

Bridge Lighting and Markings

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Lighting and other signals on bridges are spelled out in [33 CFR 118](#).

Bridges across navigable waters are marked with red, green and/or white lights for nighttime navigation. Red lights mark piers and other parts of the bridge. Red lights are also placed on drawbridges to show when they are in the closed position. Green lights are placed on drawbridges to show when they are in the open position. The location of these lights will vary according to the bridge structure. Green lights are also used to mark the centerline of navigable channels through fixed bridges. If there are two or more channels through the bridge, the preferred channel is also marked by three white lights in a vertical line above the green light.

Red and green retro-reflective panels may be used to mark bridge piers and may also be used on bridges not required to display lights. Lateral red and green lights and day boards may mark main channels through bridges. Adjacent piers are marked with fixed yellow lights when the main channel is marked with lateral aids to navigation. Centerlines of channels through fixed bridges may be marked with a safe water mark and an occulting white light when lateral marks are used to mark main channels.

The centerline of the navigable channel through the draw span of floating bridges may be marked with a special mark. The mark will be a yellow diamond with yellow retro-reflective panels and may exhibit a yellow light that displays a Morse code "B" (a long flash followed by three short flashes). AIS-ATON and RACONs may be placed on the bridge structure to mark the centerline of the navigable channel through the bridge.

Vertical clearance gauges may be installed to enhance navigation safety. The gauges are located on the right channel pier or pier protective structure facing approaching vessels. Clearance gauges indicate the vertical distance between "low steel" of the bridge channel span (in the closed to navigation position for drawbridges) and the level of the water, measured to the bottom of the foot marks, read from top to bottom.

Drawbridges equipped with radiotelephones display a blue and white sign which indicates what VHF radiotelephone channels you should use to request bridge openings.

You can see depictions of bridge lightings here:

<https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5pw/Office%20of%20Bridge%20Programs/Lighting.pdf>