



Wearing Special Ensign Rules

From 1st April 1985 a new General Warrant empowered the Flag Officers and Committee of each privileged Club to issue permits to all British Members whose yachts satisfy the qualifying conditions:

- a. Yachts registered under the Merchant Shipping Act 1984 (Part I Register) which measure not less than 2 tons gross.
- b. Yachts entered on the Small Ships Register (SSR Part III) of not less than 7m overall length.

Duration of Permit

Permits issued to Part I registered yachts cease to be valid when the Part I registration certificate expires, the ownership of the yacht changes or until the owner ceases to be an RMYC member.

Permits issued to yachts on the SSR Part III cease to be valid when the SSR Part III certificate expires, when the yacht is sold or when the owner ceases to be an RMYC member.

The permit shall at all times be revocable at the discretion of the Flag Officers and the Committee of the RMYC. Expired, invalid or revoked Permits must be returned at once to the Secretary, or may be retained as a souvenir, provided the Secretary is notified.

How to Apply

A member owning an eligible yacht may obtain an "Application to fly the Blue Ensign" from the RMYC office. This should be completed and returned with the Registration Certificate (or a photocopy) and a £5 processing fee. The Permit will be sent to the member. If the Certificate is to be sent by registered post please add £4 to the processing fee.

Contravention of Condition

Privileged clubs are required to ensure that special ensigns are worn correctly and only by entitled owners. Serious contravention of the rules which come to the attention of the Ministry of Defence could result in revocation of the Club's General Warrant. To safeguard the privilege, the General Manager will follow up any abuses brought to their attention.

Conditions are printed on the Permit but, in brief, are:

- a. The special Ensign authorised by the Permit may not be flown unless the Owner is on board or in effective control of the yacht when she is in harbour or at anchor near the shore.
- b. The special Ensign may only be worn on a yacht used exclusively for the private and personal purposes of the yachtsman to whom the certificate is issued.
- c. The privileged Ensign is never to be worn unless the Burgee (or appropriate Flag Officers Broad Pennant) of the issuing Club is also flown at the same time. The Permit does not give permission to wear the privileged Ensign with the Burgee of any other Club even if that is also a Privileged Club.

NOTE. The Ensign may NOT be worn without first hoisting the RMYC's burgee.

The Permit draws attention to the Naval custom, when in Harbour, of hoisting the Ensign at 08.00 BST and lowering it at 21.00, (or sunset, if late in the season). (Hoisting at 09.00 and lowering at sunset, between 20th September and 25th March), RMYC members are particularly asked to comply.

Members wearing the Blue Ensign on their yachts must demonstrate their entitlement by flying the RMYC's Burgee, preferably at the masthead or failing that, then at the starboard spreader, properly peaked up. Please note: It should NOT be worn on a jack staff at the bow of the boat. The use of an aerial amidships is acceptable as a temporary flag staff, if nothing else will serve, but the Burgee must be higher than the Blue Ensign, if an Ensign is worn. Note. They cannot be worn on the same staff.

Flag Officer's Pennants

The Pennant of the Commodore is a swallow-tailed pennant of the same proportions and colouring as the Burgee. The Pennants of the Vice Commodore and the Rear Commodores are similar to the Commodore's except that the Vice Commodore's Pennant has one white ball in the inner canton, next to the hoist, and the Rear Commodore's Pennant has two vertical white balls in the same position. A past Commodore's Pennant is the same as the Commodore's Pennant but narrows towards the fly and has a white band fimbriated [inset] around the fly.

A Flag Officer shall fly his Pennant only from the mast head of the highest mast, instead of the club Burgee. It is flown day and night whilst in command of his vessel.

The traditional custom of taking your time for hoisting and lowering your Ensign from the senior ship in the area, e.g., when in sight of a Club Flag Officer, should be observed whenever possible.

Position of Flags

The preferred position for the Burgee is from the mainmast truck or head. (Please see foot note). In a power boat, it should be flown from a signal mast over the main cabin. The Ensign, in both cases should be flown from a staff at the stern. (see foot note).

Courtesy Ensigns

It is customary and sometimes law, to fly the maritime Ensign of the country being visited from the starboard spreader. It should be the only flag on the hoist, the "Q" flag being flown from the port spreader. If the Club burgee is normally flown from the starboard spreader, then a second halyard should be prepared which can be used on the same spreader. The outer halyard[senior] being used for the courtesy Ensign and the inner halyard for the Club Burgee.

Dressing Ship

For National or local festivals, yachts when at anchor or berthed alongside, may dress overall. It is incorrect to proceed under way whilst dressed overall. The only flags "on strings" to be used in dressing overall are the International Code of Signals. Burgees and Ensigns stay in their usual positions.

The order of flags on a single masted vessel is:

From bow to masthead E, Q, P3, G, P8, Z, P4, W, P6, P, P1, I, answering pennant, T, Y, B, X, 1st substitute, H, 3rd substitute.

From masthead to stern D, F, 2nd substitute, U, A, O, M, R, P2, J, P0, N, P9, K, P7, V, P5, L, C, S.

Salutes

The Blue Ensign should be dipped to Warships of all nations. The Ensign is held at the dip (a third of the way down the staff) until the Warships answers, at which time the Ensign should be peaked up to its original position.

As a final reminder: **IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY THE SPECIAL ENSIGN BE WORN ON ITS OWN WITHOUT THE RMYC BURGEE (OR FLAG OFFICER'S BROAD PENNANT) BEING HOISTED AND FLOWN FIRST, AND REMOVED LAST.**

We have a proud tradition of wearing the un-defaced Blue Ensign, a gift of the Royal Family and the Admiralty. To uphold this tradition we should not fly other flags with the Club Burgee if it is flown on a spreader halyard, nor should "strings of flags" be

seen anywhere on the vessel. Burgees should not be left flying when the boat is left on a mooring, in a berth or if the owner is away.

Yacht flag etiquette is, for the most part, derived from the custom and usage of the Royal Navy. Our Club's minor traditions, notwithstanding, we try to follow the customs and traditions of the Senior Service. It is old fashioned and traditional, but must be carried out correctly.

Note: It is acknowledged that some modern vessels present difficulties for hoisting a burgee. Help and designs are available through the Club Secretary, in order to assist members in the correct wearing of a Club burgee at the mainmast, above aerials, wind indicators etc.

Burgees and other flags worn in the proper fashion declare that the owner of a vessel is proud to be a member of the Royal Motor Yacht Club.