

COLREGs Rule 19

Conduct of Vessels in Restricted Visibility



- (a) This Rule applies to vessels not in sight of one another when navigating in or near an area of restricted visibility.
- (b) Every vessel shall proceed at a safe speed adapted to the prevailing circumstances and conditions of restricted visibility. A power-driven vessel shall have her engines ready for immediate manoeuvre.
- (c) Every vessel shall have due regard to the prevailing circumstances and conditions of restricted visibility when complying with the Rules of Section I of this Part.
- (d) A vessel which detects by radar alone the presence of another vessel shall determine if a close quarters situation is developing and/or risk of collision exists. If so, she shall take avoiding action in ample time, provided that when such action consists of an alteration of course, so far as possible the following shall be avoided:
 - (i) an alteration of course to port for a vessel forward of the beam, other than for a vessel being overtaken;
 - (ii) an alteration of course towards a vessel abeam or abaft the beam.
- (e) Except where it has been determined that a risk of collision does not exist, every vessel which hears apparently forward of her beam the fog signal of another vessel, or which cannot avoid a close-quarters situation with another vessel forward of her beam, shall reduce her speed to the minimum at which she can be kept on her course. She shall necessary take all her way off and in any event navigate with extreme caution until danger of collision is over.

Restricted Visibility Changes Everything

Different rules apply in restricted visibility. Restricted visibility includes fog, mist, snow, heavy rain and sandstorms – any situation where you cannot see the other ship or its navigation lights.

There are no 'stand-on' or 'give-way' vessels in restricted visibility. Every vessel must take action and **every vessel must proceed at a safe speed** with its engines ready for immediate manoeuvre.

You must assess if your ship is getting close to another ship and/or if there is a risk of collision. In both cases you should:

- **Avoid altering to port** for a vessel forward of the beam, except for a vessel you are overtaking (Rule 19(d)(i)).
- **Avoid altering towards** any ship abeam or abaft the beam (Rule 19(d)(ii)).

You should also remember Rule 7 on risk of collision – there is a risk of collision if you are in any doubt.

And remember Rule 5 on look-out – you must always maintain a proper lookout by sight and hearing.

Summary

Always be prepared to give way to ships you cannot see.

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