



Chart Storage Tubes

Paul Esterle has been building or repairing watercraft, of all descriptions, for longer than he cares to admit, from hovercraft to power and sailboats. Paul specializes in boat improvement and repair projects utilizing wood, epoxy, and fiberglass.

If you have any questions about your boat project, contact Paul at pesterle@comcast.net.

by Paul W. Esterle

While renovating my quarter-berth, I had occasion to remove the headliner overhead. I was amazed to see a huge empty area. This area was actually the inside of the cockpit coaming or backrest. The area appeared to be about 18 inches high, just about as wide and almost the full length of the quarter-berth. I immediately had visions of opening up the back bulkhead, inside the cabin, to access this newfound area.

Upon calmer reflection, I realized that this area posed several problems. The nuts for the winch and cleat mounting bolts were overhead, a stanchion mounting was near the hull/deck joint and several major electrical cables ran through the area. I hated to lose that area, so I came up with an alternative. I would add a series of tubes to hold charts or flags and the ensign staff. A slight complication was that they had to be removable so that I could access the mounting nuts when necessary.

I had used PVC tubing in several other boat-related projects before and that was my first choice for this one. However, while wandering around the local home improvement cen-



Tube opening cut, tubes cut to length and in place

ter, I came across something that would be ideal. There were stacks of white vinyl fence posts just asking to be used. They were four inches square and came in various lengths and would be ideal for the project at hand.

With the vinyl fence posts in hand and the headliner removed, I tried the posts in various locations. I found that I had room for three

tubes, running almost the full length of the quarter-berth. They would run just above the cleats that the headliner attaches to and would have to be supported at the aft end.

With the location of the tubes identified, the next step was to cut the opening in the cabin bulkhead, a step approached with some trepidation. Since the bulkhead is at an angle, the top and bottom cuts had to be made at an angle so those edges were horizontal. The opening was made slightly undersized so it could be closely fitted to the tubes.

The end of the tubes stopped at the bulkhead at the aft end of the quarter-berth. I cut four-inch square support blocks from a scrap piece of two-inch x six-inch. These blocks slipped inside the tubes and would be fastened to the aft bulkhead. With the opening sized and the tubes temporarily blocked in place, the tubes could be scribed to length and cut. With the tubes in place, I drew locating marks across the bottom of the tubes and marked them as inside, middle and outside. With the tubes removed, I used regular plumbing PVC cement to glue

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