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Green Colors, Green Lights, and Odd Numbers These mark the edge of the channel on your port (left) side as you enter from the open sea or head upstream. Numbers usually will increase consecutively as you return from the open sea or head upstream.

Red and Green Colors and/or Lights These are placed at the junction of two channels to indicate the preferred (primary) channel when a channel splits. If green is on top, the preferred channel is to the right. If red is on top, the preferred channel is to the left. These also are sometimes referred to as "junction buoys."

Shapes

- Narrow Buoys** These cone-shaped buoys are always marked with red markings and even numbers. They mark the edge of the channel on your starboard (right) side when entering from the open sea or heading upstream.
- Can Buoys** These cylindrical-shaped buoys are always marked with green markings and odd numbers. They mark the edge of the channel on your port (left) side when entering from the open sea or heading upstream.

Other Kinds of Buoys and Markers

- Lighted Buoys** These buoys use the lateral marker shapes, colors, and numbers discussed above. In addition, they have a matching colored light.
- Daymarks** These are permanently placed signs attached to structures, such as piers, in the water. Common daymarks are red triangles (equivalent to narrow) and green squares (equivalent to cans). These may be lighted also.

Variations on the U.S. Aids to Navigation System

Some waters of the United States have slight variations on the lateral navigation markers. You should be aware of these if you boat on these waters.

Intra-coastal Waterway (ICW)

The Intra-coastal Waterway (ICW) is a chain of local channels linked together to provide an inland passage along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts.

- Channels that are part of the ICW are identified by yellow symbols on channel buoys and markers. Buoys and markers that bear these yellow symbols are serving a dual purpose—they are navigational aids for both the U.S. Aids to Navigation System and the Intra-coastal Waterway.
- When following the Intra-coastal Waterway in a direction starting from New Jersey and heading to Brownsville, Texas, these rules apply:
 - Any marker displaying a yellow triangle should be passed by keeping it on the starboard (right) side of the vessel.
 - Any marker displaying a yellow square should be passed by keeping it on the port (left) side of the vessel.

These rules are true regardless of the shape or color of the channel marker or buoy on which the ICW symbols are displayed. When you are following the Intra-coastal Waterway, the yellow triangles and squares should be used as guides, rather than the colors and shapes of the lateral navigation markers on which they appear.

Examples of Lateral Markers

Buoys

Lighted Buoys

Daymarks (on a Fixed Post or Piling)

ICW Symbols on Daymarks

Intra-coastal Waterway (ICW) symbols are most commonly found on daymarks.

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