

Quick Guide to current Sound and Light Signals

Condensed from the ©U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Rules, (part D only)
International – Inland: COMDTINST M16672.2D. Updated 2004*.

Part D - International / Inland

Sound and Light Signals, Rules 32 - 37

KEY: horn only can use 360° light with the horn
360° light: International - white. Inland - white or yellow.
Visible 5nm. Visible 2nm. Sync light with horn

32 Definitions

- (a) whistle sound signaling blasts appliance (Annex III)
- (b) - short blast. 1 second duration
- (c) — prolonged blast 4-6 second duration

33 Equipment for Sound Signals

- (a) vessel > 39 1/2 ft. shall have a whistle and bell (Annex III)
- (b) vessel < 39 1/2 ft. shall have means of making efficient sound signal

34 Maneuvering and Warning Signals (international: vessels in sight.) (inland: vessels in sight; meeting/crossing within .5 nm.)

<p>(a&b) International</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changing to STB (right) - - changing to PORT (left) no response needed from other vessel 		<p>Inland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - intend to go STB - - intend to go PORT if in agreement, second vessel gives same signal ••••• if in doubt, 5 short, rapid blasts
<p> - - - operating astern propulsion (international & inland)</p> <p>(c) Overtaking – narrow channel/fairway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - - - intend to overtake to STB - - - - intend to overtake to PORT - - - - if in agreement, second vessel gives this signal 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - intend to overtake to STB - - intend to overtake to PORT if in agreement, second vessel returns same signal
<p> ••••• if in doubt, 5 short, rapid blasts (international & inland)</p> <p>(e) Nearing bend / obscured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — if vessel has an obscured field of vision — if vessel has an obscured field of vision <p>any approaching vessel returns same signal (both international & inland)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — if vessel has an obscured field of vision
<p> (f) If whistles are 100+ meters apart, use only one for these signals</p> <p> (g)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — when power-driven vessel leaves dock/berth

35 Sound Signals in Restricted Visibility (international & inland)

In or near area of restricted visibility, day or night

- (a) — if under Power Making Way (every 2 min.)
- (b) — — if under Power Not Making Way (every 2 min.)
- (c) — - - every 2 minutes if:
 - NUC: Not Under Control (ex.: loss of steering)
 - RAM: Restricted Ability to Maneuver (ex.: dredging, cable laying, buoy tender)
 - CBD: Constrained by Draft (international only)
 - Sailing, Fishing using apparatus, Towing / Pushing
- - - - if Towed & Manned (every 2 min.) (immediately after signal made by towing vessel)
- Use (a) or (b) if pushing vessel / vessel being pushed are rigidly connected
- - - At Anchor (in addition, may signal every 1 min. immediately after ringing of bell and/or gong) (gong for vessels >100 meters only)

36 Signal to Attract Attention (international & inland)

Signals not used elsewhere OR carefully direct searchlight beam toward danger

37 Distress Signals (international & inland)

- - - - - (S.O.S.); high intensity light flashing at 50 - 70/min. (inland only)
- continuous blast

*Note: No endorsement by or association with the United States Coast Guard is implied or stated. This is a summary of one section specific to sound & light. Entire manual is available at the United States Coast Guard Navigation Center website: www.navcen.uscg.gov/mw/navrules/navrules.htm.
Provided free of charge as a navigation and/or education aid by Kimberlite Assemblers Inc., 113 N. Collington Ave., Baltimore, MD 21231.