

Racing Rules of Sailing

Rule 20.1

A submission from US Sailing

Purpose or Objective

To promote safety and simplify a rule.

Proposal

Change rule 20.1 as follows:

20.1 Hailing

A boat may hail **‘Room to tack’** for *room* to tack and avoid a boat on the same *tack*, but only if the hailing boat is.... [*no further changes*]

Current Position

As above.

Note that the ‘Current Position’ is rule 20.1 as approved in November 2014 for the 2017-2020 edition of *The Racing Rules of Sailing*.

Reasons

The only rules that require a hail are rules 61.1(a), 20.2(c) and 20.1. Under rule 61.1(a) a boat is required to hail the word, ‘Protest’. Under rule 20.2(c), a boat is required to hail the words, ‘You tack’. However, the hail required by rule 20.1 for room to tack and avoid another boat may be made using any of a number of hails. Different competitors can choose to use different words, creating the possibility of misunderstanding or confusion. Frequently heard examples include ‘Water’, ‘Room to tack’ or ‘Tacking’. Under the proposal a boat hailing for room to tack and avoid a boat on the same tack will be required to hail specified words: ‘Room to tack’.

The use of a specified hail of three words in English will more likely be understood when the competitors in an event speak several different languages. However, even if all competitors at an event speak English, the use of a specified standard phrase is more likely to be understood than is a hail selected from a range of possible hails. A misunderstood hail can result in a collision, so the proposal promotes safety.

The proposal also simplifies the rules and makes them easier to learn. It does so by requiring each required hail to have a common feature – each one must be made using a standard phrase or word that is explicitly stated within quotation marks in the relevant rule.
