

PREAMBLE TO SECTION A

A boat has right of way over another boat when the other boat is required to *keep clear* of her. However, some rules in Sections B, C and D limit the actions of a right-of-way boat.

The rules of Part 2 are written to clearly say which boat must *keep clear* of the other. (See the definition *Keep Clear* for a full discussion of the meaning of this phrase.) For example, rule 10 (On Opposite Tacks) says, “*When boats are on opposite tacks, a port-tack boat shall keep clear of a starboard-tack boat.*” Therefore, in learning the rules, it is helpful to learn which boats do **not** have the right of way in meeting situations, as these are the boats with the requirement to stay out of the other’s way. Note, “shall” when used in the *rules* means “must;” i.e., it is a mandatory requirement.

There are just four basic right-of-way rules (rules 10–13), and they are found in Section A. They cover the three basic relationships boats can be in (on the opposite tack, on the same tack or changing tacks), and they are:

- on opposite tacks..... port tack keeps clear of starboard tack
– rule 10
- on same the tack, overlapped..... windward keeps clear of leeward
– rule 11
- on the same tack, not overlapped... clear astern keeps clear of clear ahead
– rule 12
- changing tacks by tacking..... boat tacking keeps clear of other boats
– rule 13