

Rule 16 Changing Course

16 CHANGING COURSE

16.1 When a right-of-way boat changes course, she shall give the other boat room to keep clear.

16.2 In addition, when after the starting signal a port-tack boat is keeping clear by sailing to pass astern of a starboard-tack boat, the starboard-tack boat shall not change course if as a result the port-tack boat would immediately need to change course to continue keeping clear.

Rule 16 is talking to the ROW boat. Whenever a ROW boat changes course she must allow the Keep Clear boat "room to keep clear." The term "course" means ROW's compass course so if the wind shifts and ROW changes her compass course to keep the same relative wind angle, she has "changed course."

Similar to the discussion on Rule 15 (Acquiring Right of Way), "room to keep clear" would be: the space needed by the Keep Clear boat to avoid the ROW boat, presuming the Keep Clear boat acts in a seamanlike way (based on the existing conditions), after the ROW boat changes course.

This rule applies only to a boat's **change of course** and not a change of speed or angle of heel or a change in position of her equipment. If the ROW boat heeled over the in a puff and contacted the Keep Clear boat, the Keep Clear boat have broken one of the rules in Section A. A Keep Clear boat should ensure that she pays close attention to the ROW boat's changes and maintains enough space to keep clear of her.

Rule 16.2 tells the ROW boat that she may not change course that would **cause** the keep clear boat, sailing to pass astern of the ROW boat and attempting to keep clear, to change her course to continue to keep clear.