

Question: I would like to buy an American flag for my boat. What size is right for my boat? Is there a right or wrong place to fly it?
Susan, Copiague

Answer: There is something in a Skipper's (S) psyche, or maybe in his soul, that is stirred to make him/her swell with a sense of exhilaration and pride when he/she unfurls an American flag onboard his/her own vessel. The sense of pride is in having the boat revealed to the entire world. "This is an American vessel," somehow gives the Skipper the true feeling of command. Even the size of the vessel grows in the Skipper's eyes when an American flag is hoisted up the yardarm, flag halyard, flagstaff or set on a stern staff. Displaying the American flag onboard says that the boat is not a "neighborhood boat" but represents the whole U. S. of A. wherever it travels.

Flying the American flag can be done only when the vessel is owned by or registered as an American vessel. It should be flown from sunrise to sunset. The ensign or yachting flag with an anchor and a circle of thirteen stars is flown when on inland waters (inside the Colregs line) when at anchor, moored, docked and underway. The national or "Stars and Stripes" flag is flown similarly and when on the open sea, when meeting another vessel and when wishing to be recognized or cruising in foreign waters.

The flag size is close to the formula of one inch on the fly which is measured from the header, halyard or staff end out to the fly end and along the fly (length), for each foot of boat length; thus a 28-foot boat could fly a flag up to 30 inches on the fly. The hoist or top to bottom (width of the flag) is approximately two-thirds of the length.



by Captain Stan Glatzer

American Flag Etiquette For Boats

Portable Fire Extinguisher Locations

Flying the flag upside down is thought of by some as a signal that the vessel is in distress. This is not proper etiquette for displaying the flag, although this method is used and recognized in an emergency situation. Flying the flag that represents the nation, not your vessel, upside down signifies that the nation is in dire straits and is in need of assistance.

On powerboats the flag is primarily flown at the stern on a staff no longer than two times the height of the flag. Sailing vessels fly the flag the same as a power vessel when under power. When under sail, the flag is displayed at

the starboard spreader, the leach of the main-sail, or the stern staff. It is definitely poor etiquette to display the national flag at the bow of the vessel.

Remember that when you fly the national flag you represent the whole country and should operate the vessel in a manner exemplifying the pride you have in being a citizen of that country and the knowledge that you are privileged to be able to do what you are doing.

Question: Where is the best place to put a fire extinguisher on my twenty-six foot Grady White?

Bob, Oakdale

Answer: A fire extinguisher is an **emergency** item. This means it should be available in an instant. The rules require that all portable extinguishers are to be mounted in a holder and not left to be moved about the boat when not in use. Searching for one under a pile of PFDs or in a cabinet when the flames are climbing the curtains is not conducive to good health.

Try to imagine where you might be when a fire breaks out. Where would be the best place to mount the extinguisher for that situation? An extinguisher mounted in the cockpit area on a bulkhead or on the *outside* of a locker door, unimpeded by any equipment, is recommended. This extinguisher is available any time you have to enter the cabin from the cockpit. *Do not place a portable fire extinguisher inside a closed locker.* Collisions and shifting equipment could put the doorframe out of square and the door could be jammed shut. The extinguisher, though onboard, is useless. Never place an ex-

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