

## So what is it all about?

There is a common misconception that sail has 'right of way' over power. Whilst this is not the case, frequently the vessel under power will be the give way vessel, zig zagging its way simply to avoid others along its course. Is it therefore surprising that after a while, the wide berth given to stand on vessels at the start of the trip begins to decrease and they instead take a 'bouncing' from the wash, disturbed by the noise and the speed?

RYA Sea Sense isn't just about reducing friction between power and sail, it applies between all the activities that take place on the coast in one way or another, and looks at whether one person's 'fun' is unnecessarily impinging on the enjoyment of another activity. Cruising versus racing is the obvious candidate in the sailing world. Less obvious however is the disturbance caused to a peaceful lunch by a PWC buzzing around, launched from the motor boat next door, or the wind surfers and kite surfers that change direction back onto your path, just after you've altered course to clear them.

Every sport feels that they should have priority on the waters. Who does have priority is defined by the COLREGs (the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea). If knowing and applying them spoils your fun, perhaps you are playing in the wrong place or maybe you need to look at them a little more closely to make sure that you fully understand them – after all they are there for your protection.

**So in a nutshell, the Sea Sense message aims to ensure that the many different forms of our sport using our coastal waters, do so in harmony with each other and in line with the rules and regulations (the COLREGs).**



**'Give and take' and consideration to fellow users of the sea is the core of the message**



Areas designated for swimming, should be avoided by all craft. Staying within these areas should keep a swimmer out of danger, but if you choose to swim outside these areas you need to think about how visible you are to other users of the waters.

The COLREGs require all craft to at all times maintain a proper lookout, proceed at a safe speed and take appropriate actions to avoid a collision.



### Look around & be aware

This is fundamental to safe boating, as is knowing the essence of all of the COLREGs. Every sailor knows that power should in general give way to sail, but as the stand on vessel the sailing boat is required to maintain its course and speed, unless it becomes apparent that the give way vessel is not taking appropriate action. Don't forget that if a sailing vessel is overtaking a powered craft the overtaking rule presides.



If you tack in to the path of a power boat, YOU, the sailing vessel are in the wrong, because you have not acted in the way required of the stand on vessel. Don't just presume that the approaching powerboat is going to realise that you are running out of water and need

to tack, do so in good time to prevent a close quarters situation (either with the shallows or with the motor boat) occurring. In narrow channels, a large motorboat or sailing yacht under auxiliary power, restricted to navigating within the channel may become the stand on vessel to a small manoeuvrable sailing dinghy which will then need to plan its tacks carefully to ensure it doesn't impede the passage of the larger boat.

### Look before you tack



Racing yachts, if forced to give way by a vessel that is not part of the race, rightly or wrongly adjust their course to the absolute minimum. They are used to passing other boats in very close proximity and will do just enough to miss you. Where possible, it is considerate to give way to people who are racing, and if you want to avoid a close quarters situation it may be prudent to do so. It is however not always a practical option and at the end of the day racing or not, racing yachts are not exempt from the COLREGs.

### Give Sea Room

Motor boats on the plane may not be generating a huge wash to bounce the boats they are passing around, but the noise, speed and its effect on the wind can be just as disruptive and on occasion frightening. Your exhilarating ride could cause injury on another boat, where they maybe pouring boiling water into cups down below. The effect of the wash will be worse on a calm day than when the sea state is already a factor.



### Watch your wash

Be aware of the effect that your speed and wash have on other craft then pass at what they will consider to be a safe distance and speed. Remember, an overtaking vessel is required to keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken.



Speed limits are set for a reason, it may be environmental, it may be safety or a combination of both.

### Cut your speed

# RYA SEA SENSE

They're fun but noisy, so when driving your PWC bear in mind that not everyone wants to share this noise. Vessels anchored having a quiet spot of lunch, won't appreciate a PWC using the boats as turning marks. Both the noise and their concern you may hit them will give cause for indignation.



## Be friendly - don't buzz

Your sail plan may make it apparent to other yachts that you are probably motor sailing, but the COLREGs state that you must raise your motoring cone. This is the recognised indicator – not a furled or flapping genoa – which tells other vessels how to apply the COLREGs. If the approaching vessel thinks you are sailing (because you are not showing a motoring cone) but you know you are under power and this makes you the give way vessel, the potential for a collision increases. The motoring cone and switching from your masthead tri-colour to port, starboard, stern and steaming lights should be as essential a part of motor sailing as starting the engine.

## Use your motoring cone when motor sailing

The COLREGs also stipulate the use of an anchor ball or anchor light to indicate your stationary status to others.



## Use your anchor ball & give anchored craft a wide berth

Think about your plans for the afternoon, before you pour the cold beer you fancy accompanying your lunch. Drinking makes you overconfident and more likely to take risks as well as reducing your ability to react. Boozing and driving don't mix whether the vehicle is a car or a boat. One drink too many could see you in a crash or taking a swim when you miss your footing at sea, in the marina on the way home from the pub or from the dinghy on the way back to the mooring and could also see you on the wrong side of the law. Have a nominated driver for the tender and make use of your lifejackets.



## Boozing and boating don't mix

Our request for consideration extends to when you are tied up. Noisy halyards, a lack of shore lines when rafted, crossing the cockpit instead of the foredeck when going ashore from rafted boats, dinghies floating tied to the back a boat, blocking the space you are trying to get into are all irritants which are easily fixed by a little thought. The next boat's occupants may be trying to get an early night in preparation for an early departure to catch the tide. The "wall" of a boat is thin, so think about the volume both of the music and voices.

The future is in your hands... our considerable freedom to use the sea could be threatened if we don't work together... it is down to all users of our coastal waters, raggies (sailors) and stinkpots (motor boaters), as each calls the other, racers, cruisers, pw riders, windsurfers, kite surfers, swimmers... everyone who shares the use of the coastal waters is in the same boat and needs to ...

## BE CONSIDERATE

The Sea Sense message comes from the RYA Cruising Department, which looks after the interest of the RYA members who participate in cruising activities, whether on coastal or inland waters, power or sail boats or alternative cruising sports such as Personal Watercraft.

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