Cardinal Buoys and Special Buoys

**Description**
- Shapes have no special meaning
- May be lettered — no numbers
- Cautionary, scientific and anchorage buoys may display a yellow “X” topmark

**Cautionary**
A cautionary buoy marks dangers such as firing ranges, underwater pipelines, race courses, seaplane bases and areas where no through channel exists.

**Anchorage**
An anchorage buoy marks the outer limits of designated anchorage areas. Consult the chart for water depth.

**Mooring**
A mooring buoy is used for mooring or securing vessels. Be aware that when you see one, a vessel may be secured to it.

**Information**
An information buoy displays information such as locality, marina, campsite, etc. inside the orange square.

**Hazard**
A hazard buoy marks random hazards such as shoals and rocks. Information is illustrated inside the orange diamond.

**Control**
Obey the speed limits, wash restrictions, etc. illustrated inside the orange circle.

**Keep out**
A keep out buoy marks areas your vessel may not enter.

**Scientific**
An ocean data acquisition system buoy collects weather and other scientific data.

**Swimming**
A swimming buoy marks the outer limits of swimming areas. It may not be charted.

**Diving**
A diving buoy marks an area where scuba or other such diving activity is in progress. It is not normally charted.

**Topmarks**
- Yellow and black
- White lights — flash characters indicated below (if equipped)
- The points of the 2 topmark cones tell you where to find safe water
- Topmark cones show where the black bands are placed on the buoy
- Letterhead — no numbers
- White retroreflective material

**Flash Groups**
- North
- East
- South
- West

**Cardinal Buoys**
- White lights – flash characters (if equipped)
- White retroreflective material

**North**
- Q 15
- QG 15

**East**
- Q 15
- QG 15

**South**
- Q 15
- QG 15

**West**
- Q 15
- QG 15

**Special Buoys**
- Yellow lights – flash characters (if equipped)
- Retroreflective material of the same colour as required markings; white buoys will display yellow material

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