

Vessel Flag Etiquette



- Stern flag: For most recreational vessels, this must be the flag which indicates where your vessel is documented, regardless of who is aboard or where you are located. e.g Canadian, United States, England, etc “Country” flags. It tells the Navy, Coast Guard and other countries where your vessel is from. (Errors could easily result in a boarding by officials)
- The starboard halyard is considered the side of honor and the port side is generally for working flags.



- Courtesy flags should be flown from the outermost halyard on the starboard side or if no halyard from an antenna or if your vessel is mastless, it should display the "courtesy flag" at the bow.
- You should not fly two flags from the same halyard. You may move the lesser status flag to the port side if you need to fly a second flag.
- Working flags such as “divers over the side” shall be flown from the port side.
- If you have no stern post and fly the Country flag from a center mast, it will be the highest flag on the vessel.
- Country Yacht club, Power Squadron, officer flags, and others should not be flown outside the US.
- Courtesy flags should not be flown when returning to your Country.
- **When to fly your flags:** Your vessel should display the flag between 8 a.m. and sunset. While in port, if you leave the vessel without intending to return before sunset, you should lower and stow the flag before you leave. When entering or leaving port, you should fly the flag, weather permitting, regardless of the time of day.
- When a foreign guest is aboard, you may display the ensign of the guest's country from the bow staff or outboard port spreader. Should more than one such guest flag be appropriate, wear them on spreader halyards from port to starboard in the alphabetical order of their countries' names in the English language. (Assumes multiple halyards on the port side)

For More info: http://www.usps.org/f_stuff/etiquett.html