There are basically three categories of Sound Signals which you should understand; Maneuvering, Danger and Restricted Visibility.

**Maneuvering:** International Rules specify that you give sound signals when you maneuver and they do not require an answer. Inland Rules specify that you give sound signals before you maneuver to signal your intent and they require an answer; like sound if the other vessel agrees or the danger signal if the other vessel does not agree. (*Just forget this unless the question seems to specifically require this distinction; e.g. look for ‘Inland Rules Only’ preceding the question.*)

International and Inland use different language to state the same thing for Maneuvering signals which makes them seem more complicated than necessary. Just remember this general idea and use it to answer specific exam questions:

Both sets of rules boil down this: **One short blast if you turn right and Two short blasts if you turn left**. Think this way!! Read the question, figure out your answer and then choose the exam answer which matches your answer.

**Danger:** Five short blasts.

There are always some special cases. We will deal with the “weird” ones closer to taking the exam. There are two easy ones you may want to know now. **Three short blasts** when operating astern (i.e. backing up) and, INLAND ONLY, **One prolonged blast** when leaving the dock.

**Restricted Visibility:** These rules absolutely depend on you knowing the different classification of vessels. That was your first lesson. You have to know that ‘cold’. Start out with the most common class; a power driven vessel. Near the end of this class, just before the exam, go over the differences which may apply to the other types of vessels; e.g. sailboats or tow boats.

A **power driven** vessel underway and making way in restricted visibility sounds **one prolonged blast** every two minutes. If underway but NOT making way (i.e. stopped but not anchored) sounds **two prolonged blasts** every two minutes.

*There are different sound signals in restricted visibility for the other classification of vessels you learned as your first lesson. Come back and learn these later as special cases.*

A vessel anchored in restricted visibility **rings a bell** for five seconds every minute.

A vessel aground in restricted visibility **rings a bell** for five seconds every minute and gives **three strokes on the bell** immediately before and after ringing the bell.