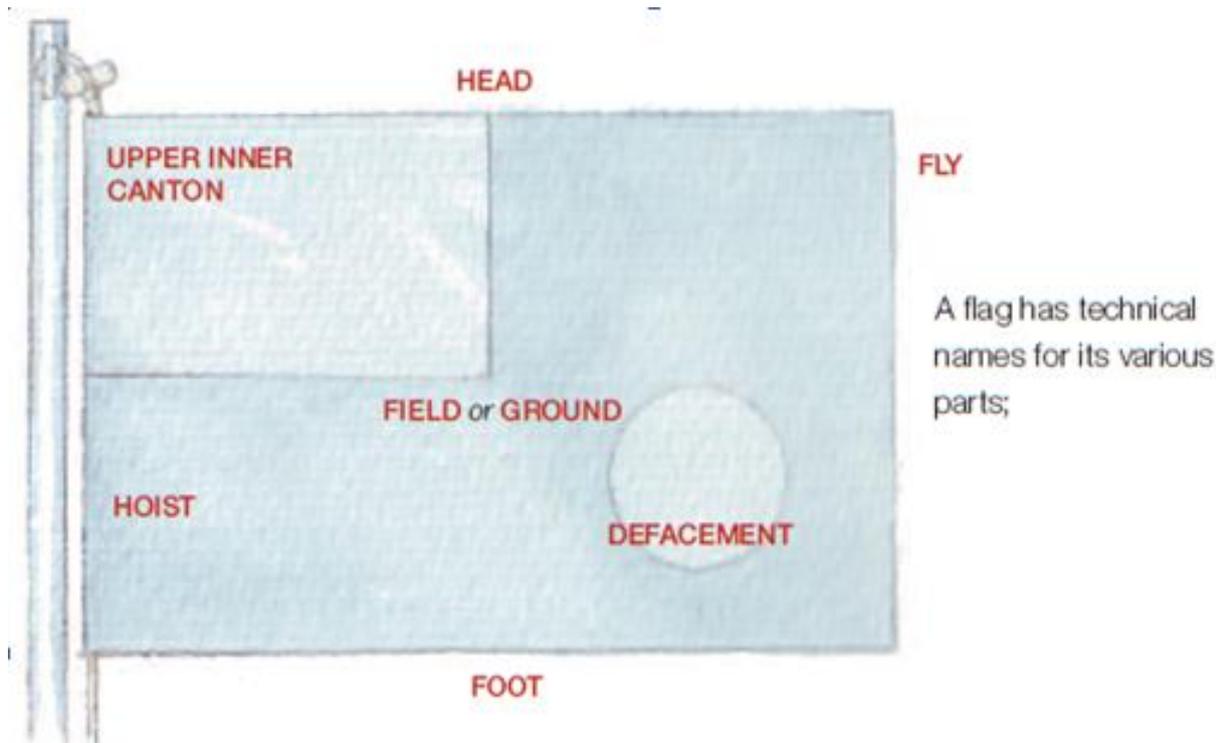


PART II

YACHT REGISTRATION, FLAG ETTIQUETTE AND VISUAL SIGNALS

Part I of this pamphlet deals with the essential elements of registration and flag etiquette, while this part gives detailed advice on the other and less well known aspects of flag etiquette that you will may wish to refer to from time to time.

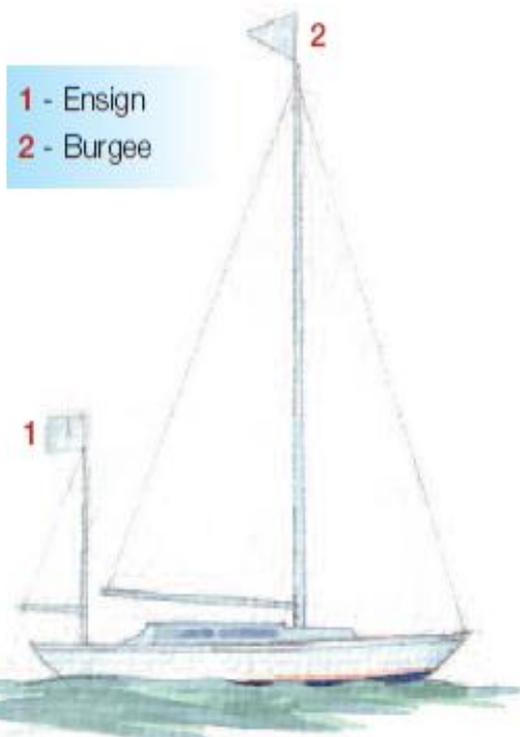
FLAG NOMENCLATURE



- The long side of a rectangular flag is called the **length**.
- The short side nearest the flagpole is called the **breadth, width** or more usually the **hoist**. The half of the flag nearest the flagpole is also called the hoist.
- The top of the flag is just that or the **head**.
- The bottom is called the **foot**.
- The part that flies in the wind (furthest from the mast) is called the **fly**. The half of the flag furthest from the mast is also called the fly.
- The four quarters of the flag are called the **cantons**. Most frequent reference is made to the **upper inner canton** nearest the mast as illustrated. This is where the Union Jack is positioned on a British Ensign.
- The **defacement** is a badge or device in the fly of a special Ensign (see below). In some cases the defacement may be a crown in the Union Jack.
- The **field** or **ground** refers to the general back ground colour of the flag (one of red, white or blue for the Ensigns of the British registry).

ALTERNATIVE POSITIONS FOR ENSIGNS

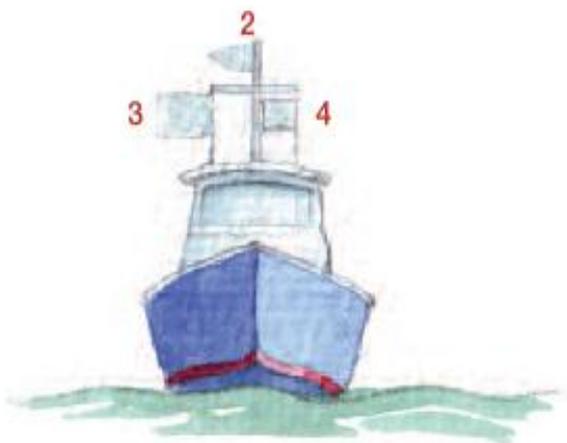
If it is impractical to wear the ensign on the taff rail as specified in part 1, then the following diagrams show the alternate positions from which it may be worn dependant on the rig. The ensign should never be worn at a greater height than the burgee and should be transferred to the taff rail when moored or at anchor.



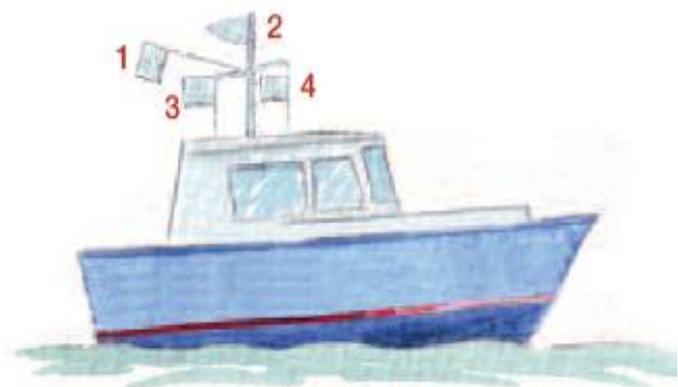
Ketch or Yawl
(at the truck on the mizzen)



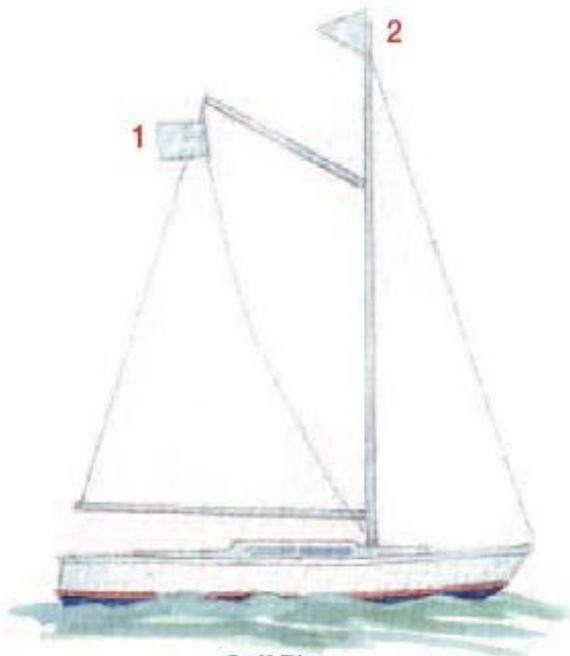
Schooner
Where there are two or more masts always the after mast sail (2/3 of the way up the leech)



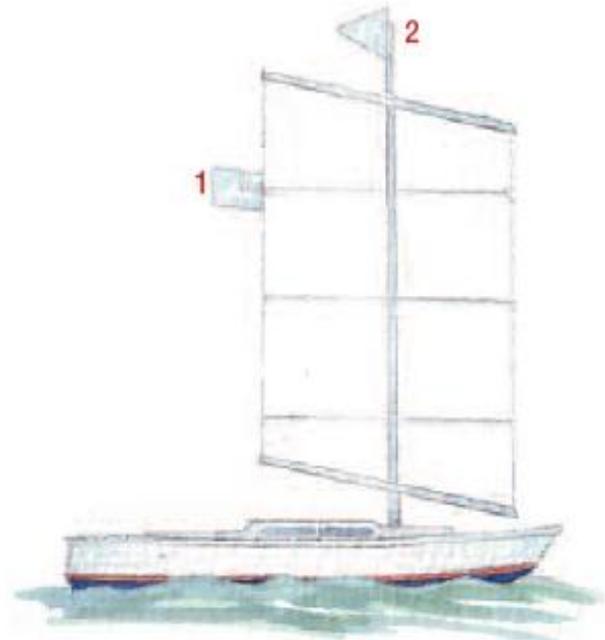
Motor boat from front



Motor boat from side



Gaff Rig
(at the peak)



Junked Rigged
(at the highest batten that is parallel to the waterline and on the after mast sail if there is more than one mast)



Single masted sailing vessel

SPECIAL YACHT CLUB ENSIGNS

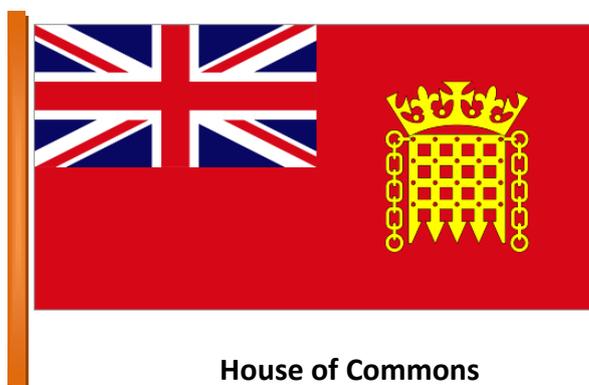
Yacht clubs authorised to use a special Ensign in place of plain Red Ensign are designated in the Navy List. Special Ensigns may be referred to as privileged ensigns, but this is not strictly correct. All the laws that apply to the Red Ensign apply to the special Ensigns together with any additional conditions specified by the club and on the Permit (see conditions for the issue of a permit in the next section). The Yacht must wear the matching burgee. The special Ensigns worn by UK yacht clubs are:

- The White Ensign of Her Majesty's Fleet, worn by the Royal Yacht Squadron alone (see Part 1).
- The Blue Ensign undefaced is worn by 31 clubs (see Part 1).
- The Blue Ensign with defacement or badge of the yacht club in the fly or jack. A defaced Blue Ensign is worn by 61 clubs of which 3 share a crown in the jack.



Army Sailing Association.

- The Red Ensign with defacement or badge of the yacht club in the fly. A defaced Red Ensign is worn by 14 clubs of which 2 share.



House of Commons

- The defaced Blue Ensign of the RAF Sailing Association below is unusual as it has a light blue ground



RYA ENSIGN

A warrant authorising the RYA Ensign (one of the 14 warranted yacht clubs using a defaced Red Ensign) was signed by Viscount Cranbourne in November 1992. It differs from all the others as the RYA is not a club in any sense and the Ensign generally only flies at the shorebased offices of RYA.



RYA Official Duty Ensign



RYA Official Duty Burgee



RYA Members Flag

However, the RYA Ensign and Burgee can be used on board by RYA Officers on official duty. RYA members may use the member's flag flown as such from the port spreaders or in burgee form.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE ISSUE AND USE OF SPECIAL ENSIGNS

These conditions are reproduced on the reverse of each permit.

By Section 4 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, it is an offence to hoist on board any British ship certain colours, flags and pendants without a Warrant from Her Majesty the Queen or from the Secretary of State for Defence. The maximum penalty on conviction on indictment is an unlimited fine. Among the prohibited flags are the Union Flag, the White Ensign, the Blue Ensign (plain or

defaced) and the Red Ensign with any defacement. The prohibition applies to any British ship wherever it may be and so extends not only to tidal waters but equally to rivers, lakes and other inland waters.

Yachts may not wear a special Ensign prohibited above except:

- a. under a Warrant issued to the yacht owner by the Secretary of State for Defence prior to 1 April 1985 and in accordance with the Conditions stated thereon; or
- b. under a Permit issued to a yacht owner by a Yacht Club from 1 April 1985 onwards and in accordance with the Conditions set out below.

Conditions

1. Permit. The Yacht must be issued with a Permit by a Yacht Club pursuant to the granting of a Warrant to that Club by the Secretary of State for Defence.
2. Registration and Measurement.
 - a. Registration. The Yacht must be a ship registered on:
 - (1) Part I of the General Central Register of British Ships; or
 - (2) Part III of the General Central Register of British Ships (for small ships); or
 - (3) the register of ships of a relevant British possession;
 - b. Measurement. The Yacht must have either a gross tonnage of at least 2GT or a length overall of at least 7m.
3. Membership of Designated Yacht Club. The owner or owners of the Yacht must have current membership of one of the Yacht Clubs in the United Kingdom or Channel Islands to which a Warrant has been issued and which is designated in the Navy list.
4. Nationality. The owner or owners must be British citizens.
5. Use of Yacht
 - a. The special Ensign may only be worn on a Yacht used exclusively for private and personal purposes of the owner or owners to whom the Permit is issued.
 - b. The Yacht must not be used for any professional, business or commercial purpose. A Yacht whose name incorporates a name, product or trademark used for business or commercial purposes is not eligible for a Permit.
 - c. A Yacht which is never used for cruising, e.g. a houseboat, is ineligible for a Permit.
6. Limited Companies. A Yacht which is the property of a Limited Company may be eligible for a Permit provided that the provisions of Condition 5 are complied with and the user is a British citizen and a member of a designated Yacht Club.
7. Presence of Holder of Permit. Except under the provisions of Condition 6, a Permit does not confer any authority while the Yacht is being sailed by anyone other than the owner in person, thus a special Ensign may not be worn unless the owner (or user pursuant to Condition 6) of the Yacht is on board, or in effective control of her when she is in harbour or at anchor near

the shore, and the designated Yacht Club's burgee is flown at the main masthead or other suitable position. The Permit must always be carried on board when a special Ensign is worn.

8. Separate Authorisation from each Designated Yacht Club. If the owner or user belongs to more than one of the designated Yacht Clubs, he must have on board the Permit authorising the particular Ensign which is being worn.

Note - A member of a designated Yacht Club who jointly owns a Yacht with a person who is ineligible to belong to that Yacht Club because of restrictive membership qualifications may exceptionally apply for a Permit. All applications under this exception must be supported by written confirmation that the other owner is ineligible for membership of the Yacht Club concerned. A Permit issued in these circumstances is valid only when the owner in whose name the Permit is issued is on board, or in effective control of the Yacht when in harbour or at anchor near the shore.

9. Loan of Yacht for which Permit Issued. It is expressly forbidden for a person borrowing the aforesaid Yacht to wear the special Ensign for which a Permit has been previously issued to the owner by a designated Yacht Club.
10. Return of Permit. When a Yacht is sold, there is a change of ownership, or the owner ceases to be a member of the designated Yacht Club, the Permit must at once be surrendered to the Secretary of the designated Yacht Club who shall forthwith cancel it.
11. Alterations to Permits. No alterations are to be made to Permits. If the name of the Yacht is changed, or alterations are made which affect the register, the Permit is to be withdrawn by the Secretary of the designated Yacht Club. A new Permit may be issued provided the provisions of these Conditions are otherwise satisfied.
12. Permits Lost or Stolen. In the event of a Permit being lost or stolen, the member must forward to the Secretary of the designated Yacht Club a report on the circumstances of the loss and the steps taken to recover it. The Secretary of the designated Yacht Club may, at his discretion, issue a fresh Permit.
13. Tenders. The special Ensign may be worn by any boat which belongs to the Yacht and can conveniently be hoisted on board her.
14. Foreign Cruises. When cruising in foreign waters a Yacht for which a Permit to wear a special Ensign has been issued should take care to avoid any action which might result in complications with a Foreign Power.
15. Validity of a Permit. A Permit for a Yacht to wear a special Ensign becomes invalid if the provisions of the above Conditions are not met. The period of validity of a Permit is a matter for the discretion of each designated Yacht Club but a Permit should not be issued with an expiry date falling after the expiry date of the Yacht's Certificate of Registry.
16. Etiquette. Permit holders may wish to comply with the custom, when in harbour, of hoisting the Ensign at 0800 (15 February to 31 October) otherwise at 0900 and lowering the Ensign at local sunset (or 2100 local time if earlier).

CLUB BURGEES AND THE FLAGS OF FLAG OFFICERS (BROAD PENNANTS)

General rules and conditions

It goes without saying that the owner of a yacht must only fly the burgees of yacht clubs of which he is a member. If a yacht has been borrowed or chartered, the user must only use the burgees of the yacht clubs of which he is a member and not the burgees of the yacht clubs of which the absent owner is a member.

The club burgee of a warranted club must be flown with its corresponding special Ensign. This is an important means of identification for those clubs that fly the same special Ensign.

Nowadays, some yachtsmen strike only the Ensign and leave the burgee flying during the hours of darkness during such time as the owner is in the vicinity of the yacht and is effectively in control of the yacht. This practice is not correct. Only flag officer's broad pennants are worn at night so that the precedence of timings given in Part I can be observed.

The Use of Colours

A yacht can only sail under the colours of one club at a time. The practice of flying more than one burgee anywhere is incorrect. A yachtsman may indicate membership of more than one club by the use of a 'member's flag' flown from the port spreaders.

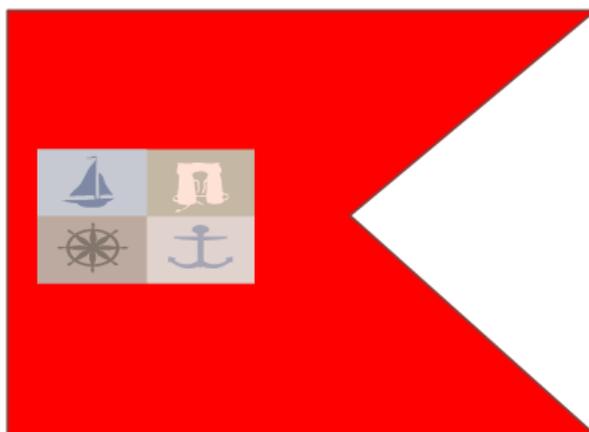
Although it will usually be obvious which colours to wear, the following rules will give guidance:

- If an owner is a flag officer of a yacht club he should fly his flag officer's flag and wear the appropriate Ensign in preference to any other burgee and Ensign, wherever he may be.
- If an owner is not a flag officer, he should simply wear the colours of his senior (the older) club.
- If an owner belongs to more than one club, then he may wear the colours of a junior club on its regatta or festival days whilst in its waters.

Flag Officer's Flags

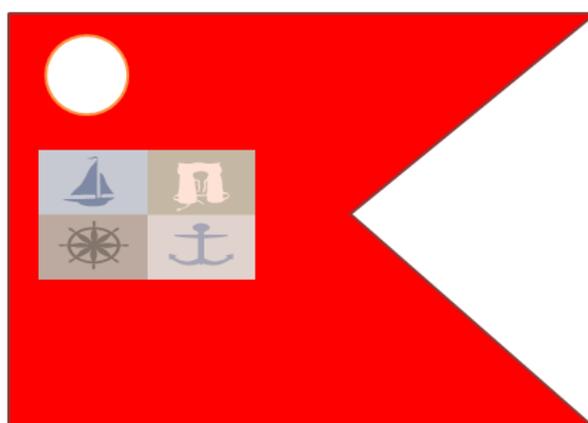
Flag officers other than an admiral (see members' flags below) are recognised by the use of a swallow tailed flag of similar design to the club burgee. These are called broad pennants. The following pennants* are in common use:

*a fictitious defacement has been used for illustrative purposes

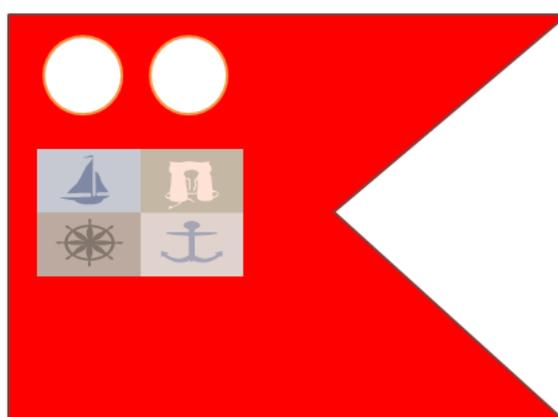


Commodore's Pennant

The vice and rear commodore's pennants are distinguished from the commodore's pennant by one and two balls respectively in the upper inner canton:



Vice Commodore's Pennant

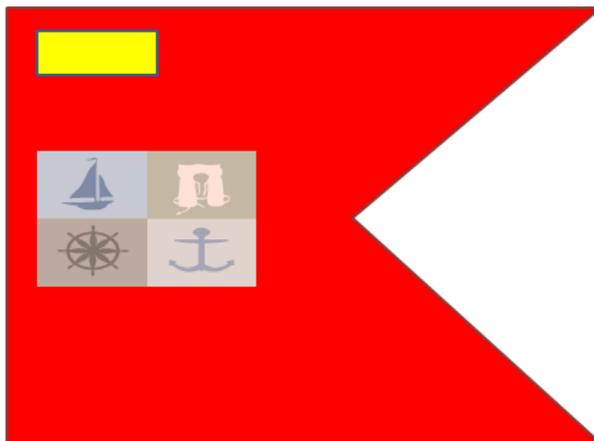


Rear Commodore's Pennant

The special flag of a flag officer of a yacht club corresponds in principle to the personal or distinguishing flag of a flag officer of the Royal Navy. In the Royal Navy the flag is flown continuously by day and by night whilst the flag officer is in exercise of his command. Thus the

special flag of a flag officer of a yacht club should be flown continuously by day and by night when the flag officer is in the vicinity of his yacht and can be described as being in control, except when he chooses to fly a racing flag or the sailing instructions require him to do so.

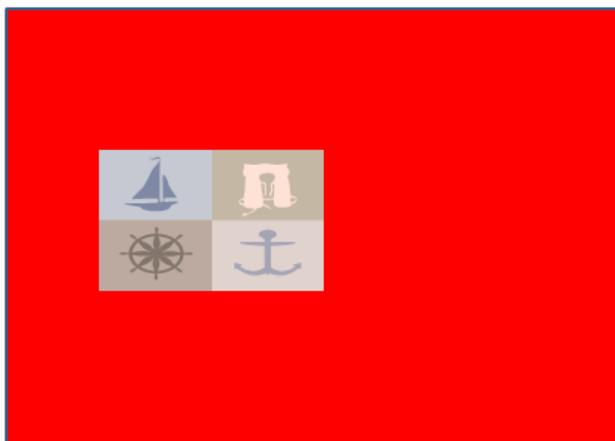
Some ancient Yacht Clubs and those with significant history may permit the use of additional flags, for example for honorary commodore's pennant. An example is shown below:



The special flag of an Honorary Appointment may be denoted by some device in the upper inner canton

Member's Flags

A member's flag is usually a rectangular flag of the same design as the club burgee flown from the Port spreaders. They denote membership of clubs under whose burgee the yacht is not being sailed. It should be noted that this same flag flown from the masthead in place of a burgee denotes an admiral of the club if it is so prescribed in the Club rules, **so beware and note the importance of positioning your flags correctly.**



Member's flag if flown from port spreaders BUT an Admirals flag if flown in place of the club burgee

LAND FLAGS

The Union Flag (Jack), the crosses of St George, St Andrew, St Patrick and the Welsh Dragon or any other civil ensign such as the Cornish flag which are land flags should not be worn at sea or as an ensign. It has however, become practice for owners to signal their nationality. To fly these flags from the port spreaders would cause the least offence, however there is no real place for them in Flag Etiquette and their use is not condoned. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) states that the Ensign must indicate the vessel's registration and there are penalties for not doing so.



Variations of the Ensigns proper to the British Register are illegal no matter how patriotic or nationalistic you may feel!

HOUSE FLAGS

Distinguishing flags of yachtsmen together with other similar flags should be flown from the port spreaders, but are frequently hoisted from the forestay.

THE PILOT, CIVIL OR MERCHANT JACK



A Union Jack with a white border, was formerly used to request a pilot and may only be used by UK Registered ships. Nowadays, known as the civil jack, it may be flown by any UK registered vessel from a jack staff at the bow whilst at anchor or in harbour. Merchant ships however may fly their own house flags in its place.

EURO FLAG

The Dark Blue European Flag with 12 gold mullets (stars, single point uppermost) is not an ensign and may not be defaced with the union flag. It is a land flag and should be accorded the same procedures and positioning as other land flags.



The Euro Flag

The flag below has no official status and its use as an ensign is illegal however pro-European you are.



RACING FLAGS

As a general rule, no ensign is worn when a yacht is racing. This indicates that she is amenable to the racing rules but does not exonerate her from the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea 1972 as amended or COLREGs. However, it may occasionally be necessary for yachts engaged, for example, in an offshore race, to *show their colours* when in foreign territorial waters or when entering a foreign port. It is sometimes the practice that yachts, not engaged in racing will as an act of courtesy, keep clear of yachts that are racing however, it should never be assumed that this will be the case. Similarly it should be expected that a vessel not racing will strictly adhere to COLREGs in any meeting or crossing situation.

Racing flag

A special rectangular flag that replaces the club burgee whilst a vessel is subject to the racing rules; sadly it is seldom used. Strictly speaking a burgee should never be worn whilst racing.

Retirement

If a yacht retires from a race, the committee should be informed and the racing flag replaced by the burgee together with the Ensign to indicate that she is no longer amenable to the racing rules.

PRIZE FLAGS

The custom of hoisting prize flags has virtually ceased but if it is desired to fly prize flags the following general comments may be of use:

- The prize flag is a rectangular flag similar to a racing flag only smaller.
- The second and third prizes are distinguished by the flag being hoisted inferior to the first prize. A blue flag marked with a white figure 2 signifies second prize
- A red flag marked with white figure 3 signifies third prize.

The prize flags are flown on completion of racing to indicate any prizes won. The rules can be summarised as follows:

1. At the end of a day's racing, the prize flag is hoisted to indicate any prize won in the day's race.
2. At the end of a day's racing, when it is the last day of a regatta lasting several days, the yacht may hoist one prize flag for each prize won during that regatta, second and third prizes indicated by 2 and 3 pendants as already described. Alternatively if the yacht is remaining in the port where the regatta was held, she may show all her prizes for that regatta on the day after the regatta ceases. She may also show all prizes won in the regatta when she returns to her home port, flying the flags on arrival and the next day.
3. On the next day after the last race of the season a yacht can hoist prize flags showing all the prizes won during the season, and she can also do this on return to her home port at the end of the season; generally it is recommended that they be flown on the day after arrival as well. If the person in charge is confident that a prize has been won, the appropriate prize flag may be hoisted immediately after the end of the race.

If it is desired to fly from a yacht a series of prize flags to indicate prizes won in a regatta or over the season, these should be hoisted as soon as she anchors or moors after the last race of the series and, or in addition, they may be hoisted with the Colours in the morning. When only a few prize flags are being flown they should be flown from the burgee halyards, below the burgee, or they may be flown from the starboard upper crosstrees. When a large number of prize flags are flown, for instance at the end of the season, they should be flown on a dressing line from the main masthead to the taffrail or boom end, and if there are more flags to be flown than can be accommodated, the balance should be flown on a line from the masthead to the stern.



MOURNING

For National mourning, ensigns and any jacks should be half masted for the day of the death until the next time of striking colours. They should not be half masted again until the day of the funeral when they are raised at the time of the internment or cremation. Half masting between these days is reserved for the death of the sovereign when flags are half masted for the entire time of official mourning dependant on the instructions given by the Palace.

It should be noted that nowadays, it may not be prudent to lay down the law about sunset on the day of death. If someone dies late in the day then flags could be half masted for the next day. i.e. "So they have had their fare share".

For Private Mourning within a club, the club burgee is 'halfmasted' as well.



Halfmast = 2/3 up the staff

SALUTING

It is customary for yachts to salute the following: All Royal Yachts; all warships, both British and foreign; Flag Officers of a yacht club when the yacht making the salute is wearing the burgee of that club. (It is customary when in their own waters for yachts to salute a Flag Officer only once a day).

Salutes are made by dipping the Ensign, i.e. lowering it slowly to a position about one-third from the lower end of the ensign staff (the Ensign should not be lowered so far that it cannot fly). There it remains until the saluted vessel dips in acknowledgement and begins to re-hoist her Ensign. The burgee and the special flag of a Flag Officer of a yacht club should never be dipped when saluting.

Yachts entering or leaving a port, where the yacht club whose burgee the yacht is flying is situated, may salute the club by dipping the Ensign. This is more desirable if the flag of a Flag Officer is flying at the time from the club flagstaff. The club should respond by dipping its Ensign.



Hoisted close up



Dipped = 1/3 way up staff

Salutes by canon (or suitable sound) may be fired on special occasions:

- A royal salute - 21 guns
- A Commodore - 11 guns
- A Vice Commodore - 9 guns
- A Rear Commodore - 7 guns

DRESSING SHIP

There are 2 ways of dressing ship; with masthead flags when under way and overall (rainbow fashion) when not under way. Vessels only dress when in or near a harbour or anchorage.

Dressing with masthead flags

The flags flown are:

The Ensign in its normal place together with ensigns of the same size repeated at each masthead plus your burgee alongside the ensign at the main masthead. However, Flag officers fly only their broad pennants at the main masthead. For a foreign festival a Flag Officer replaces his courtesy flag at the starboard spreader with the appropriate foreign ensign (size as masthead). In addition, the burgee only is flown at the main masthead for local and club regattas.

Dressing overall

Flags as above adding dressing lines as prescribed below

Dressing lines consist of stringing the flags of the International Code from the stem head to the masthead, from the masthead to masthead (where the ship has more than one mast) and thence to the taffrail. It is important that Ensigns, racing or other private flags should not be used on the dressing lines (i.e. the string of flags going overall), which should be confined to flags of the International Code of Signals. In arranging the flags on the dressing lines, triangular flags and pendants should, as far as possible, be placed between rectangular flags (this cannot be done throughout, however, as there are not enough pendants and triangular flags). Adjacent flags should be chosen to give as much contrast as possible, if the full complement of flags is unavailable. All vessels should, as far as possible, be dressed alike. There is no official order for dressing flags but the following has come into use and is recommended.

E, Q, p3, G, p8, Z, p4, W, p6, P, p1, I, Code, T, Y, B, X, 1st, H, 3rd,
D, F, 2nd, U, A, O, M, R, p2, J, PO, N, p9, K, p7, V, p5, L, C, S.

In a single-masted vessel the divide at the masthead would be between the 3rd substitute and flag D. In a twin masted vessel flags from Y to O should be between the masts. This order can be made up by any reputable flag supplier. It is important that the size of the flags fits your vessel and that they are spaced correctly to fill the dressing lines.

In addition to the ship's Colours (her Ensign) which should still be worn at its usual place, i.e. the Ensign staff on the taffrail, flags – generally Ensigns – should also be flown from each masthead when the ship is dressed. It is important that there is a flag at each masthead, and the flags flown at the masthead should be in accordance with the following:

1. For British national festivals British Ensigns are flown at all mastheads; at the main masthead the Ensign and the club burgee are flown side by side. There is, however, an exception to this rule when the owner of the yacht is a Flag Officer of a yacht club. In that case, his personal flag is flown by itself at the main masthead without any Ensign. It follows, that if such a yacht is a single masted yacht, no masthead Ensign can be flown.
2. For foreign national festivals (either in British waters or abroad) an Ensign of the country in whose honour the ship is dressed is flown at the masthead. For schooners or yachts with more than two masts, the foreign Ensign is flown at the fore, for yawls and ketches at the mizzen, and for single-masted yachts it is flown at the main masthead alongside the club burgee. British Ensigns are flown at the other mastheads. Flag Officer broad pennants are always flown by themselves at the masthead. For a foreign festival a Flag Officer replaces his courtesy flag at the starboard spreader with the appropriate foreign ensign (size as masthead).
3. For local festivals, such as regattas, the club burgee should be flown at the main masthead with no Ensign. The owner's house flag may also be flown in its usual place or, alternatively, an Ensign may be flown. An Ensign should also be flown at all other mastheads where no other flag is flying.

In all the above cases, if the owner is entitled to wear the special Ensign of a privileged yacht club, he may fly either this Ensign at the masthead or a Red Ensign, but, should he elect to wear a special Ensign, the same special Ensign must be flown at the masthead. The special Ensign of one yacht club should never be flown from the masthead at the same time as the special Ensign of another yacht club is worn from the taffrail.

Dates for dressing ship

The principal national festivals of Great Britain currently celebrated by dressing ship are: Accession Day; Coronation Day; HM The Queen's birthday; Commonwealth Day; HM The Queen's Official birthday (usually the first Saturday in June); HRH The Duke of Edinburgh's birthday.

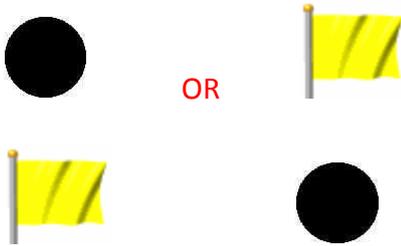
In addition to these fixed days, owners may wish to dress ship for any special private occasion and to follow the example of local vessels when away from their home port. Foreign countries have their own national festivals which may be celebrated by dressing ship. Visiting yachts may, as a courtesy, follow the local customs.

SIGNALLING

A full list of the international code of signals is given at part III. Those listed below are the more common that should be understood and are covered by the Yachtmaster® syllabus. Signals are hoisted at the signal station i.e. the starboard spreader.

DISTRESS SIGNALLING

Distress Signalling is important and should not be underestimated. The DSC alert and distress call are over in moments and needs a pair of hands to work. Similarly smoke, flares and many other distress methods finish too quickly or need a crew member to function. A flag keeps flying and leaves hands free to work.



Anchor ball either over or under a square shape (any flag is obviously convenient), once hoisted, this signal requires no further effort to be maintained.



Flag N above C, again once hoisted, this signal requires no further effort to be maintained.

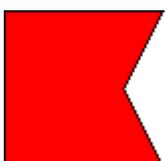


Flag O - Man Overboard Normally attached on the Dan Buoy

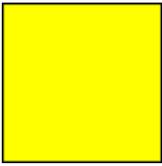
ROUTINE SIGNALLING



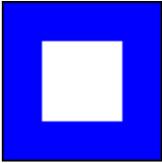
Flag A – Vessel engaged in diving operations. This flag should be ½ yard in the hoist so that it clearly visible at distance. Normally made out of plastic or some other solid material so that it ‘flies’ when there is no wind!



Flag B – I am carrying dangerous cargo. If you see this stay clear.



Flag Q - My ship is healthy and I require free pratique



Flag P - *The Blue Peter* All aboard the vessel is about to set sail. Very useful for signalling crew who are ashore, particularly if at anchor or out of mobile phone reception.



Flag V – I require assistance. Note this is not a distress signal

SIGNAL GROUPS

The International Code of Signals 1969 lists many different selected groups of code flags that have a specific meaning. The most common of these that is still seen today in harbours and naval ports is:



Flag R over Flag Y - This means keep clear and keep your speed down

