



FLORIDA MARINE PATROL
OFFICE OF WATERWAY MANAGEMENT

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KNOW AND OBSERVE THE BOATING "RULES OF THE ROAD"

RIGHT OF WAY

On the water, the stand-on (privileged) boat has the right-of-way. The give-way (burdened) boat must give way. At night, running lights provide information about size, direction, and speed of the other vessel.

A green light is on the starboard side of the boat; a red light on the port side. If you see a red light, stop or give way; that vessel is crossing from your right and has the right of way. Generally, if you see a green light, you are the stand-on vessel; maintain course and speed.

Always use common sense. This is especially important at night. The other boater may not know what the lights mean. Proceed slowly, with caution. If both boats obey the Navigation Rules, the maneuver is completed without danger and collision is avoided.

Note: Under Inland rules, signals are sounded for intention of movement. Under International rules, the signals are only given when the movement is being executed.

MANEUVERING

The following diagrams indicate the proper safe way to maneuver in several situations. These rules of the road are used on waters throughout the country. Learn them well.

When two motorboats are approaching at right angles or nearly so (Fig. 1), with risk of collision, the motorboat on the right is the stand-on vessel and must hold course and speed. The other boat, the give-way vessel, shall keep clear by directing its course to starboard (right) and passing astern of (behind) the stand-on vessel, or if necessary, by slowing, stopping, or reversing.

When meeting head-on, or nearly so (Fig. 2), either vessel shall signal its intention with one short blast which the other vessel shall answer promptly.

Each vessel shall then turn to its starboard (right) and pass with the other vessel on its port (left) side (Fig. 2A). When two powerboats are meeting head to head or nearly so, neither is the stand-on (privileged) vessel.

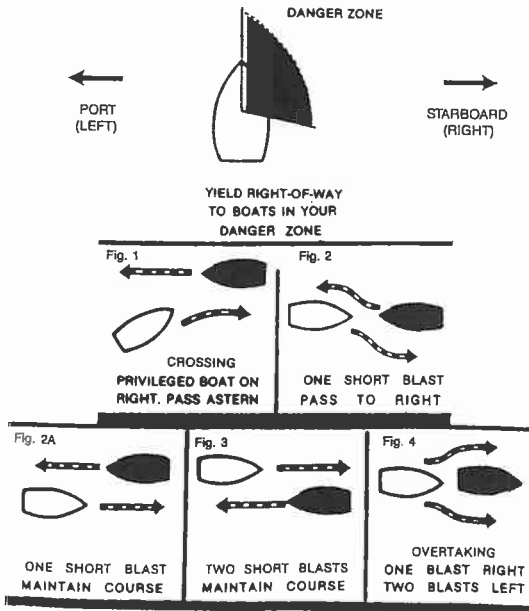
When a starboard to starboard passing situation is desired for convenience or safety (Fig. 3), either vessel shall signal two short blasts which the other vessel shall answer promptly with two short blasts, and each shall pass with the other vessel on its starboard.

At any time when there is danger of collision and conditions prevent immediate compliance by either vessel with the other vessel's signals, the danger signal shall be sounded, and both vessels shall be slowed or stopped, until signals for passing with safety are sounded and understood.

When two motorboats are running in the same direction and the vessel astern desires to pass (Fig. 4), it must give the sound signals indicated in the illustration.

A motorboat approaching another motorboat from the stern and overtaking it shall keep out of the way of the overtaken vessel. The vessel being overtaken shall hold its course and speed.

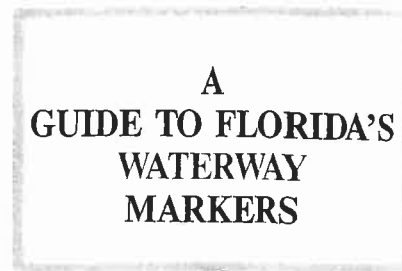
If the course ahead is not safe for passing, the stand-on (privileged) vessel shall indicate so by sounding five or more short, rapid blasts. This danger signal must be used on both Inland and International waters.



Returning From Sea*		Color	Number	Unlighted Buoy Shape	Light Color	Light Phase Characteristic	Daymark Shape
Right Side of Channel	Red	Even	Nun	Red or White	Fashing or Quick Fashing	Triangle	
Left Side of Channel	Green	Odd	Can	Green or White	Fashing or Quick Fashing	Square	
Channel Junction or Obstruction	Red and Green horizontally banded**	Not Numbered; may be lettered	Nun or Can**	Red, Green or White**	Interrupted Quick Fashing	Triangle or Square**	See diagrams above
Midchannel or Fairway	Black and White vertically striped	May be lettered	Nun or Can	White	Morse Code "A"	Octagonal	

*For entering a harbor from a larger body of water, such as a lake.
**preferred channel is indicated by color of uppermost band (shape of unlighted buoy), color of light, if any.

LATERAL SYSTEM IN U.S. AND CANADIAN WATERS



Provided for the Boater by the



MARINE PATROL

A GUIDE TO FLORIDA'S WATERWAY SIGNS AND MARKERS

SLOW SPEED MINIMUM WAKE and SLOW DOWN MINIMUM WAKE mean the same thing.

SLOW SPEED / MINIMUM WAKE requires that all vessels be completely off plane and fully settled into the water. The vessels may then proceed at a speed which is reasonable and prudent under the existing circumstances.

The purpose of this restriction is to regulate vessel speed, not the size of a vessel's wake.

How do I know if I am travelling at Slow Speed Minimum Wake?

If your vessel is operating on a plane (i.e., travels on the top of the water), you are not operating at slow speed minimum wake.

If your vessel is in process of coming off of plane and settling into water you are not operating at slow speed minimum wake.



If your vessel is travelling at such a speed that there is little or no wake and is completely settled into the water, you are travelling at Slow Speed Minimum Wake.



IDLE SPEED / NO WAKE is the most restrictive of vessel speed. This restriction prohibits the operation of vessels at any speed greater than that speed which is necessary to maintain steerage. An example of idle speed / no wake would be a car with an automatic transmission that is placed in "drive" but is given neither gas nor brake; the engine will "idle" and the car will creep forward at a very low speed.

Idle Speed / No Wake will vary from one vessel to another depending on the particular vessel's size, shape, power system, and steering configuration. It will also vary for any given vessel depending on that vessel's load, the wind direction and speed, and the sea conditions. Generally, however, it will be between 1 and 3 miles per hour for outboard and inboard/outdrive type vessels, and between 2 and 5 miles per hour for fixed shaft/rudder vessels.

Idle Speed / No Wake is usually reserved for areas with a high risk of collision and specific locations with high probability of damage or injury from vessel wake.

These areas include but are not limited to blind intersections, bridge fender systems, boat ramps, and fueling facilities.

How do I know if I am travelling at Idle Speed No Wake?

The speed which you dock your vessel is Idle Speed No Wake.



VESSEL WAKE is the movement of waves created by the motion of the vessel. It is the track or path that the vessel leaves behind it.

For vessel wake information in Broward County only, see below.

The maximum allowable wake created by any vessel, regardless of speed or size of vessel is 15" in vertical height, measured at least 25' from the vessel.

REGULATORY MARKERS

A vertical diamond shape of international orange with white center indicate **DANGER**. The type of danger will be indicated by words or well known abbreviations in block letters inside the diamond shape.



A vertical diamond shape of international orange with a cross of the same color within it against a white center without qualifying explanation shall indicate a zone from which all vessels are excluded. An explanation may be placed outside of the crossed area.



A circle of international orange with a white center will indicate a control or restriction. The type of the control or restriction will be indicated by words, numerals. Well known abbreviations may be inside the circle.



A rectangle or square shape of international orange with a white center will indicate information such as directions, distances and locations. The message shall be presented within a rectangle in black letters.



LATERAL BUOYS

The Lateral System employs a simple arrangement of shapes and colors to indicate the side on which a buoy should be passed when proceeding in a given direction. Please see the Table located on reverse for visual description of lateral buoy system.

In Florida and the United States when proceeding in a southerly direction along the Atlantic Coast, or in a northerly and westerly direction along the Gulf of Mexico, the red buoy will be on your right, green on left. This can be remembered as proceeding around the coastline of Florida in a clockwise direction.

DEFINITIONS

Green Buoy - marks the left (or port) side of a channel when entering from seaward, and must be passed by keeping the buoy on the left side.

Red Buoy - marks the right (or starboard) side of a channel, when entering from seaward, and must be passed by keeping the buoy on the right side.

Port Side - Left side of vessel when coming from seaward. Colors, Numbers, Lights and Reflectors shall be as follows: Color: Green; Number(s); Odd; Lights: Flashing Green; Reflector(s): Green.

Starboard Side - Right side of vessel when coming from seaward (red, right, returning). Colors, Numbers, Lights and Reflectors shall be as follows: Color: Red; Number(s): Even; Lights: Flashing Red; Reflector(s):

Buoy Shapes - (from seaward) **Port** buoys will be a rectangle green marker or a can type buoy. **Starboard** buoys will be a triangle red marker or can type buoy. Examples are displayed on the reverse of this brochure.