

## COLREGs Rule 2

# Responsibility



- (a) Nothing in these Rules shall exonerate any vessel, or the owner, master or crew thereof, from the consequences of any neglect to comply with these Rules or of the neglect of any precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen, or by the special circumstances of the case.
- (b) In construing and complying with these Rules due regard shall be had to all dangers of navigation and collision and to any special circumstances, including the limitations of the vessels involved, which may make a departure from these Rules necessary to avoid immediate danger.

### It's Your Responsibility

Rule 2 is a vital rule that is often misunderstood.

It is different from the majority of the COLREGs because it does not tell you what to do or when to do it. Instead, Rule 2 highlights the fact that **you are responsible for your own actions**. You are the one who has to make the immediate decision on what to do in order to comply with the rules.

Your ship's safety management system may tell you when to call the master or what to do if visibility reduces, but it is Rule 2 that makes you responsible to your fellow crew and to the ships around you.

Your responsibility is not only to follow the COLREGs – you are also responsible for doing everything necessary to avoid the **risk of collision** and the dangers of navigation.

- Rule 2(a) requires you to follow both the rules and 'the ordinary practice of seamen'. This means that you must always use common sense.
- Rule 2(b) is often misunderstood so read it carefully. It only allows you to depart from the rules if that is the only way to avoid an immediate danger. But, in almost every situation, it is the proper application of the rules that will keep you out of that danger. Rule 2(b) is never a justification for not following the rules properly.

Rule 2 allows no excuses. It is written in old-fashioned language so please read it carefully and often to make sure that you understand it. Always ask yourself:

- How does Rule 2 apply to this situation?
- What does Rule 2 require me to do?

### Summary

It is always your responsibility to comply with COLREGs and avoid collisions.

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