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THE MARITIME LAW ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNITED STATES

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS FOR  
PREVENTING COLLISIONS AND MATTER CONCERNING  
COAST GUARD REGULATIONS**

Your Committee has considered carefully the desirability of recommending that legislation be adopted so that the new International Rules of the Road will be applicable to the inland waters of the United States to the maximum extent practicable. The Inland Rules, as they now read, were enacted many years ago and have not been brought up to date. Confusion has resulted in situations where navigators have not been certain where the line of demarcation is between the Inland and International Rules. Your Committee is of the opinion that this Association can and should recommend that this anachronistic and confusing state of the law be remedied.

The President of the United States, on September 24, 1963, signed the Bill giving him the power to proclaim the new International Rules as being embodied in United States law on the date when the Convention by its terms comes into effect. We understand that it is expected that the required number of acceptances will be deposited shortly and it therefore can be expected that the new International Rules will be in effect by the end of 1964. We recommend that the proposed new Inland Rules go into effect at the same time.

The United States Coast Guard is also considering the question of revising the Inland Rules, and your Committee has been in touch with the Chief of the Rules of the Road Branch, who has expressed interest in our proposals. If the Association approves it is the intention of your Committee that we continue to coordinate our activities with those of the Coast Guard in this respect.

At the meeting of the Association on May 1st, 1964 the Resolution printed below will be put forward. We invite your consideration of the Resolution so that there can be full discussion at the meeting. It is the opinion that the differences between our proposed Inland Rules and the new International Rules are helpful and necessary

because of the special situations obtaining in our Inland Rules. We do not recommend any further changes. It is assumed that each of you has access to the texts of the new International Rules as well as the present Inland Rules so that it is not necessary to reproduce them here.

RESOLVED that the Maritime Law Association of the United States, for the purpose of achieving uniformity and clarity urges that the present Inland Rules of the Road (33 U. S. Code 151-231) be abolished; and that there be substituted therefor on the date when they are officially proclaimed by the President of the United States, the new International Rules of the Road as adopted at the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, London, England, June 17, 1960, with the exception of the addition of Rules 5(e), 7(h), 28(c), 28(f), 30(b) and 32 as set forth below and alterations in Rules 1(a), 7(c), 15(c)(i), 15(c)(ii), 15(ix), 25(b), 28(a), 28(b), to read as set forth below, and the renumbering of Rules 28(c) and (d) to become 28(d) and (e) respectively.

### Part A — Preliminary and Definitions

*Rule 1(a).* These Rules shall be followed by all vessels and seaplanes upon the waters designated in Section (I) herein. Where, as a result of their special construction, it is not possible for seaplanes to comply fully with the provisions of Rules specifying the carrying of lights and shapes, these provisions shall be followed as closely as circumstances permit.

*Rule 5(e) [addition to the Rules], Lights for Ferryboats, Barges and Canal Boats in Tow.*

Ferryboats, barges and canal boats in tow shall carry lights in accordance with § 80.15 through § 80.17 of the Pilot Rules for Inland Waters which were promulgated under § 2 of this Act.

*Rule 7(c).* Power-driven vessels of less than 40 feet in length may carry the white light at a less height than 9 feet above the gunwale, but it shall be carried not less than 3 feet above the side lights or the combined lantern prescribed in § (a)(ii). Motorboats shall carry the lights prescribed in §§ 2 and 3 of the Act of April 25, 1940 (46 U. S. C. 526 a and b).

*Rule 7(h) [addition to the Rules].* Rafts or other water craft not herein provided for, navigating by hand power, horse power, or by the current of the river, shall carry one or more good white lights, which shall be placed in such manner as shall be prescribed by the Commandant of the Coast Guard.

*Rule 15(c)(i).* A power-driven vessel making way through the water shall sound at intervals of not more than one minute a prolonged blast.

*Rule 15(c)(ii).* A power-driven vessel underway, but making no way through the water, shall sound at intervals of not more than one minute two prolonged blasts, with an interval of about one second between them.

*Rule 15(ix).* A vessel of less than 40 feet in length, a rowing boat, raft, seaplane on the water, or other watercraft not herein provided for, shall sound a blast of the fog horn or make some other efficient sound signal at intervals of not more than one minute.

*Rule 25(b).* Whenever a power-driven vessel is nearing a bend in a channel where a vessel approaching from the other direction cannot be seen, such power-driven vessel, when she shall have arrived within one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) mile of the bend, shall give a signal by one prolonged blast on her whistle which signal shall be answered by a similar blast given by any approaching power-driven vessel that may be within hearing around the bend. Regardless of whether an approaching vessel on the farther side of the bend is heard, such bend shall be rounded with alertness and caution. When power-driven vessels are moved from their docks or berths and other vessels are liable to pass from any direction toward them, they shall give the same signal as in the case of vessels meeting at a bend, but immediately after clearing the berths so as to be fully in sight, they shall be governed by the steering and sailing rules.

*Rule 28(a).* When vessels are in sight of one another, a power-driven vessel under way shall, when meeting another in such a way so that each may pass safely on the port side of the other, sound one short blast of her whistle. When vessels are in sight of one another and approaching each other in such a way as to pass on the port side of the other in accordance with Rule 18(a) hereof, either vessel shall give as a signal of her intention, one short and distinct blast of her whistle, which the other vessel shall answer promptly

by a similar blast of her whistle, and thereupon such vessels shall pass on the port side of each other. If the courses of such vessels are so far on the starboard of each other as not to be considered as meeting head and head, either vessel shall immediately give two short and distinct blasts of her whistle, which the other vessel shall answer promptly by two similar blasts of her whistle, and they shall pass on the starboard side of each other.

When vessels are in sight of one another a power-driven vessel under way whose engines are going astern shall indicate that fact by three short blasts.

*Rule 28(b)*. If when power-driven vessels are approaching each other, either vessel fails to understand the course or intention of the other, from any cause, the vessel so in doubt shall immediately signify the same by giving at least five short and rapid blasts on the whistle. The giving of such a signal shall not relieve a vessel of her obligations under Rules 27 and 29, or any other Rule, or of her duty to indicate any action taken under these Rules by giving the appropriate sound signals laid down in this Rule.

*Rule 28(c) [addition to the Rules]*. When power-driven vessels are running in the same direction, and the vessel which is astern shall desire to pass on the right or starboard hand of the vessel ahead, she shall give one short blast of the whistle as a signal of such desire, and if the vessel ahead answers with one short blast, she shall direct her course to starboard; or if she shall desire to pass on the left or port side of a vessel ahead, she shall give two short blasts of the whistle as a signal of such desire, and if the vessel ahead answers with two blasts, shall direct her course to port, or if the vessel ahead does not think it safe for the vessel astern to attempt to pass at that point, she shall immediately signify the same by giving several short and rapid blasts of the steam whistle, not less than five, and under no circumstances shall the vessel astern attempt to pass the vessel ahead until such time as they have reached a point where it can be safely done, when said vessel ahead shall signify her willingness by blowing the proper signals. The vessel ahead shall in no case attempt to cross the bow or crowd upon the course of the passing vessel.

*Rule 28(f) [addition to the Rules]*. The whistle signals provided in this Rule for vessels meeting, passing, or overtaking, are

never to be used except when vessels are in sight of each other, and the course and position of each can be determined in the daytime by a sighting of the vessel itself or by night by seeing its signal lights. In fog, mist, falling snow or heavy rainstorms when vessels cannot see each other fog signals only must be given.

*Rule 30(b) [addition to the Rules].* The exhibition of any light on board of a vessel of war of the United States or a Coast Guard cutter may be suspended whenever, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Navy, commander of two or more vessels, or the commanding officer of a vessel acting singly, the special character of the service may require it.

*Rule 32 [addition to the Rules] orders to Helmsmen.* All orders to helmsmen shall be given as follows:

“Right rudder” to mean ‘Direct the vessel’s head to starboard.’

“Left rudder” to mean ‘Direct the vessel’s head to port.’

Respectfully submitted,

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EUGENE UNDERWOOD, *Chairman*

The majority of the Committee has approved the report as above. Mr. Warner Pyne has suggested revision of Rules 15(c)(i)(ii), 25(b) and 28(c). Mr. Richard H. Brown has suggested substantial revision of Rule 28(a) and (b) and, as have others, has suggested that consideration be given to eliminating the Pilot Rules and revision of Western River and Great Lakes Rules and State Navigation Statutes.

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