

Glossary of terms:

Abaft: Behind, toward the stern of a vessel.

Abeam: To one side of a vessel, at a right angle to the fore-and-aft center line.

Advection fog: A type of fog that occurs when warm air moves over colder land or water surfaces; the greater the difference between the air temperature and the underlying surface temperature, the denser the fog, which is hardly affected by sunlight.

Aft: Near or toward the stern.

Aground: With the keel or bottom of a vessel fast on the sea floor.

Ahead: a direction or position forward of the bow (off the vessel).

Aids to Navigation: Lighthouses, lights, buoys, sound signals, Racon, radio beacons, electronic aids, and other markers on land or sea established to help navigators determine position or safe course, dangers, or obstructions to navigation.

All around light: A light showing an unbroken light over an arc of the sky line of 360 degrees.

Allision: The running of one vessel into or against another, as distinguished from a collision, i.e., the running of two vessel against each other. But this distinction is not very carefully observed. Also used to refer to a vessel striking a fixed structure (i.e. bridge, pier, moored vessel, etc.) per marine inspection.

Amidships: In or towards center portion of the vessel, sometimes referred to as “midships.”

Anchor Rode: The rope and/or chain that connect a boat and its anchor.

Anchorage area: A customary, suitable, and generally designated area in which vessels may anchor.

Astern: The direction toward or beyond the back of a vessel.

Athwart ships: Crosswise of a ship; bisecting the fore-and-aft line above the keel.

Attitude: A vessel’s position relative to the wind, sea, hazard, or other vessel.

Back and fill: A technique where one relies on the tendency of a vessel to back to port then uses the rudder to direct thrust when powering ahead. Also known as casting.

Backing plate: A reinforcement plate below a deck or behind a bulkhead used to back a deck fitting. It is usually made of wood or steel and distributes stress on a fitting over a larger area and prevents bolts from pulling through the deck.