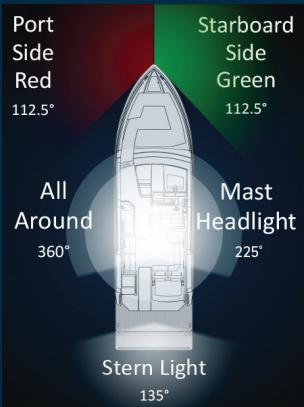


# GENERAL TOPICS

Marine navigation lights help to prevent accidents by indicating boat direction while operating at night and/or in low visibility.

- ▶ Navigation lights must be on from sunset to sunrise and during times of reduced visibility.
- ▶ A common configuration of navigation lights is one white masthead light, one red sidelight on the port side of the vessel, one green sidelight on the starboard side of the vessel and one white stern light.
- ▶ On vessels less than 40' in length, the masthead light and stern light can be replaced with one all-around white light.



- ▶ Using additional accent/decorative lighting aboard boats may cause confusion in some situations and has prompted the Coast Guard to publish Marine Safety Alerts on this topic. ([http://www.uscgboating.org/content/recalls\\_and\\_safety\\_defects.php](http://www.uscgboating.org/content/recalls_and_safety_defects.php))

To find out more information contact:

#### United States Coast Guard

Office of Auxiliary & Boating Safety  
Commandant (CG-BSX-2) Stop-7501  
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., S.E.  
Washington, DC 20593-7501  
[uscgboating.org](http://uscgboating.org)  
202.372.1062

#### National Marine Manufacturers Association

231 South LaSalle Street, Suite 2050  
Chicago, IL 60604  
[nmma.org](http://nmma.org)  
312.946.6200

#### American Boat & Yacht Council

613 Third Street, Suite 10  
Annapolis, MD 21403  
[abycinc.org](http://abycinc.org)  
410.990.4460

**NMMA**  
nmma.org

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# WHAT YOU SEE/ WHAT THEY SEE

Knowing the status of vessels in your vicinity allows you to take the appropriate action required by the Navigational Rules or “Rules of the Road”. It is important to know whether you are the “stand-on” or “give-way” vessel.

- ▶ See a red light—give way to the other vessel (you are the give-way vessel).
- ▶ See a green light—remain on course but stay vigilant (you are the stand-on vessel).
- ▶ See a white light—you may be approaching a rowboat, a vessel at anchor, or the stern of another boat (STEER CLEAR) (you are the give-away vessel).
- ▶ Nighttime operation is often a matter of reading subtle clues. Your own cockpit lights or reflections can compromise your night vision.
- ▶ Do not allow passengers, gear or stowed items to block your navigation lights.



## MAINTENANCE

When properly cared for, marine navigation lights clearly indicate your position and direction at night and in inclement weather. Following these **V.I.P.** steps will help keep your lights in safe and working condition:

- (V) Visual Maintenance**—Lights can be affected by corrosion or vibration. Inspect your navigation lights before each trip to ensure proper operation.
- (I) Illumination Intensity**—Marine navigation lights are designed to illuminate at a specific intensity. Always replace lights/bulbs with the exact same marine-grade specifications.
- (P) Professional Repair**—If you discover that your navigation lights need repair, take your boat to a marine professional who can perform the work properly. Assure that all replacement lights are USCG approved.

## SPECIAL PURPOSE LIGHTING

- ▶ You may encounter special purpose lighting on navigation aids, law enforcement boats, tow boats, and emergency service boats such as fire or search and rescue boats.
- ▶ Learn the different lights and shapes displayed on navigation aids and special purpose vessels.
- ▶ Docking lights are intended for close-quarter dock maneuvering only. Do not use as “headlights” as this can confuse other boaters.

## ILLEGAL USE OF LIGHTS

- ▶ Do not use extra or accent lights on your boat at night. These lights can confuse the operators of nearby boats.
- ▶ Do not use blue accent or underwater lights while underway. Blue is reserved for law enforcement. Use of these colors or lights may also be illegal in your state.

