

Type of light	Masthead light	Stern light	Sidelights	All round light	Shapes
Definition	A white light placed over the fore-and-aft centreline of the vessel showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 225° and so fixed as to show the light from right ahead to 22.5° abaft the beam on either side of the vessel.	A white light placed as nearly as practicable at the stern showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 135° and so fixed as to show the light 67.5° from right aft on each side of the vessel.	A green light on the starboard side and a red light on the port side each showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 112.5° and so fixed as to show the light from right ahead to 22.5° abaft the beam on its respective side. In the forward direction, sidelights as fitted on the vessel shall show the minimum required intensities (see Annex 1 - 8). The intensities shall be decreased to reach practical cut-off between 1° and 3° outside the prescribed sectors.	A light showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 360°.	A ball shall have a diameter of not less than 0.6m; a cone shall have a base diameter of not less than 0.6m and a height equal to its diameter; a cylinder shall have a diameter of at least 0.6m and a height of twice its diameter; a diamond shape shall consist of two cones with a common base. The vertical distance between shapes shall be at least 1.5m. In a vessel of less than 20m in length shapes of lesser dimensions but commensurate with the size of the vessels may be used and the distance apart may be correspondingly reduced.

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Power driven vessel underway <small>(any vessel, including sailing vessels, propelled by machinery, that is not at anchor, or made fast to the shore, or aground)</small>	50m or more	Minimum visibility range 6 miles Two masthead lights, the first forward, at a height above the hull of not less than 6m, and, if the breadth of the vessel exceeds 6m, then at a height above the hull not less than such breadth, so however that the light need not be placed at a greater height above the hull than 12m; the second masthead light shall be abaft of at least 4.5m vertically higher than the forward one. For details of the vertical spacing see Annex 1 2(b). The distance between the two masthead lights shall not be less than one half of the length of the vessel but need not be more than 100m. The forward light shall be placed not more than one quarter of the length of the vessel from the stem.	Minimum visibility range 3 miles Shall be exhibited by a power driven vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 3 miles May not be placed in front of the forward masthead light. They should be placed at or near the side of the vessel and shall be fitted with inboard screens painted matt black, so as to show the minimum required intensities.		
	less than 50m	Minimum visibility range 5 miles Position: forward of amidships, not less than 6m above the hull (uppermost continuous deck) or the breadth of the vessel whichever is greater. For details of the vertical spacing see Annex 1 2(b).	Minimum visibility range 2 miles Shall be exhibited by a power driven vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 2 miles Must not be more than 3/4 of the height of the masthead light and not so low as to be interfered with by deck lights. They may not be placed in front of the masthead light. They should be placed at or near the side of the vessel and shall be fitted with inboard screens painted matt black, so as to show the minimum required intensities. The intensities shall be decreased to reach practical cut-off between 1° and 3° outside the prescribed sectors.		
	less than 20m	Minimum visibility range 3 miles If not forwards of amidships then as far forward as is practicable and not less than 2.5m above the gunwhale.	Minimum visibility range 2 miles Shall be exhibited by a power driven vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 2 miles The sidelights may be combined in one lantern carried on the fore-and-aft centreline of the vessel and placed not less than 1m below the masthead light and for which external screens need not be fitted. If individual lanterns are selected they should be fitted with inboard matt black screens if this is necessary to meet the horizontal sectors requirements.		
	less than 12m	Minimum visibility range 2 miles The masthead light and sternlight may be combined in an all-round light. The masthead light or all-round light may be displaced from the fore-and-aft centreline of the vessel if centreline fitting is not practicable, provided that the sidelights are combined in one lantern which shall be carried on the fore-and-aft centreline of the vessel or located as nearly as practicable in the same fore-and-aft line as the masthead light or the all-round white light. The masthead light or all round white may be less than 2.5m above the gunwhale, but must be at least 1m higher than the side lights.	Minimum visibility range 2 miles	Minimum visibility range 1 mile Required as above		
	less than 7m and not exceeding 7 knots	The masthead light and sternlight may be combined in an all-round white, a light showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 360°.		Sidelights should be exhibited if practicable		

Sailing vessel of any size underway and being propelled by machinery	A vessel proceeding under sail when also being propelled by machinery (or a vessel equipped for sailing but not using the sails and being propelled by machinery alone) is classed as a power driving vessel and should display lights for a power driven vessel appropriate to its size. Although permitted for sailing vessels under way under 20m the side and stern lights combined in one lantern at or near the top of the mast (a tri-colour) may not be used when a sailing vessel is under power as the side lights must be positioned below the masthead light.	A vessel proceeding under sail when also being propelled by machinery shall exhibit forward where it can best be seen a conical shape apex downwards.
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Sailing vessel underway <small>(any vessel under sail provided that propelling machinery, if fitted, is not being used, that is not at anchor, or made fast to the shore, or aground)</small>	50m or more	Minimum visibility range 3 miles Shall be exhibited by a sailing vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 3 miles Shall be exhibited by a sailing vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 3 miles In addition to side and stern lights, a sailing vessel underway may exhibit at or near the top of the mast, where they can best be seen, two all-round lights in a vertical line, the upper being red and the lower green.	
	less than 50m	Minimum visibility range 2 miles Shall be exhibited by a sailing vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 2 miles Shall be exhibited by a sailing vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 2 miles In addition to side and stern lights, a sailing vessel underway may exhibit at or near the top of the mast, where they can best be seen, two all-round lights in a vertical line, the upper being red and the lower green.	
	less than 20m	Minimum visibility range 2 miles Shall be exhibited by a sailing vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 2 miles Shall be exhibited by a sailing vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 2 miles As above, but the all-round red over green light may not be exhibited if the side lights and stern light are combined in one lantern carried at or near the top of the mast.	
	less than 12m	Minimum visibility range 2 miles Shall be exhibited by a sailing vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 1 mile Shall be exhibited by a sailing vessel underway	Minimum visibility range 2 miles As above	
	less than 7m	should if practicable exhibit sidelights and a stern light (or a tri-colour), but if she does not shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.			

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Vessel at anchor	50m or more	A vessel at anchor does not exhibit a masthead light, side lights or a stern light		Minimum visibility range 3 miles A vessel at anchor shall exhibit where it can best be seen, in the fore part, an all-round white light and at or near the stern and at a lower level than the light in the fore part, and all-round white light. The forward anchor light shall be not less than 4.5m above the after one, which must be at a height not less than 6m above the hull. A vessel at anchor may and a vessel of 100m and more in length shall also use the available working or equivalent lights to illuminate her decks.	A vessel at anchor shall exhibit where it can best be seen, in the fore part one ball.
	less than 50m			Minimum visibility range 2 miles A vessel at anchor shall exhibit, where it can best be seen, an all-round white light	
	less than 7m			When at anchor not in or near a narrow channel, fairway or anchorage, or where other vessels normally navigate, is not required to exhibit the light or shape for a vessel at anchor.	

Rules concerning lights shall be complied with from sunset to sunrise. The Rules concerning shapes shall be complied with by day. The lights shall, if carried, also be exhibited from sunrise to sunset in restricted visibility and may be exhibited in all other circumstances when it is deemed necessary. Exemptions to the rules for vessels that were under construction prior to the rules coming into force are detailed in Part E

This summary does not deal with the colour specification and intensity of lights (including the intensity over the horizontal and vertical sectors). Colour specifications and intensity of lights are detailed in COLREGS ANNEX1 Paragraphs 7 and 8. This summary does not deal with the rules for vessels towing, fishing, not under command, restricted in their ability to manoeuvre, constrained by their draft or aground, air-cushion vessels when operating in non-displacement mode, pilot boats, WIG or seaplanes. All vessels 12m or more must have the ability to display lights and shapes if aground - two all-round red lights in a vertical line or three balls in a vertical line. All vessels 12m or more must have the ability to display lights and shapes for not under command, restricted in ability to manoeuvre, towing, will need 2 balls & a diamond

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