



KNOW YOUR BUOYS



Buoys and channel markers function similar to lanes on a highway—designating the safest navigable channel and marking any hazards on the water.

Remember, what you see depends on where you boat—whether inland or offshore. If you are traveling to an unfamiliar area, always review nautical charts for safe navigation. These will note buoys and markers in the area.

COMMON TERMS

BUOY—Floats on top of the water and moored to the bottom; shape (cylinder or triangular), color, and numbering is important

BEACON—Permanently fixed, such as pole, lighthouse, or another structure, often with reflective tape or light

DAYBOARD/DAYMARKER—Informational signs

CHANNEL MARKER—A buoy or beacon that marks a channel

WHAT'S THE COLOR MEAN?

RED AND GREEN

Mark the best channel; like road lanes, stay between these markers and keep to the right.

Navigation Tips:

- Red are even-numbered, green are odd-numbered
- Number on the buoy will decrease as you head further out in open water, and increase as you head toward shore
- Remember the phrase, “Red, Right, Returning”
 - ◊ If returning to land, keep the red buoy on your right (starboard)
 - ◊ If heading out to open water, keep the green buoy on your right (starboard)
- Markers with both red and green indicate a junction of navigable channels; the top color indicates the direction of the preferred channel



DAYBEACON



DAYBEACON



LIGHT



LIGHT



CAN BUOY



NUN BUOY



LIGHTED BUOY



LIGHTED BUOY



CAN BUOY



DAYBEACON

ORANGE AND WHITE

Alerts boaters to potential dangers and regulations, such as swim areas, no wake zones, or other hazards.



DANGER
A diamond shape alert boaters to hazards



RESTRICTED OPERATIONS
Marks with a circle indicate areas with regulated operations



EXCLUSION
A diamond shape with a cross means boats are prohibited from the area



INFORMATION
Marks with a square provide helpful information such as directions, distances, and locations



BLACK AND WHITE

Marks dangers such as shallow areas or rocks; never pass through a group of these buoys or pass between the buoys and shore.



WHITE AND BLUE

Indicates where mooring or tying up is allowed; check your local waters to see which are public versus private.



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