations. MarineLink. Retrieved 22 September 2024.Autonomous shipping. International Maritime Organization. Retrieved 22 September 2024.Elvstrom, Paul; Krause, Soren (5 January 2021). Elvstrm Explains the Racing Rules. Bloomsbury Publishing. ISBN 978-1-4729-8059-5.When vessels are approaching each other with the wind free or sailing before or with the wind, the vessel that is close-hauled must yield to the one that has the power of readily controlling its movements. If both vessels have the wind free and are approaching each other, the one on the larboard tack should give way, and they should pass each other to the right.The same rule applies when vessels are sailing on the wind and approaching each other, with some uncertainty about which vessel is to windward. In such cases, the vessel on the starboard tack should give way if it can do so with greater facility and less loss of time and distance than the other.When vessels are crossing each other in opposite directions and there is some doubt about their course, the vessel on the starboard tack should persevere in its course, while the one on the larborAs a steamer travels through waters, it's crucial to consider the rate at which it's moving. If its speed poses a danger to other vessels that could have been seen or avoided, it's reasonable to expect the steamer to slow down or come to a halt to prevent harm. While steamboats may be designed for rapid travel, the law doesn't justify such speeds if they put others' lives and property at risk. In fact, the threat of collision serves as a sufficient warning for sailing vessels to exercise caution and vigilance. Rule 21 emphasizes the importance of slowing down or stopping when approaching another vessel that poses a risk of collision, especially in foggy conditions.Approximately 200 such systems exist worldwide. The COLREG consists of 41 rules, divided into six parts: Part A - General; Part B - Steering and Sailing; Part C - Lights and Shapes; Part D - Sound and Light signals; Part E - Exemptions; and Part F - Verification of compliance with the Convention's provisions. Four annexes provide technical requirements for lights and shapes, sound signaling appliances, additional signals for fishing vessels operating in close proximity, and international distress signals. Part A (Rules 1-3) applies to all vessels on the high seas and connected waters, emphasizing the responsibility of masters, owners, and crews to comply with the rules. Rule 3 includes definitions. Part B (Rules 4-19) covers steering and sailing, including conduct in various visibility conditions. Rule 5 requires maintaining a proper lookout by sight, hearing, and available means to assess situations and collision risks. Rule 6 emphasizes safe speed, considering factors such as radar-equipped vessels. Rule 7 warns against making assumptions based on limited information, especially from radar. Rule 8 outlines actions to avoid collisions, while Rule 9 obliges vessels to keep to the starboard side of narrow channels or fairways, avoiding impediments to other vessels' passage. An amendment to Rule 8 in 1987 added a paragraph emphasizing early action to allow safe passage for other vessels. Rule 10 addresses vessel behavior in or near traffic separation schemes adopted by the Organization, with SOLAS regulation V/8 recognizing IMO as the competent authority.Ship routing measures were implemented to enhance safety on the high seas. A notable example is the International Association of Institutes of Navigation's (IAIN) study conducted in 1981, which found that traffic separation schemes significantly reduced collisions in the Strait of Dover between 1956 and 1960. The number of collisions decreased from 60 to 16 over a period of twenty years following the introduction of these schemes. Conversely, areas without such schemes saw an increase in collisions.The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) has been granted authority to introduce and amend traffic separation schemes as needed. This enables swift adaptation to changing traffic conditions. The rules emphasize that ships must cross traffic lanes at right angles to avoid confusion with other vessels. Fishing vessels are required to yield to passing vessels but may continue fishing operations.In 1981, regulations were updated to include exemptions for vessels restricted in their maneuverability while engaged in safety operations within traffic separation schemes or cable laying. Subsequent amendments in 1987 clarified that Rule 10 applies only to Organization-adopted schemes and does not absolve any vessel of its obligations under other rules.Section II deals with the conduct of vessels in sight of one another, outlining specific rules for navigating scenarios such as overtaking, head-on situations, crossing, and responsibilities between vessels. The section emphasizes the importance of taking action to avoid collisions when necessary.Vessels must navigate at a safe speed that takes into account current conditions and limited visibility. When a vessel detects another using radar, it should assess the risk of collision and take evasive action if necessary. If a vessel hears the fog signal of another, it should reduce its speed to the bare minimum.The rules regarding lights and shapes are outlined in Part C, which includes Rules 20-31. Specifically, Rule 20 states that these regulations apply from sunset to sunrise, while Rule 21 provides definitions. The visibility of lights is addressed in Rule 22, with requirements varying based on vessel type. Power-driven vessels must adhere to the lighting rules outlined in Rule 23, and those towing or pushing other vessels have specific requirements under Rule 24.Sailing vessels, as well as those under oars, are subject to the regulations outlined in Rule 25. Fishing vessels have their own set of rules regarding lights, as specified in Rule 26. Vessels not under command, restricted in their ability to maneuver, or constrained by draft must also follow specific lighting requirements, as detailed in Rules 27 and 28. Pilot vessels, those anchored or aground, and seaplanes are all subject to unique lighting regulations.Part D covers sound and light signals, with Rule 32 defining key terms like whistle, short blast, and prolonged blast. Vessels over 12 meters in length must carry a whistle and bell, while those over 100 meters must also have a gong, as per Rule 33. Manoeuvring and warning signals are addressed in Rule 34, with specific sound signals for use in restricted visibility outlined in Rule 35.Signals to attract attention are covered under Rule 36, and distress signals are detailed in Rule 37. Exemptions from certain requirements may apply to ships that comply with the 1960 Collision Regulations, as stated in Rule 38. The COLREG includes four annexes: Annex I on positioning and technical details of lights and shapes, Annex II on additional signals for fishing vessels, Annex III on technical details of sound signal appliances, and Annex IV on distress signals.The history of amendments to the COLREG is significant, with changes made in 1981, 1987, and 1993. These amendments have clarified rules, added new requirements, and updated technology standards to improve maritime safety. The most notable change concerns Rule 10, which now enables vessels to carry out various safety operations like dredging while ensuring the safety of all vessels involved.Given article text here The Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS) has undergone several amendments since its adoption in 1987. The amendments address various aspects of maritime navigation, including vessel types, lighting requirements, and sound signals.In 1989, the convention was amended to clarify rules related to vessels constrained by their draught and crossing traffic lanes. The 1993 amendments focused on the positioning of lights, particularly for Wing-in-Ground (WIG) craft. These changes aimed to enhance safety and reduce confusion in navigation.The 2001 amendments introduced new rules specifically addressing WIG craft, including requirements for lighting and sound signals. For instance, WIG craft must exhibit a high-intensity all-round flashing red light when taking off, landing, or in-flight near the surface. Additionally, seaplanes were included in the regulations, and equipment for sound signals was amended to cater for small vessels.The 2007 amendments updated Annex IV, which deals with distress signals. The changes expanded the range of signals that indicate distress and need for assistance, including rockets, shells, and radiotelephony messages. These updates aim to improve maritime safety by providing clearer guidelines for navigation and response to emergencies.A distress signal consists of a variety of means, including a square flag with a ball or ball-like object above or below it, flames on the vessel, and orange-coloured smoke giving off a signal. Additionally, slowly raising and lowering arms outstretched to each side is used. Other signals include digital selective calling (DSC) transmitted on specific frequencies, emergency position-indicating radio beacons, approved radiocommunications systems, and survival craft radar transponders.

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