

A photograph of a ship's wooden steering wheel in the foreground, looking out over a calm sea at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The ship's deck is green.

## Act early in a crossing situation.

An early and apparent change of course is a lot safer than a last minute alteration at close range.

## Why wait until the last mile to avoid a collision?

Act early. Act large. There have been several collisions in crossing situations where the give way vessel waited too long to make the course alteration.

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Mariners draw their own inferences from the terms “ample time”, or “substantial” where the measure could be very inconsistent from one individual to the other. The question for every officer of the watch should be to consider the possibility and practicability of altering course well in advance to avoid a collision or a close quarter situation. An alteration of course made at, say, 5 nm range is a lot safer than a substantially large alteration made at 1 nm. This gives the stand on vessel a clear signal of the intention of the give way vessel and avoids ambiguity.

You can find out more from our

Loss Prevention poster **Act early in a crossing situation** type: asset-hyperlink id: 1102aa1149e74f51964488d9a173262f type: asset-hyperlink id: 0a2427a50bd646c3956bf7b7044b0b9a

Insight [Collisions – why do they occur?](#)

Case study type: asset-hyperlink id: 214e46b62b294a858b1ef5b574ef7476

Insight [A collision that should have been avoided](#)