

Rules of the Road Loophole:
Commercial Trollers Restricted in their Ability to Maneuver

Commercial salmon trollers allowed in the waters of Southeastern Alaska, are disadvantaged under the Rules of the Road, Rule 3. They are not recognized as fishing vessels restricted in ability to maneuver even though they have fishing gear in the water. The writers of this rule felt that since trollers are moving through the water as they fish, they should have no special status in crossing situations with other vessels. However, it is obvious to anyone who has trolled near the pinnacles and rocks where the salmon are often caught, that trollers are not as maneuverable as might be thought. Avoiding a recreational boat or other commercial vessel might mean losing hundreds of dollars of gear and many hours in repair.

Trollers can take advantage of Rule 27, however, which allows vessels that are in fact restricted in their ability to maneuver, to be recognized as such. To be so recognized, the troller must display the day shape ball-diamond-ball, or the night signal red over white over red. In fact, under Rule 27, they are **required** to display these signals.

This rule does not help trollers with larger commercial traffic, such as cruise ships, which are restricted in their ability to maneuver due to size and draft. However, it does help protect trollers in traffic with other smaller vessels. In either case, courtesy and common sense also go a long way to avoid conflicts.



Support for Uniroyal and Uni-raft Liferrafts Terminated

The manufacturer Rubbercrafters has discontinued support for Uniroyal and Uni-raft liferafts. In effect, this makes it impossible to have these rafts repacked at certified service stations since Rubbercrafters no longer supports these products with training or servicing manual updates. Thus, effective November 1, 1999, the USCG intends to terminate all approval for these two liferaft brands. Uniroyal and Uni-raft liferafts will not be suitable for use after the expiration of their next scheduled service. Owners of these rafts should be aware of this discontinuation and plan accordingly.

*EPIRBs, GPS AND Y2K:
 Is There A Problem?*

What happens if your boat goes down near midnight on December 31, 1999? Will the satellite and computer system let you down? Not likely. Most satellites do not use a PC based program, but rely on Unix, Pick and other mainframe programs that do not have the year 2000 problem.

Most GPS units manufactured after 1994, have taken into account any year 2000 rollover problem. They also are immune from a problem that will begin in August of 1999. At that time, the GPS system runs out of its original 1,024 week cycle that started in 1980. Units built before 1994 may experience problems, however.

To find out if your unit will be affected, check the following web sites for information. For a list of GPS manufacturers' contact numbers, go to:

www.navcen.uscg.mil/gps/geninfo/2ky/default.htm .

Sites for specific manufacturers include:

Magellan - www.magellangps.com

Garmin- www.garmin.com

Si-Tex- www.si-tex.com

Trimble- www.trimble.com

Raytheon/Apelco- www.raytheon.com

Motorola- www.mot.com

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