

## ***Prevention of Collision Regs for Kayakers***

The rationale for this text arose from the French maritime regulation requiring a résumé of the COLREGS to be available when navigating at sea.

This text will highlight some important aspects of the regulations that are pertinent to kayakers on the sea

The COLREGS, or The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 apply to **ALL** Vessels navigating on the sea, this is RULE 1 and **clearly includes Kayaks**.

There are 38 rules, and 4 annexes published by the International Maritime Organisation, they detail equipment to be carried, routines that must be followed, and action to be taken to prevent and avoid collision at sea.

A brief description of the RULES follows, and are enlarged where relevant for sea kayaking, (those marked \*).

At the end of the text an 'Aide memoire' is included

### **AN OVERVIEW of the rules**

RULE 1		Application and Scope of Rules
RULE 2	*	Introduces Responsibility of 'Master' to use judgement and experience, RULES cannot be used as an excuse
RULE 3		Definition of Vessel, classification of Vessels and of Conditions
RULE 4		Creates Sec1 and states "Rules 5 to 10 apply in any condition of visibility
RULE 5	*	Every Vessel must maintain proper lookout
RULE 6		Use of Safe speed
RULE 7		Determining if risk of collision exists, assess early
RULE 8	*	Action to Avoid Collision communicate your intention
RULE 9		Narrow channels and 'Rules of the road'
RULE 10	*	Traffic separation schemes TSS
RULE 11		Creates Sec 2 Conduct of Vessels Rules 11 to 18
RULE 12		Action between sailing Vessels
RULE 13		Overtaking
RULE 14		Head on situation
RULE 15		Crossing situations
RULE 16		Action by 'Give way vessel'
RULE 17		Action by 'Stand on' vessel
RULE 18		Responsibility between vessels
RULE 19		Sec 3 Conduct of Vessels in restricted visibility
RULE 20		APPLICATION OF Lights by Night / Poor Vis and Shapes by Day
RULE 21		Definitions of Lights
RULE 22		Visibility and range of lights
RULE 23		Application for power driven vessels

RULE 24		Lights for Towing and Pushing
RULE 25	*	Sailing and Vessels under Oars
RULE 26		Fishing vessels
RULE 27		Vessels not under command or restricted in movement
RULE 28		Vessels constrained by draught
RULE 29		Pilot Vessels
RULE 30		Anchored vessels and vessels aground
RULE 31		Seaplanes
RULE 32	*	Definitions Sound and Light signals
RULE 33		Equipment for sound signals
RULE 34	*	Maneuvering and warning signals
RULE 35	*	Sound signals in restricted visibility
RULE 36	*	Signals to attract attention
RULE 37	*	Distress signals
RULE 38		exemptions

## **RULES You MUST know**

**RULE 2** states you must take action to avoid collision, even if you are the ‘Stand on vessel’ (i.e. have right of way)

**RULE 5** Every vessel must keep a proper lookout by ***Sight and hearing***

**RULE 10 TSS** Kayaks should not use shipping lanes, use the inshore traffic zone. If you have to cross shipping lanes **you must** cross as near as practical to 90° (*consider announcing a ‘SECURITE’ alert via VHF (Slow moving vessel etc)*)

**RULES 11 to 18** defines ‘Right of Way’ but the reality is that kayaks at sea are not easy to identify on Radar or see, it is much safer to assume you have not been seen and avoid all other traffic, always be prepared to change course and make the change obvious (**RULE 8**) so if you are seen, your intentions are understood

**RULE 25** Give the requirement of lights for Kayaks (vessel under oars less than 7 meters)

***“A vessel under oars may exhibit the lights prescribed in this Rule for sailing vessels,***

*(i.e. In vessels of less than 12 metres in length: an all round white masthead light)*

***but if she does not, she shall have ready to hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent a collision.***

**RULE 32** Defines equipment for sound signals, but important that you have a good loud whistle at least for distress signals.

**Here's the important bit**

***The term "short blast" means a blast of about 1 second duration.***

***The term "long blast" means a blast of 4 to 6 seconds duration***

**RULE 34** Maneuvering and warning signals

<b>Signal</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
One short blast	I am altering my course to starboard
Two short blasts	I am altering my course to port
Three short blasts	I am operating astern propulsion
FIVE SHORT BLASTS	<b>Danger</b> I do not understand your intentions KEEP CLEAR

*These signals may also be supplemented with light signals flashed with flashes of 1 second separated by one second.*

### **Signals by Vessels overtaking**

Vessels overtaking on Port side signal, "Two long blasts + one Short blast"

Vessels overtaking on Starboard side "Two long blasts + Two Short blasts"

Vessel being overtaken acknowledges with

"One Long blast , one short blast, One long blast one short blast"

#### ***Please Note:***

***This rule is included to provide understanding of the sound signals and will allow you to predict Vessel movements and keep out of the way.  
if you use these signals on your paddling trips, you are likely to find yourself paddling alone !***

### **RULE 35 Sound signals in restricted visibility**

For vessels in restricted visibility, there are a number of sound signals that must be made depending on the type of vessel and situation.

A motor vessel under way 1 long blast at 2 minute intervals.

A vessel Stopped will sound 2 long blasts at 2 min Int.

A vessel not under command or rest. Manoev. 1 long 2 Short at 2 min Int.

A vessel fishing as above (not under command)

A towed vessel will sound immediately after the tower's sig, 1 long 3 short

For vessels Anchored and aground, Bells or Gongs will be used as the signal

***The important bit to know ....***

**A Vessel under 12 meters are not obliged to give the above signals, if she does not then she MUST make some other efficient sound signal at 2 min intervals**

### **RULE 36 Signals to attract attention**

This rule provides that any Sound or light signal can be used to attract the attention of another vessel as long as ***it cannot be confused with any other authorized signal, or Navigation aid.*** Strobe lights should be avoided.

If you need to attract attention as a kayaker (ie to prevent collision) Use of a white hand flare is recommended

### **RULE 37 DISTRESS SIGNALS**

Appendix iv of the rules list the Distress signals, those appropriate to Sea kayaking are listed below

***Continuous use of sound signal***

***Red Hand flares or Red Rockets/ Para Illums***

***Spoken word MayDay on Radio/ Telephone***

***Orange smoke***

***repeatedly raising/Lowering outstretched arms***

***Alert from EPIRB / PLB***

***Water Dye Marker***

This text and accompanying 'aide memoire' has been prepared from The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (COLREGS) They are not intended to replace those regulations, but are intended to assist Kayakers to understand their importance. In all cases of doubt where you are unsure of the intention of the rules, you must seek advice from a competent authority. The interpretation of these rules are those of the author and may not be correct.

***7 December 2011***

## ***COLREGS for Kayaking aide memoire***

**RULE 2** states **you must** take action to avoid collision in good time

**RULE 5** **Every vessel must** keep a proper lookout by ***Sight and hearing***

**RULE 8** Be prepared to change course and **make the change obvious**

**RULE 10** cross shipping lanes **at 90° and Stay Out !**

**RULES 11 to 18** **Assume you have not been seen and avoid all other traffic**

**RULE 25** At night Show one 'All round light' or have Torch to hand  
**NO NIGHT PADDLING ON FRENCH TIDAL WATERS**

**RULE 32** Maneuvering and warning signals

<b>Signal</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
One short blast	I am altering my course to starboard
Two short blasts	I am altering my course to port
Three short blasts	I am operating astern propulsion
<b>FIVE SHORT BLASTS</b>	<b>Danger I do not understand your intentions KEEP CLEAR</b>
2 long 1 short	Vessels overtaking on Port
2 long 2 short	Vessels overtaking Starboard
1 long 1 short 1 long 1 short	Acknowledgement re above

**RULE 35** In reduced visibility make an efficient sound signal every 2 minutes

**RULE 36** Use a White hand flare to attract attention, Do not use a strobe  
(Save the strobe for rescue situations)

**RULE 37** **Distress Signals**

***Continuous use of sound signal***

***Red Hand flares or Red Rockets/ Para Illums***

***Spoken word MayDay on Radio/ Telephone***

***Orange smoke***

***repeatedly raising/Lowering outstretched arms***

***Alert from EPIRB / PLB***

***Water Dye Marker***

In busy Waters, when crossing channels or shipping lanes **“KEEP TIGHT IN A GROUP”**

