



Transport
Maritime

Be bright – be safe at night



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When night falls it is a completely different world on the water, and so vessels that operate from sunset to sunrise, whether at anchor or underway, must carry and exhibit the correct lights.

Boating at night – go slow, be seen, keep a lookout and be bright.



Go slow

When fog, glare, smoke or darkness restrict your visibility, you must slow down to a safe speed.

A safe speed is one at which you can stop and avoid a collision, considering the circumstances and conditions at the time.

You wouldn't drive fast on a dark road without headlights – the same applies on dark waterways – be bright.

Remember – the faster you go, the faster you approach hazards and hitting a hazard at speed can have a greater impact on you, your passengers and your boat.

Be seen

You may be able to see others but can they see you? At night, every type of craft on the water needs lights in order to be seen.

Whether you are paddling, rowing, sailing or motoring, everyone needs to be able to recognise where you are and what you are doing.

Make sure you have the right lights for your craft and that they work properly. Use them as soon as the sun goes down or when visibility is poor.

Your lights should be mounted in a position that gives you optimum night vision and allows others to see you from every direction.

Carry a working waterproof floating torch. It may help others see you if you shine your torch on your sails or superstructure. Make sure you don't adversely affect your night vision, or the vision of other boat skippers.

If you anchor at night, show an all-round white light where it can best be seen.

Remember – penalties apply for not showing appropriate lights when required.

Keep a lookout

Navigating at night requires special care – it can be like looking into a black hole. Look and listen at all times, as a number of hazards such as logs, moored boats or sandbanks are unlit.

Navigation lights may not be as bright as other lights and background lights may hide something that is closer.

If it is a large ship, the lights might be high and you may not realise that you are looking at the sides of a dark hull.

If you have the slightest doubt, stop, ensure you are lit and have a good look around you.

LOOKOUT AT NIGHT

- Is that a vessel(s)?
- How big is it?
- What direction is it travelling in?
- How fast is it moving?
- How far away is it?
- Does it have priority?
- What is our relative position?



Know your waterway

Navigation markers can aid you in safe passage of a waterway.

These aids to navigation can indicate where prominent hazards are, but should be coupled with reference to a map or chart and use of local knowledge of the area, particularly in the dark.

For more information on the navigation system, pick up a copy of the free Maritime Boating Handbook or view it online at www.maritime.nsw.gov.au.



Different lights

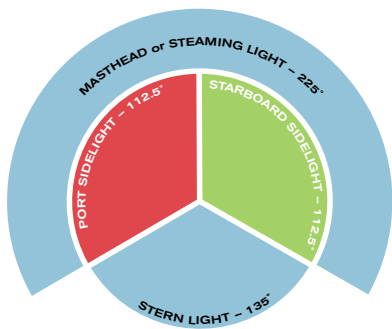
All round white light: a white light showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 360 degrees.

Masthead light: a white light placed over the fore and aft centreline of a vessel, showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 225 degrees and fixed to show from anywhere ahead, to just behind the beam of the vessel on both sides.

Sidelights: a green light on the starboard (right) side, and a red light on the port (left) side of a vessel. Each shows an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 112.5 degrees, and is fixed to show from ahead to just behind the beam of the vessel on its respective side.

On a vessel of less than 20 metres in length, the sidelights may be combined in one light unit, carried on the fore and aft centreline of the vessel.

Sternlight: a white light placed near the stern, showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 135 degrees, fixed to show from behind the vessel.



Range of visibility

Vessels under 12 metres

- Masthead light – 2 miles
- Sidelight – 1 mile
- Stern light – 2 miles
- All round lights – 2 miles

Vessels 12 metres to 20 metres

- Masthead light – 3 miles
- Sidelight and stern light – 2 miles
- All round lights – 2 miles

Placement of lights

Navigation lights should be positioned so they are not obscured by the vessel's superstructure or interfered with by deck lights.



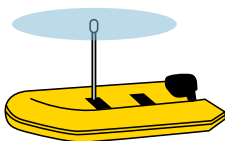
Masthead

The masthead and/or all round white light must be fitted (if practical) on the centreline (bow to stern) of the vessel.

Power vessels underway

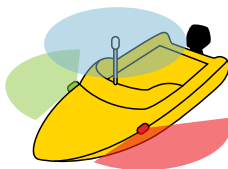
Vessels under seven metres and less than seven knots

Powered vessels of less than seven metres in length, with a maximum speed of seven knots or less, shall exhibit a white light visible all round and if possible, separate and/or combined sidelights.



Vessels under 12 metres

- i. Separate or combined sidelights; a masthead light and a stern light; or
- ii. Separate or combined sidelights and an all round white light.



The masthead or white all round light shall be carried at least one metre above the sidelights.

Vessels 12 metres to 20 metres

- i. A masthead light, separate sidelights and stern light; or
- ii. A masthead light, combined sidelights and stern light.



The masthead light shall be carried at least 2.5 metres above the gunwale. Combined sidelights shall be carried at least one metre below the masthead light.

Sailing vessels underway

Sailing vessels while underway (being motor driven) under power shall exhibit navigation lights applicable to power driven vessels.

Sailing vessels under seven metres

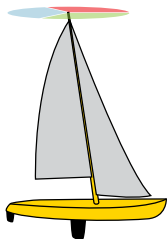
Sailing vessels of less than seven metres in length, or vessels being rowed, should if practicable exhibit the lights required for sailing vessels over seven metres.

If not they should have ready use of an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.



Sailing vessels seven metres to 20 metres

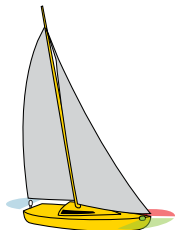
- i. A combined lantern, that is at or near the top of the mast and incorporates sidelights and stern light; or
- ii. Separate sidelights and stern light.



NOTE: The use of tricoloured lights alone in areas affected by backlighting is not recommended. In these cases it is recommended to use deck level navigation lights.

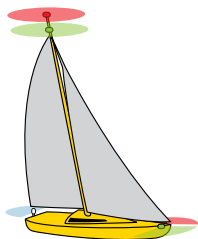
Sailing vessels over 20 metres

Must exhibit sidelights and stern light and may carry the optional red and green all round lights. However, these vessels may not carry a combined lantern.



Optional lights for sailing vessels

A sailing vessel of any length which is fitted with sidelights and a stern light (but not a combined lantern) may, in addition, carry two all round lights in a vertical line at or near the top of the mast. The upper light shall be red and the lower green.



Power and sailing vessels at anchor

Vessels less than 50 metres in length at anchor shall exhibit an all round white light, placed where it can best be seen.

Anchor lights must always be shown from sunset to sunrise. If you are at anchor in a busy area, then show additional lights to ensure you are seen and keep a good watch.



Rowing/Paddle vessels

Such craft must have a torch or lantern ready to display in time to prevent a collision. Craft that are more than four metres long should exhibit two all-round lights, either continuous or a combination of continuous and flashing white lights, positioned at either end, in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Rowing.

NOTE: There are many other combinations of lights used on vessels. The lights shown relate to the activity the vessel is engaged in, i.e. fishing, dredging, not under command.

A simple rule of thumb for a small power boat is to stay clear of any vessels exhibiting additional lights.

BE BRIGHT AT NIGHT



**YOU'RE THE SKIPPER
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE!**



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Maritime is a division of Roads and Maritime Services

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