

WAC 352-66-030 General regulations. (1) On the navigable waters of Washington state, marking to assist navigation is accomplished by a lateral system of buoyage for use with nautical charts. The lateral system is used by the United States Coast Guard in the marking of navigable waters of the United States as determined by the United States Coast Guard Commandant. The lateral system may be also used by the state and subdivisions thereof for private aids to navigation only when all applicable permits for private aids to navigation have been approved by the United States Coast Guard and other federal, state, or local authorities.

(2) The USATONS has been developed to provide a system of visual, audible, and electronic signals which are designed to assist the prudent mariner in the process of navigation. They have been established to provide a means to convey to the recreational vessel operator adequate guidance to indicate safe boating channels by indicating the presence of either natural or artificial obstructions or hazards, marking restricted or controlled areas, and providing directions. The USATONS is suited to use on all waters of Washington state and is designed to satisfy the needs of all types of recreational vessels.

(3) The U.S. Aids to Navigation System is primarily a lateral system which employs a simple arrangement of colors, shapes, numbers, and light characteristics to mark the limits of navigable routes. This lateral system is supplemented by nonlateral aids to navigation where appropriate.

(4) Generally, lateral aids to navigation indicate on which side of a vessel an aid to navigation should be passed when the vessel is proceeding in the conventional direction of buoyage. Normally, the conventional direction of buoyage is the direction in which a vessel enters navigable channels from seaward and proceeds towards the head of navigation. In the absence of a route leading from seaward, the conventional direction of buoyage generally follows a clockwise direction around land masses.

(5) Although aids to navigation are maintained to a reasonable degree of reliability, the rigors of the marine environment and various equipment failures do cause discrepancies on occasion.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 79A.05.070, 79A.05.030. WSR 21-20-006, § 352-66-030, filed 9/22/21, effective 10/23/21. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.51.040. WSR 90-07-051, § 352-66-030, filed 3/19/90, effective 4/19/90.]