



Chapter 4: Air Boat Navigation Training

Navigational Tools and Equipment for Air Boat Operators

Even though most of the time Air Boats are used in shallow water to dry land there will on occasions traversing in deep water or exploring into the boonies.

When it comes to operating an Air Boat, having the right navigational tools and equipment is essential for ensuring a safe and successful journey. Whether you are a seasoned Air Boat operator or just starting out, knowing what tools to have on board can make all the difference in your experience on the water.

One of the most important navigational tools for Air Boat operators is a GPS system. This device allows you to track your location, plan your route, and navigate through unfamiliar waters with ease. Having a reliable GPS system on board can help prevent getting lost or stranded in remote areas. If you are traversing back in areas that you make a lot of turns it is very helpful for your unit have a screen that is tracking with dots showing path. If you decide that you may be lost you can turn around and follow your dots back out to where you started from.

In addition to a GPS system, a compass is another essential tool for Air Boat operators. While GPS systems are great for providing precise coordinates, a compass can serve as a backup in case of technical difficulties or battery failure. A compass can also help you maintain your heading and navigate in challenging conditions such as fog or low visibility.

For Air Boat operators who venture out into open waters or unfamiliar territories, having a marine radio is crucial for communication and safety. A marine radio allows you to communicate with other vessels, emergency services, and fellow Air Boat operators in case of an emergency or unexpected situation. Having a marine radio on board can provide peace of mind and ensure that help is always just a call away. Since most everyone has a smart phone, I would say that is a mandatory item to have onboard. Bottom line, it mandatory to have a life line in case your boat breaks down and you need somebody come and get you and the souls that are onboard.

Reading Maps and Charts for Safe Navigation on Waterways

Understanding how to read maps and charts is essential for safe navigation on waterways when operating an Air Boat. Whether you are an experienced Air Boat owner or a novice user, having the skills to interpret these tools will help you navigate through unfamiliar territories with confidence.

Maps are a two-dimensional representation of a specific area, showing landmarks, water depths, and other important information. Charts, on the other hand, are nautical maps specifically designed for use on bodies of water. By familiarizing yourself with both maps and charts, you can effectively plan your route, avoid obstacles, and stay on course during your Air Boat adventures.

When reading maps and charts, pay close attention to symbols and legends that indicate water depths, underwater hazards, and navigational aids such as buoys, signs and markers. Understanding these symbols will help you determine the safest routes to take and avoid potential dangers. Additionally, be sure to note the scale of the map or chart to accurately judge distances and plan your journey accordingly. Seals will be covering the basic "Navigational rules of the road".

Did I say how important it is to have a full tank of fuel before you leave the ramp or dock.

If I didn't, I'm saying it now.

QUICK REFERENCE

Abbreviated Guide To Navigation Rules Of the Road

Based on the *Navigation Rules International – Inland* (Commandant Instruction M16672.2D, 1999)

DEFINITIONS (From Rule 3)

Vessel Engaged in Fishing – Any vessel fishing with nets, lines, trawls or other fishing apparatus that restricts maneuverability, and excluding vessels fishing with trolling lines or other fishing apparatus that does not restrict maneuverability

Vessel Not Under Command – A vessel unable to keep out of the way of other vessels because an exceptional circumstance is hindering its maneuverability (steering failure, engine breakdown, etc.)

Vessel Restricted In Its Ability To Maneuver – A vessel unable to keep out of the way of other vessels because the nature of its work is hindering its ability to maneuver (buoy tender picking up a buoy, vessel transferring persons, provisions or cargo while underway, etc.)

Underway – A vessel not at anchor, aground or made fast to the shore

Give-Way Vessel – A vessel that must change course or speed to avoid a collision with a stand-on vessel

Stand-On Vessel – A vessel that must maintain course and speed except to avoid collision with another vessel

LOOKOUT (From Rule 5)

Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper lookout.

SAFE SPEED (From Rule 6)

All vessels must proceed at a safe speed at all times.

You must go slow enough to prevent a collision no matter what the conditions.

DETERMINING RISK OF COLLISION (From Rule 7)

Every vessel must use all available means appropriate, including lookout (eyes and ears), radar and radio, to determine if a risk of collision exists.

Steady bearing and decreasing range indicate a risk of collision.

ACTION TO AVOID COLLISION (From Rule 8)

Action to avoid collision should be taken well in advance of any potential meeting. Any course or speed change should be great enough to be obvious to any approaching vessel. Avoid a succession of small alterations of course.

NARROW CHANNELS (From Rule 9)

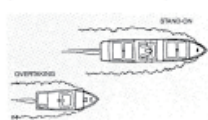
A vessel engaged in fishing shall not impede the passage of any vessel navigating in a narrow channel or fairway.

TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEMES (From Rule 10)

A vessel engaged in fishing shall not impede the passage of any vessel following a traffic lane.

OVERTAKING ANOTHER VESSEL

(From Rules 13 and 17)



A vessel that is being overtaken shall keep its course and speed.

RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN VESSELS

(From Rules 13, 18)

To determine which vessel must give-way in an approach situation, it is essential to know the hierarchy established by the Rules:

- 1st – Vessel not under command or vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver
- 3rd – Any vessel being overtaken
- 4th – Vessel engaged in fishing
- 5th – Vessel under sail
- 6th – Power-driven vessel

MEETING ANOTHER VESSEL HEAD-ON

(From Rules 14)

When two power-driven vessels meet on reciprocal (head-on) or nearly reciprocal courses so as to involve the risk of collision, both shall alter course to starboard so that they pass port-to-port (except as provided by Rules 9, 10 and 18)

CROSSING SITUATION (From Rules 15 and 17)

When two power-driven vessels are crossing so as to involve the risk of collision, the vessel which has the other on her own starboard side shall keep out of the way and avoid crossing ahead of the other vessel.

ACTION BY THE GIVE-WAY VESSEL

(From Rule 16)

Every vessel in sight of another and required to give way to another vessel shall, so far as possible, take early and substantial action to give way.

ACTION BY THE STAND-ON VESSEL

(From Rule 17)

When one of two vessels is required to give way, the other vessel (the stand-on vessel) shall maintain its course and speed.

It is also important to consider factors such as currents, tides, and weather conditions when reading maps and charts. By understanding how these elements can affect your navigation, you can make informed decisions about when and where to travel on waterways. Keep in mind that water levels can change rapidly, so always stay updated on current conditions before setting out

on your Air Boat. It is always a good idea to get the current weather forecast for your day on the water.

In conclusion, mastering the art of reading maps, charts and navigation symbols and signs are crucial for safe navigation on waterways while operating an Air Boat. By understanding the symbols, legends, and scales on these tools, as well as considering external factors like currents and weather conditions, you can confidently plan your routes and avoid potential hazards.

Please check out all 10 chapters. You will be well on your way to becoming a safe Air Boater.

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