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Plastic Buoys

During the 1990s the Coast Guard experimented with plastic buoys as a more cost-effective aid to navigation. IT was intended to reduce cost as the colored plastic panels would be modular in design allowing components to be replaced piecemeal. Also the plastic surfaces would be molded in specific colors, thus alleviating the need to sandblast and repaint the surfaces with hazardous anti-fouling paint. Filled with a foam to prevent them from sinking in the event of a leak, the plastic buoys were also lighter than the standard steel and in the event of a collision with a vessel, a replacement could be emplaced without removing the damaged buoy from its station. The design's modularity would also ease logistics as interchangeable parts could be employed as opposed to the wholesale replacement of a buoy. Ultimately, the main issue regarding the buoys stemmed from their durability. After all, steel buoys that had been constructed prior to Worlds War II still endure with proper maintenance.

Official Coast Guard Imagery (click on thumbnail for High resolution image)	Caption/ Historical Information
	Example of a plastic buoy tested by the Coast Guard