

SOUND AND LIGHT SIGNALS



Condensed from ©U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Rules, (part D only) International – Inland: COMDTINST M16672.2D. Updated 2004*.

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Part D International/Inland Sound & Light Signals, Rules 32-37

IMPORTANT NOTE:
Under Rule 36, sound & light signals can be used together for restricted visibility.

KEY: horn only can use 360° light with the horn
360° light: International - white. Inland - white or yellow.
Visible 5nm. Visible 2nm. Sync light with horn

32 Definitions

- (a) whistle sound signaling blasts appliance (Annex III)
- (b) - short blast. 1 second duration
- (c) — prolonged blast 4-6 second duration

33 Equipment for Sound Signals

- (a) vessel > 39¹/₃ ft. shall have a whistle and bell (Annex III)
- (b) vessel < 39¹/₃ ft. shall have means of making efficient sound signal

34 Maneuvering and Warning Signals (international: vessels in sight.) (inland: vessels in sight; meeting/crossing within .5 nm.)

(a&b) <i>International</i>		<i>Inland</i>
- changing to STB (right)		- intend to go STB
- - changing to PORT (left)		- - intend to go PORT
no response needed from other vessel		if in agreement, second vessel gives same signal
		••••• if in doubt, 5 short, rapid blasts
- - - operating astern propulsion (international & inland)		
(c) <i>Overtaking – narrow channel/fairway</i>		
— — — intend to overtake to STB		- intend to overtake to STB
- - - - intend to overtake to PORT		- - intend to overtake to PORT
- - - - - if in agreement, second vessel gives this signal		if in agreement, second vessel returns same signal
(d) ••••• if in doubt, 5 short, rapid blasts (international & inland)		
(e) <i>Nearing bend / obscured</i>		
— if vessel has an obscured field of vision		— if vessel has an obscured field of vision
any approaching vessel returns same signal (both international & inland)		
(f) If whistles are 100+ meters apart, use only one for these signals		
(g)		— when power-driven vessel leaves dock/berth

35 Sound Signals in Restricted Visibility (international & inland)

In or near area of restricted visibility, day or night

- (a) — if under Power Making Way (every 2 min.)
- (b) — — if under Power Not Making Way (every 2 min.)
- (c) - - - every 2 minutes if:
 - NUC: Not Under Control (ex.: loss of steering)
 - RAM: Restricted Ability to Maneuver (ex.: dredging, cable laying, buoy tender)
 - CBD: Constrained by Draft (international only)
 - Sailing, Fishing using apparatus, Towing / Pushing
- - - - if Towed & Manned (every 2 min.) (immediately after signal made by towing vessel)
- Use (a) or (b) if pushing vessel / vessel being pushed are rigidly connected
- - - - At Anchor (in addition, may signal every 1 min. immediately after ringing of bell and/or gong) (gong for vessels >100 meters only)

36 Signal to Attract Attention (international & inland)

Signals not used elsewhere OR carefully direct searchlight beam toward danger

37 Distress Signals (international & inland)

- - - - - (S.O.S.); high intensity light flashing at 50 - 70/min. (inland only)
- continuous blast

*No endorsement by or association with U.S. Coast Guard is implied or stated. This is a summary of one section specific to sound & light. Entire manual available at www.navcen.uscg.gov/mww/navrules/navrules.htm.

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