



Advisory Note 04/2017
Supersedes 20/2007

CLOSE PROXIMITY MANOEUVRES & OVERTAKING SITUATIONS IN COASTAL PILOTAGE AREAS

Purpose

This advisory note reminds pilots about risks and obligations when manoeuvring in close proximity and/or overtaking other vessels in coastal pilotage areas.

Manoeuvring and Overtaking

Historical close-quarters events between piloted vessels (particularly those involved overtaking situations in Torres Strait) reflect that a lack of communication between vessels in close proximity can lead to uncertainty and increase the potential for an incident.

Vessels altering course and/or speed in close proximity to another, especially in the context of overtaking, should give a courtesy call on VHF radio *before* the manoeuvre to confirm that the other vessel is aware of your intentions and to confirm that it is safe to proceed.

When overtaking, pilots should also be particularly mindful of not reducing speed too soon after conducting the overtaking manoeuvre.

Pilots are reminded that the final arbiter to determine appropriate action in any situation is *The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions At Sea, 1972* (COLREGS). This applies equally to the overtaking vessel and the vessel being overtaken.

Pilots are reminded of the following requirements and obligations relevant to manoeuvring and overtaking, excerpted from the COLREGS:

Rule 9(e) (Narrow Channels):

- (i) *in a narrow channel or fairway when overtaking can only take place if the vessel to be overtaken has to take action to permit safe passing, the vessel intending to overtake shall indicate her intention by sounding the appropriate signal prescribed in Rule 34(c)(i). The vessel to be overtaken shall, if in agreement, sound the appropriate signal prescribed in Rule 34(c)(ii) and take steps to permit safe passing. If in doubt, she may sound the signals prescribed in Rule 34(d).*
- (ii) *This rule does not relieve the overtaking vessel of her obligation under Rule 13.*

Rule 13 (Overtaking):

- (a) *Notwithstanding anything contained in the Rules of Part B, Sections I and II, any vessel overtaking any other shall keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken.*
- (b) *A vessel shall be deemed to be overtaking when coming up with another vessel from a direction more than 22.5 degrees abaft her beam, that is, in such a position with reference to the other vessel she is overtaking, that at night, she would be able to see only the sternlight of that vessel but neither of her sidelights.*
- (c) *When a vessel is in any doubt as to whether she is overtaking another, she shall assume that this is the case and act accordingly.*
- (d) *Any subsequent alteration of the bearing between the two vessels shall not make the overtaking vessel a crossing vessel within the meaning of these Rules, or relieve her of the duty of keeping clear of the overtaken vessel until she is finally past and clear.*

Rule 34(c) (Manoeuvring and Warning Signals):

When in sight of another in a narrow channel or fairway:

- (i) *a vessel intending to overtake another shall in compliance with Rule 9(e)(i) indicate her intention by the following signals on her whistle:*
 - *two prolonged blasts followed by one short blast to mean “I intend to overtake you on your starboard side”:*
 - *two prolonged blasts followed by two short blasts to mean “I intend to overtake you on your port side”:*
- (ii) *the vessel about to be overtaken when acting in accordance with Rule 9(e)(i) shall indicate her agreement by the following signal on her whistle:*
 - *one prolonged, one short, one prolonged, one short blast, in that order.*

Rule 34(d) (Manoeuvring and Warning Signals):

When vessels in sight of one another are approaching each other and from any cause either vessel fails to understand the intentions or actions of the other, or is in doubt whether sufficient action is being taken by the other to avoid collision, the vessel in doubt shall immediately indicate such doubt by giving at least five short and rapid blasts on the whistle. Such signal may be supplemented at night by a light signal of at least five short and rapid flashes.

All vessels involved in an overtaking situation should act in accordance with the COLREGS as required by the circumstances of the case. AMSA reminds all coastal pilots that COLREGS must be followed at all times in accordance with the licence conditions detailed in Marine Order 54 (Coastal pilotage).

Please forward any queries about this PAN to coastal.pilotage@amsa.gov.au.
