AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

March 3, 1885.

CHAP. 354.—An act to adopt the "Revised International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea"

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following "Revised International Rules and Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea" shall be followed in the navigation of all public and private vessels of the United States upon the high seas and in all coast waters of the United States, except such as are otherwise provided for, namely:

"Revised International Rules and Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea," to be followed in navigation of vessels.

Terms sailing-ship and steamship defined.

"ARTICLE 1. In the following rules every steamship which is under sail and not under steam is to be considered a sailing-ship, and every steamship which is under steam, whether under sail or not, is to be considered a ship under steam.

RULES CONCERNING LIGHTS.

Rules concerning lights.

Lights to be carried in all weather from sunset to sunrise.

"ART. 2. The lights mentioned in the following articles numbered three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, and eleven, and no others, shall be carried in all weathers, from sunset to sunrise.

Lights for sea-going steamship.

"ART. 3. A sea-going steamship, when under way, shall carry—

White light in front of foremast.

"(*a*) On or in front of the foremast, at a height above the hull of not less than twenty feet, and if the breadth of the ship exceeds twenty feet, then at a height above the hull not less than such breadth, a bright white light, so constructed as to show a uniform and unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of twenty points of the compass, so fixed as to throw the light ten points on each side of the ship, namely, from right ahead to two points abaft the beam on either side, and of such a character as to be visible on a dark night, with a clear atmosphere, at a distance of at least five miles.

Green light on starboard.

"(*b*) On the starboard side a green light, so constructed as to show a uniform and unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of ten points of the compass, so fixed as to throw the light from right ahead to two points abaft the beam on the starboard side, and of such a character as to be visible on a dark night, with a clear atmosphere, at a distance of at least two miles.

Red light on port side.

"(*c*) On the port side a red light, so constructed as to show a uniform and unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of ten points of the compass, so fixed as to throw the light from right ahead to two points abaft the beam on the port side, and of such a character as to be visible on a dark night, with a clear atmosphere, at a distance of at least two miles.

Green and red side lights; how fitted.

"(*d*) The said green and red side-lights shall be fitted with inboard screens projecting at least three feet forward from the light, so as to prevent these lights from being seen across the bow.

Lights for steamship when towing another ship.

"ART. 4. A steamship when towing another ship shall, in addition to her side-lights, carry two bright white lights in a vertical line, one over the other, not less than three feet apart, so as to distinguish her from other steamships. Each of these lights shall be of the same construction and character, and shall be carried in the same position, as the white light which other steamships are required to carry.

Ships when not under command because of accident, to carry lights at night and balls or shapes by day.

"ART. 5 (*a*) A ship, whether a steamship or a sailingship, which from any accident is not under command, shall at night carry, in the same position as the white light which steamships are required to carry, and if a steamship, in place of that light, three red lights in globular lanterns, each not less than ten inches in diameter, in a vertical line, one over the other, not less than three feet apart, and of such a character as to be visible on a dark night, with a clear atmosphere, at a distance of at least two miles and shall by day carry in a vertical line, one over the other, not less than three feet apart, in front of but not lower than her foremast head, three black balls or shapes, each two feet in diameter.

Lights and balls or shapes for ships employed in laying or picking up cable.

"(*b*) A ship, whether a steamship or a sailing-ship, employed in laying or in picking up a telegraph cable, shall at night carry, in the same position as the white light which steamships are required to carry, and if a steamship, in place of that light, three lights in globular lanterns, each

not less than ten inches in diameter, in a vertical line, over one another, not less than six feet apart. The highest and lowest of these lights shall be red, and the middle light shall be white, and they shall be of such a character that the red lights shall be visible at the same distance as the white light. By day she shall carry, in a vertical line, one over the other, not less than six feet apart, in front of but not lower than her foremasthead, three shapes not less than two feet in diameter, of which the top and bottom shall be globular in shape and red in color, and the middle one diamond in shape and white.

Only ships under way to carry side-lights.

"(*c*) The ships referred to in this article when not making any way through the water shall not carry the side-lights, but when making way shall carry them

Lights and shapes to be taken as signals that ship is not under command.

"(*d*) The lights and shapes required to be shown by this article are to be taken by other ships as signals that the ship showing them is not under command, and cannot therefore get out of the way. The signals to be made by ships in distress and requiring assistance are contained in article twenty-seven.

Signals of distress, see art. 27.

Lights carried by sailing-ship when under way or being towed.

"ART. 6. A sailing ship under way or being towed shall carry the same lights as are provided by article three for a steamship under way, with the exception of the white light, which she shall never carry.

When, during bad weather, side-lights cannot be fixed.

"ART. 7. Whenever, as in the case of small vessels during bad weather, the green and red side-lights cannot be fixed, these lights shall be kept on deck, on their respective sides of the vessel, ready for use, and shall, on the approach of or to other vessels, be exhibited on their respective sides in sufficient time to prevent collision, in such manner as to make them most visible, and so that the green light shall not be seen on the port side nor the red light on the starboard side. To make the use of these portable lights more certain and easy, the lanterns containing them shall each be painted outside with the color of the light they respectively contain, and shall be provided with proper screens.

Lights for ships at anchor.

"ART. 8. A ship, whether a steamship or a sailing-ship, when at anchor, shall carry, where it can best be seen, but at a height not exceeding twenty feet above the hull, a white light, in a globular lantern of not less than eight inches in diameter, and so constructed as to show a clear, uniform, and unbroken light, visible all round the horizon at a distance of at least one mile.

Lights for pilot vessels.

"ART. 9. A pilot vessel, when engaged on her station on pilotage duty, shall not carry the lights required for other vessels, but shall carry a white light at the masthead, visible all round the horizon, and shall also exhibit a flare-up light or a flare-up lights at short intervals, which shall never exceed fifteen minutes. A pilot vessel, when not engaged on her station on pilotage duty, shall carry lights similar to those of other ships.

Lights for open boats and fishing-vessels of less than 20 tons, when under way and having nets in water.

"ART. 10. Open boats and fishing-vessels of less than twenty tons net registered tonnage, when under way and when not having their nets, trawls, dredges, or lines in the water, shall not be obliged to carry the colored side-lights; but every such boat and vessel shall in lieu thereof have ready at hand a lantern with a green glass on the one side and a red glass on the other side, and on approaching to or being approached by another vessel such lantern shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision, so that the green light shall not be seen on the port side nor the red light on the starboard side.

Fishing-vessels and boats in sea off coast of Europe north of Cape Finisterre.

"The following portion of this article applies only to fishing-vessels and boats when in the sea off the coast of Europe lying north of Cape Finisterre:

Fishing-vessels and boats of 20 tons or more, when under way, etc.

"(*a*) All fishing-vessels and fishing-boats of twenty tons net registered tonnage or upward, when under way and when not having their nets, trawls, dredges, or lines in the water, shall carry and show the same lights as other vessels under way.

Vessels engaged in fishing with drift-nets.

"(*b*) All vessels when engaged in fishing with drift-nets shall exhibit two white lights from any part of the vessel where they can be best seen. Such lights shall be placed so that the vertical distance between them shall be not less than six feet and not more than ten feet, and so that the horizontal distance between them, measured in a line with the keel of the vessel, shall be not less than five feet and not more than ten feet. The lower of these two lights shall be the more forward, and both of them shall be of such a character and contained in lanterns of such construction as to show all round the horizon, on a dark night, with a clear atmosphere, for a distance of not less than three miles.

Vessels when trawling, dredging, or fishing with drag-nets.

"(*c*) All vessels when trawling, dredging, or fishing with any kind of drag-nets shall exhibit, from some part of the vessel where they can be best seen, two lights. One of these lights shall be red and the other shall be white. The red light shall be above the white light, and shall be at a vertical distance from it of not less than six feet and not more than twelve feet; and the horizontal distance between them, if any, shall not be more than ten feet. These two lights shall be of such a character and contained in lanterns of such construction as to be visible all round the horizon, on a dark night, with a clear atmosphere, the white light to a distance of not less than three miles and the red light of not less than two miles.

Vessels employed in line-fishing.

"(*d*) A vessel employed in line-fishing, with her lines out, shall carry the same lights as a vessel when engaged in fishing with drift-nets.

Light and signal when vessel fishing becomes stationary.

"(*e*) If a vessel, when fishing with a trawl, dredge, or any kind of drag net, becomes stationary in consequence of her gear getting fast to a rock or other obstruction, she shall show the light and make the fog-signal for a vessel at anchor.

Flare-up lights; when and where used.

"(*f*) Fishing-vessels and open boats may at any time use a flare-up in addition to the lights which they are by this article required to carry and show. All flare-up lights exhibited by a vessel when trawling, dredging, or fishing with any kind of drag-net shall be shown at the after part of the vessel, excepting that if the vessel is hanging by the stern to her trawl, dredge, or drag-net they shall be exhibited from the bow.

Fishing-vessels and open boats when at anchor.

"(*g*) Every fishing-vessel and every open boat when at anchor between sunset and sunrise shall exhibit a white light, visible all round the horizon at a distance of at least one mile

When fog-horn and bell are to be used.

"(*h*) In a fog a drift-net vessel attached to her nets, and a vessel when trawling, dredging, or fishing with any kind of drag-net, and a vessel employed in line-fishing with her lines out, shall, at intervals of not more than two minutes, make a blast with her fog-horn and ring her bell alternately.

A ship overtaken by another.

"ART. 11. A ship which is being overtaken by another shall show from her stern to such last-mentioned ship a white light or a flare-up light.

SOUND SIGNALS FOR FOG, AND SO FORTH.

Sound signals for fog, etc.

"ART. 12. A steamship shall be provided with a steam-whistle or other efficient steam sound signals, so placed that the sound may not be intercepted by any obstructions, and with an efficient fog-horn, to be sounded by a bellows or other mechanical means, and also with an efficient bell. (In all cases where the regulations require a bell to be used, a drum will be substituted on board Turkish vessels.) A sailing-ship shall be provided with a similar fog-horn and bell.

Steamships to be provided with steam-whistle, fog-horn, and bell.

Drum instead of bell on Turkish vessels.

Sailing-ships to carry fog-horn and bell.

In fog, mist, or falling snow, whether by day or night, the signals described in this article shall be used as follows, that is to say:

Sound signals; how and when used.

"(*a*) A steamship under way shall make with her steam-whistle or other steam sound signal, at intervals of not more than two minutes, a prolonged blast.

"(*b*) A sailing-ship under way shall make with her foghorn, at intervals of not more than two minutes, when on the starboard tack one

blast, when on the port tack two blasts in succession, and when with the wind abaft the beam three blasts in succession.

"(c) A steamship and a sailing-ship when not under way shall, at intervals of not more than two minutes, ring the bell.

SPEED OF SHIPS TO BE MODERATE IN FOG, AND SO FORTH.

Speed of ships to to be moderate in fog, etc.

"ART. 13. Every ship, whether a sailing-ship or a steamship, shall in a fog, mist, or falling snow go at a moderate speed.

STEERING AND SAILING RULES.

Steering and sailing rules.

When sailing ships are approaching one another.

"ART. 14. When two sailing-ships are approaching one another so as to involve risk of collision, one of them shall keep out of the way of the other as follows, namely:

"(a) A ship which is running free shall keep out of the way of a ship which is close hauled.

"(b) A ship which is close hauled on the port tack shall keep out of the way of a ship which is close hauled on the starboard tack.

"(c) When both are running free, with the wind on different sides, the ship which has the wind on the port side shall keep out of the way of the other.

"(d) When both are running free, with the wind on the same side, the ship which is to windward shall keep out of the way of the ship which is to leeward.

"(e) A ship which has the wind aft shall keep out of the way of the other ship.

When two steamships are meeting.

"ART. 15. If two ships under steam are meeting end on, or nearly end on, so as to involve risk of collision, each shall alter her course to starboard, so that each may pass on the port side of the other. This article only applies to cases where ships are meeting end on, or nearly end on, in such a manner as to involve risk of collision, and does not apply to two ships which must, if both keep on their respective courses, pass clear of each other. The only cases to which it does apply are when each of the two ships is end on, or nearly end on, to the other; in other words, to cases in which by day each ship sees the masts of the other in a line, or nearly in a line, with her own, and by night to cases in which each ship is in such a position as to see both the side-lights of the other. It does not apply by day to cases in which a ship sees another ahead crossing her own course, or by night to cases where the red light of one ship is opposed to the red light of the other, or where the green light of one ship is opposed to the green light of the other, or where a red light without a green light, or a green light without a red light, is seen ahead, or where both green and red lights are seen anywhere but ahead.

When two steamships are crossing.

"ART. 16. If two ships under steam are crossing so as to involve risk of collision, the ship which has the other on her own starboard side shall keep out of the way of the other.

Steamship to keep out of way of sailing-ship.

"ART. 17. If two ships, one of which is a sailing ship and the other a steamship, are proceeding in such directions as to involve risk of collision, the steamship shall keep out of the way of the sailing-ship.

Steamship approaching to slacken speed.

ART. 18. Every steamship, when approaching another ship so as to involve risk of collision shall slacken her speed, or stop and reverse, if necessary.

Steamship's signals to another vessel.

"ART. 19. In taking any course authorized or required by these regulations, a steamship under way may indicate that course to any other ship which she has in sight by the following signals on her steam-whistle, namely:

"One short blast to mean 'I am directing my course to starboard.'

"Two short blasts to mean 'I am directing my course to port.'

"Three short blasts to mean 'I am going full speed astern.'

"The use of these signals is optional, but if they are used the course of the ship must be in accordance with the signal made.

Overtaking ship to keep out of way of ship overtaken.

"ART. 20. Notwithstanding anything contained in any preceding article, every ship, whether a sailing-ship or a steamship, overtaking any other shall keep out of the way of the overtaken ship.

Course in narrow channels.

"ART. 21. In narrow channels every steamship shall, when it is safe and practicable, keep to that side of the fairway or mid-channel which lies on the starboard side of such ship.

"ART. 22. Where by the above rules one of two ships is to keep out of the way, the other shall keep her course.

Special circumstances.

"ART. 23. In obeying and construing these rules due regard shall be had to all dangers of navigation, and to any special circumstances which may render a departure from the above rules necessary in order to avoid immediate danger.

No ship, under any circumstances, to neglect proper precaution.

"NO SHIP, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, TO NEGLECT PROPER PRECAUTIONS.

"ART. 24. Nothing in these rules shall exhonerate any ship, or the owner, or master, or crew thereof, from the consequences of any neglect to carry lights or signals, or of any neglect to keep a proper look-out, or of the neglect of any precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen or by the special circumstances of the case.

Reservation of rules for harbor and inland navigation.

"RESERVATION OF RULES FOR HARBOR AND INLAND NAVIGATION.

"ART. 25. Nothing in these rules shall interfere with the operation of a special rule, duly made by local authority, relative to the navigation of any harbor, river, or inland navigation.

"SPECIAL LIGHTS FOR SQUADRONS AND CONVOYS.

No interference with special rules of any Government as to ships of war or ships under convoy.

"ART. 26. Nothing in these rules shall interfere with the operation of any special rules made by the Government of any nation with respect to additional station and signal lights for two or more ships of war or for ships sailing under convoy.

Signals for ships in distress.

"ART. 27. When a ship is in distress and requires assistance from other ships or from the shore, the following shall be the signals to be used or displayed by her, either together or separately, that is to say:

"In the daytime—

"First. A gun fired at intervals of about a minute.

"Second. The international code signal of distress indicated by N C.

"Third. The distant signal, consisting of a square flag, having either above or below it a ball, or anything resembling a ball.

"At night—

"First. A gun fired at intervals of about a minute.

"Second. Flames on the ship (as from a burning tar-barrel, oil-barrel, and so forth).

"Third. Rockets or shells, throwing stars of any color or description, fired one at a time, at short intervals."

All conflicting laws repealed, except as to navigation in harbors, lakes, and inland waters of United States.

SEC. 2. That all laws and parts of laws inconsistent with the foregoing "Revised International Rules and Regulations" for the navigation of all public and private vessels of the United States upon the high seas, and in all coast waters of the United States, are hereby repealed, except as to the navigation of such vessels within the harbors, lakes, and inland waters of the United States; and that this act shall take effect and be in force from and after the first day of September, anno Domini eighteen hundred and eighty-four.

Act to take effect September 1, 1884.

Approved, March 3d, 1885.