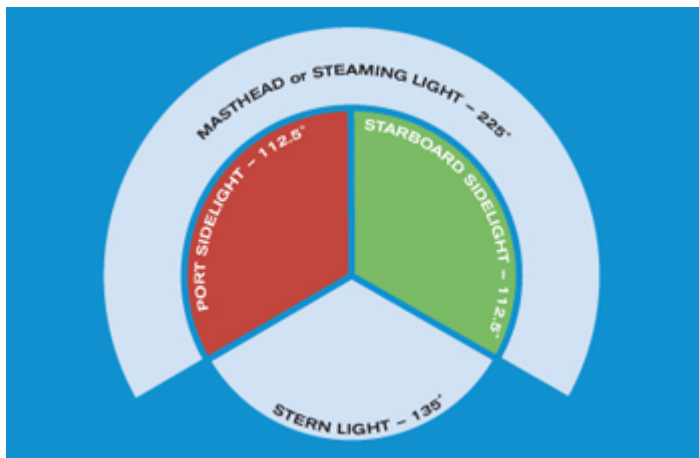




Lights and Shapes

As with Flags, Shapes are used by vessels to communicate with other vessels. Shapes can be used singularly or combination to send various messages. During Darkness and periods of restricted visibility these shapes are replicated by lights. During darkness lights can also indicate the type and size of vessel.

Description of vessel 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 beams of the vessel.

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 beams of the vessel on its respective side.

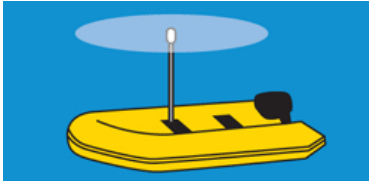
On a vessel of less than 20 metres in length, the sidelights may be combined in one light unit, carried on the fore and aft centreline of the vessel.

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.

Lights and Shapes Commonly Used in the Waterway

Vessels under seven metres and capable of less than seven knots:

Needs to display a single white light all round light. There is no day shape.



Powered vessel under 12 metres:

May display port and starboard lights and an all round white light.



Powered vessel under 50 metres:

Needs to show a white masthead light, a white stern light and port and starboard lights. There is no day shape.



Powered vessel over 50 metres:

Needs to display two white masthead lights, the forward one lower than the aft. In addition to this, there would be port and starboard lights and a stern light there is no day shape.



A yacht under sail:

Needs to display a tricolour white/red/green light at the top of the mast or port and starboard lights and a white stern light. There is no day shape, but if a vessel is motor sailing, it should display an inverted triangle.



An alternative for a vessel under sail is a red light over a green light.

Any vessel at anchor:

Vessels under 50 metres need to show a single all round white light, while vessels over 50 metres should display two white lights, with the stern one lower than the bow.



It is worth noting that many large vessels switch on their deck lights while at anchor, making it very clear that they are not underway. The day shape is a black ball.

Vessel engaged in diving operations:

Dive boats should show a code flag. At night a dive boat would display the restricted in ability to manoeuvre lights (see below).



Vessel engaged in fishing (not trawling):

These show the usual lights for a powered vessel with the addition of an all round red light above its white light.



The day shape is two triangles, apexes touching.



Vessel restricted in its ability to manoeuvre:

Should show the usual lights but also a red-white- red combination at its masthead.



The day shape is two balls with a diamond between them.