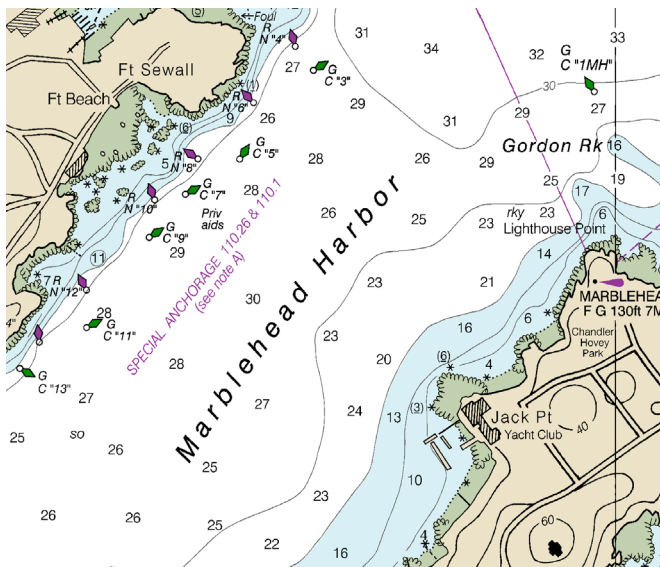


Special Anchorages
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Rule 30 of the International and Inland Navigation Rules. Anchored Vessels and Vessels Aground, requires that an all-round white light be shown while anchored. The purpose of this rule is to improve navigation safety by clearly delineating between the designated anchorage and the navigation channel, and by accommodating vessel traffic on all sides of the anchorage.

On many charts you will see the words "SPECIAL ANCHORAGE" as seen below in Chart 13276, Marblehead Harbor, and probably wondered what this means.



The areas described in subpart A of **33 CFR 110**, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-33/chapter-I/subchapter-I/part-110/subpart-A> are designated as special anchorage areas for the purposes of Rule 30 (**33 CFR 83.30**) and Rule 35 (**33 CFR 83.35**) of the Inland Navigation Rules, **33 CFR Chapter I, Subchapter E**. The areas designated as Special Anchorage areas are removed from fairways and are located where general navigation will not endanger or be endangered by unlit vessels. The boundaries of these areas are designated by a solid magenta line, as seen above, from the Marblehead Light to Peach's Point.

The authority to designate special anchorage areas was transferred to and vested in the Secretary of Homeland Security by section 902(j) of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 (**Pub. L. 109-241, 120 Stat 516**), and delegated to the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard in Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 0170.1. The Commandant redelegated the authority to establish anchorage grounds to each Coast Guard District Commander.

What this means is that vessels of less than 20 meters in length, and barges, canal boats, scows, or other nondescript craft, are not required to sound signals required by Rule 35 of the

Inland Navigation Rules ([33 U.S.C. 2035](#)). Vessels of less than 20 meters are not required to exhibit anchor lights or shapes required by Rule 30 of the Inland Navigation Rules ([33 U.S.C. 2030](#)). The anchorage grounds for vessels described in Subpart B of [33 CFR 110](#) are established, and the rules and regulations in relation thereto adopted, pursuant to the authority contained in Section 7 of the act of March 4, 1915, as amended ([38 Stat. 1053; 33 U.S.C. 471](#)).

You can find a complete list of special anchorage areas in 33 CFR 110. You can see a list of these anchorage areas on line at: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title33/33cfr110_main_02.tpl

The specific coordinates on these areas can be found in Chapter 2 of the United States Coast Pilot, which can be found at: <https://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/nsd/cpdownload.htm>

In the list of anchorages, you will note that many small harbors are not included. Since lights are usually not shown, this regulation is not being enforced.

8 August 2025