

# Teaching IRPCS for PWs – keep it simple!

Teaching IRPCS on a PW course can be a bit of a challenge. Keeping it simple is the key to success. Paul Mara outlines the main pointers to pass on to your students.

The most important rule has to be:

**KEEP A GOOD LOOKOUT** by all means possible. Whilst looking ahead is a natural function when flying along at 45 knots, don't forget to regularly check behind you – there could easily be someone overtaking at 60knots! Take a good look around before making any change of direction.



Once you are aware of other craft around you, you need to decide which way to go in order to avoid them:

**RIDE ON THE RIGHT** at sea and in channels marked with navigation buoys – the opposite side to driving a car in the UK.

When in the vicinity of other craft, you need to consider:

- Does the risk of collision exist?
- What action should I take?
- What action should the other vessel take?

There are three main ways in which collisions occur, so let's apply the above to each scenario:

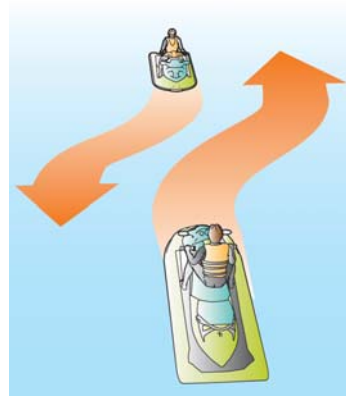
## Head on collisions

*Does the risk of collision exist?* Relatively easy to establish as both craft will be heading towards each other, head on.

*What action should I take?* Don't assume that you will not collide. If there

is any doubt you must alter your course by turning to the right, making it very obvious to the other craft what you have done. The sooner you do this the better.

*What action should the other vessel take?* In this situation he should also turn to his right, therefore placing you both on the correct side of the road – remember: ride on the right.



**REMEMBER! Right is right. Give way to the right, turn to the right. Think – RIGHT**

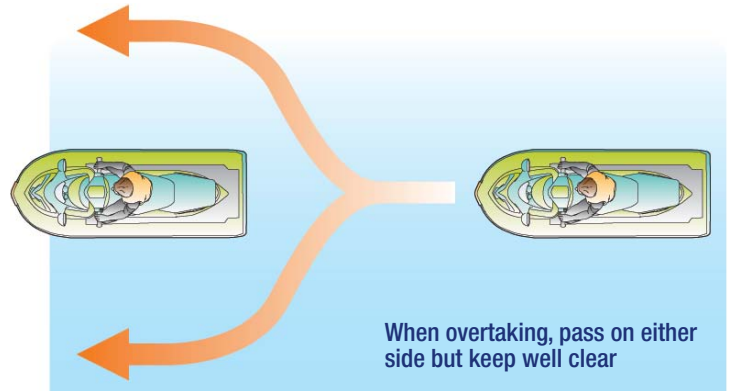


## Running into the back (overtaking)

*Does the risk of collision exist?* Let's assume that you are the overtaking vessel. You should easily be able to tell if you are going to run into the back of the one ahead. Likewise, if the vessel ahead is keeping a good look out he will know that you are behind him.

*What action should I take?* You can pass on either side, but keep well clear. Do not force the other craft to alter course and, if you have not seen him looking behind, assume that he doesn't know you are there.

*What action should the other vessel*



**When overtaking, pass on either side but keep well clear**

*take?* The vessel being overtaken must keep on a steady course and avoid unnecessary alterations. If he is keeping a good lookout he will know that you are there and let you pass. Bear in mind that you can close in on other craft very quickly, so they may not see you until it's too late.

## Running into the side (crossing)

*Does the of risk of collision exist?* This situation requires a little more thought. Keeping a good lookout in this situation is the most important part in deciding if you will collide. If two craft are approaching at an angle and their relative speed and angle of approach does not change, they will collide.

Let's consider two skis are approaching the same buoy. They can see each other and appear to be running on a parallel course. However, as they get closer to the buoy they will also be getting closer to each other, eventually colliding. Avoiding action needs to be taken.



*What action should I take?* It depends upon whether you are on the right or left. Remember we ride on the right so if you are on the right you should hold your course and speed, but keep a good lookout to check the vessel on your left.

*What action should the other vessel take?* The vessel on the left should give way to the one on the right. This can be done by slowing down and allowing the other one to pass ahead, or by altering course to run behind the other vessel. In either case your action should be early and obvious.

## Crossing at sea is just like driving round a UK roundabout

Imagine that you are driving on the road in the UK, approaching a roundabout. What do you do? Slow down, look to your right and allow any traffic already on the roundabout to pass ahead of you. If you are already on the roundabout and see a vehicle approaching ahead of you, you would expect him to stop at the white line and allow you to pass. If he doesn't, you have to slow down.

**So there it is – basic collision avoidance in three easy steps. If you remember to teach your students these three main ways to collide and the three main steps for avoidance, you shouldn't go too far wrong.**

*A full explanation of these rules can be found in the RYA publication International Rules for Preventing Collisions at Sea (G2), available from the RYA priced £4.99.*