

Lights for Canoe and Kayak

Coast Guard Lighting Regulations

Rule 25 - Navigation Lights when Underway

Rule 30 - Light Required at Anchor

Rule 37 - In Distress

Rule 25 - Navigation Lights when Underway

When are recreational boats operating at night are required to display navigation lights?

- Between sunset and sunrise
- During periods of restricted visibility (fog or heavy rain)

What light(s) are we required to display?

“Oar-Driven and Paddled Vessels (Rowboats, Kayaks, Canoes)

Rowed or paddled vessels may exhibit the lights for a sailboat. An acceptable substitute is to keep ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern (flashlight) that shows a white light that shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision ”

Sailboats When Under Sail

- "The basic rule is that sidelights and a stern light are required. Permissible variations to this rule appear below.
- Sailboats less than 7m (23') shall, if practicable, exhibit lights as explained above. An acceptable substitute is to keep ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern (flashlight) that shows a white light that shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision."

Why I prefer deck mounted lights

- They do not interfere with paddling
- They can be mounted in way that protects night vision

Other considerations

- Avoid deck lights that might be confused with other meanings e.g. Blue for law enforcement, or Yellow for a lead boat towing another boat.
- State laws typically follow Coast Guard regs but might be different. Tennessee requirements are consistent with what is presented here

Rule 30 - Light Required at Anchor

360 degree white light

Should be visible for 2 miles

Rule 37 - In Distress

Strobe 50 - 70 times per minute (inland rule)

(discouraged by Coast Guard because it's prohibited in international rules)

Flares preferred

Links to Some of the Products

[Cheap Stern Light](#)

[Same Stern Light with Expensive Base](#)

[Expensive Red Green Bow Lights](#)

[Cheap set of navigation lights](#)

[Harbor Freight Flashlight](#)

[LED Lantern](#)