

Royal Cork Yacht Club Flag Etiquette

Flag Etiquette refers to the use of flags on sailing and motorised craft of all sizes. In some cases this etiquette is regulated by law, and in other cases it has developed through custom and tradition and has become expected behaviour. The misuse of flags may give rise to offence or insult, even if unintended.

This document is intended for the use of members of the Royal Cork Yacht Club as a source of information if or when required or needed. All references are to leisure craft unless otherwise stated.

General Flag Guidance

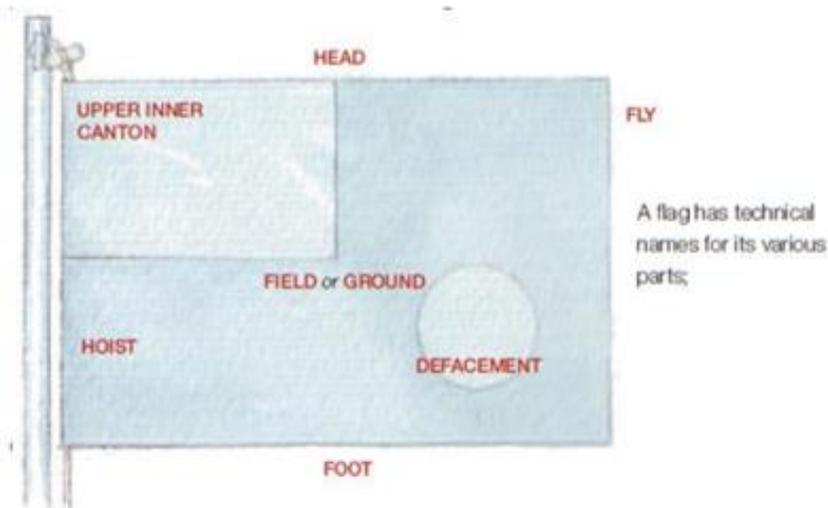
The Hoist of a flag is that vertical edge that is next to the flagstaff after it has been raised or hoisted. The Hoist will frequently have re-enforced eyes or lanyards sewn in to assist attachment to halyards. The Fly is that loose horizontal portion of the flag that flies to the wind. The proportions of a flag are normally given as a ratio. For example, the **Club Burgee** has a fly to hoist ratio of 3:2 and the **Club Ensign** has a fly to hoist ratio of 2:1.

Distinguishing flags, club burgees, club ensigns, house flags, etc., are said to be **worn** by vessels and individuals, however they may also be **flown** on board a vessel or ashore. Other types of flags are always described as being flown. For example, the Club Ensign is worn or flown. A protest flag is flown.

All flags should be maintained in a good condition. Flags that are faded or frayed should be replaced. Flags, particularly the Club Ensign and Club Burgee, should be treated with respect and carefully rolled or folded and stowed when not in use.

With very few exceptions flags should never be made up and broken out. That is to say that a flag, particularly any Club Flag, should not be folded into a ball, bound with its halyard using a slip knot and subsequently released after being hoisted.

FLAG NOMENCLATURE



Club Insignia, Flags and Pennants

The appearance of, and correct use of Club Insignia, Flags and Pennants is described in the Rules of the Royal Cork Yacht Club, published in 2010.

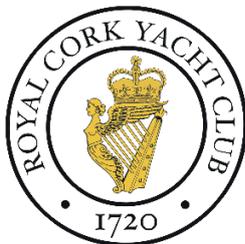
Club Emblem:

A Maid of Erin Harp surmounted by a crown with the date 1720 beneath.



Club Roundel:

Two circles, one inside the other. Within the smaller circle a Maid of Erin Harp surmounted by a crown. Between the circles "ROYAL CORK YACHT CLUB 1720"



Members may display either the Club Emblem or the Club Roundel on suitable locations such as the stern of their own vessel.

In addition to the Club Emblem and the Club Roundel, Club Insignia includes all representations of Club Flags as described and illustrated elsewhere in these Rules.

The Club Insignia shall not be used in connection with any commercial purpose whatever, other than those agreed with the Club.

Club Flags

Members of the Royal Cork Yacht Club should either fly the National flag or the Club Ensign incorporating the defaced National flag.

Club Ensign: The field azure, in the first quarter the National Tricolour of green, white and orange; in the centre of the fourth quarter a harp of five strings within three antique crowns one on each side and one below and beneath the legend 1720, all gold. The Club Ensign shall have a fly to hoist ratio of 2:1



The Club Ensign is normally flown from a prominent position on the stern. It may also be flown from the spanker gaff of a gaff-rigged vessel, providing that the Club Burgee is worn at the truck of the mast, or main mast. In the case of a vessel with two or more masts and with the Club Burgee worn at the main mast, the Club Ensign may be worn at the truck of the aftermost mast. In exceptional circumstances as on a Bermudian rigged vessel the Club Ensign may be worn one-third down along the leech of the mainsail or mizzen sail.

Ensign Size

A guideline for ensign size is frequently given as one inch along the fly of the ensign to one foot of vessel length. However it is more often simply a matter of aesthetics and practicality. If the flag looks right on a vessel then it is probably the right size. Care should be taken that an ensign worn on the transom does not dip into the water.

Royal Cork Yacht Club House Flag

The House Flag identifies the individual as a member of the RCYC. It is flown, for example, when a member of the RCYC is also a member of another club and is sailing as a member of that club and is flying their Ensign and Burgee. The house flag of the RCYC may be flown from the lower port spreader. House flags, like Burgees, are flown in order of seniority.



Royal Cork Yacht Club Burgees and flags

These denote the membership of the club and should, by tradition, be flown from the masthead. When flown at the masthead it is usually hoisted on its own pole, separate from the mast, and should be flown higher than the Ensign/Defaced Ensign

RCYC member's Burgee

Red triangular pennant with a gold Maid of Erin Harp surmounted by a crown in the centre, without 1720 beneath. The Club Burgees shall have a fly to hoist ratio of 3:2



RCYC Flag Officers

RCYC Flag Officers and Past Flag Officers are entitled to fly pennants denoting their status instead of the RCYC burgee.

Flag Officers' Pennants

Admiral's Pennant:

Rectangular red field with a gold Maid of Erin Harp and crown in the centre.



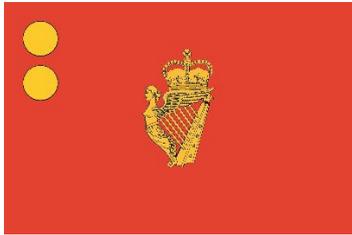
Vice-Admiral's Pennant:

Rectangular red field with a gold Maid of Erin Harp and crown in the centre. This flag shall incorporate one gold ball in the upper canton (or quarter) nearest the hoist.



Rear-Admiral's Pennant:

Rectangular red field with gold Maid of Erin Harp and crown in the centre. This flag shall incorporate two gold balls, one above the other, in the upper canton nearest the hoist.



All Flag Officers' pennants shall have a fly to hoist ratio of 3:2

The style of harp depicted shall be that known as the Maid of Erin.

Past Flag Officers' Pennants

The pennants for all past Flag Officers shall be as described for current Flag Officers but with the addition of a vertical gold bar, positioned at one fifth the length of the fly from the hoist.

While the office of Commodore no longer exists, Past Commodores shall be entitled to wear a swallow tailed Past Commodore's Pennant.

All Past Flag Officers' pennants shall have a fly to hoist ratio of 3:2

The style of harp depicted shall be that known as the Maid of Erin.

Past Admiral



Past Vice Admiral



Past Rear Admiral



Past Commodore



Protocol for Flag Officers' Pennants and Club Burgee on board Members' Yachts

Flag Officers' Pennants or the Club Burgee shall be worn whenever the Club Ensign is flown.

Flag Officers' Pennants or the Club Burgee shall not be worn when an Ensign other than the Club Ensign is flown.

Flag Officers' Pennants or the Club Burgee shall be worn clear of the highest masthead. Should this prove impossible then they may be worn from the lower starboard spreaders.

Flying of Club Insignia, Flags and Pennants

When the burgee is flown, the defaced ensign should also be flown.

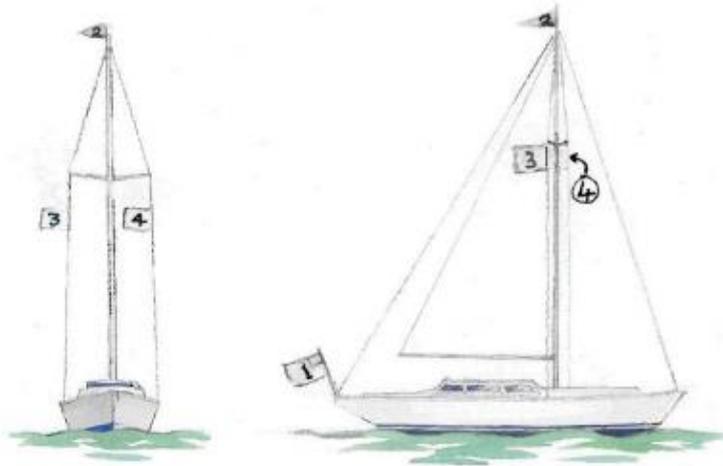
The starboard spreader is reserved for signalling (such as a courtesy flag when visiting another country). However if it is not possible to fly the burgee from the Mainmast, it may be flown below the lower starboard spreader. Only one RCYC burgee should be flown at a time.

Normally the Club Burgee will be the uppermost flag if flown at this position, however if the courtesy flag of a foreign country is flown here, the Club Burgee should be transferred to the lower port spreader. (Please see examples below)

Members may wish to also fly the burgees or pennants of other maritime organisations to which they belong while wearing the Club Ensign and Burgee. They should be flown at the lower port spreader. Members should note that the burgee or pennant of the most senior institution takes precedence and that “Royal” clubs take precedence over “non Royal” clubs. In this regard, if these are flown they should be flown in order of seniority. However, ideally only one burgee should be flown on a vessel at any one time. To this end the house flag of those institutions, rather than their burgee, should be flown where possible.

The International Code Flag “Q” when flown, signals that the vessel is requesting Free Pratique. Traditionally the vessel is requesting a certificate from the port authorities to state that the vessel is free from contagious disease. Today it is a visual signal requesting customs clearance. Code flag “Q” is also known as the Quarantine Flag, and by tradition should be flown from the lower starboard spreader.

Members should note that burgees and ensigns of different clubs or institutions when worn on board should never be mixed. The burgee and ensign worn should always be those of the same club on any one occasion. The Club ensign should not be worn until the Club burgee or relevant Flag Officer’s pennant has been hoisted.



1 - Pushpit or Taffrail 2 – Masthead 3 - Starboard Spreaders 4 - Port Spreaders

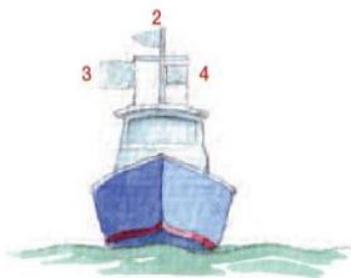


1 - Ensign
2 - Burgee

Ketch or Yawl
(at the truck on the mizzen)



Schooner
Where there are two or more masts always the after mast sail ($\frac{2}{3}$ of the way up the leech)



Motor boat from front



Motor boat from side

Protocol for the Club Ensign on board Member's Yachts

The Club Ensign may only be flown from 08:00 from April to October and 09:00 from November to March and shall be lowered daily at sunset.

The Club Ensign shall be worn afloat in compliance with the conditions of the Warrant granted to the Club under the Mercantile Marine Act, 1955.

The Club Ensign, and any flag or burgee flown shall be clean, and in good condition, and shall never be made up and broken out.

The Club Ensign shall not be worn while racing.

Dressing Ship

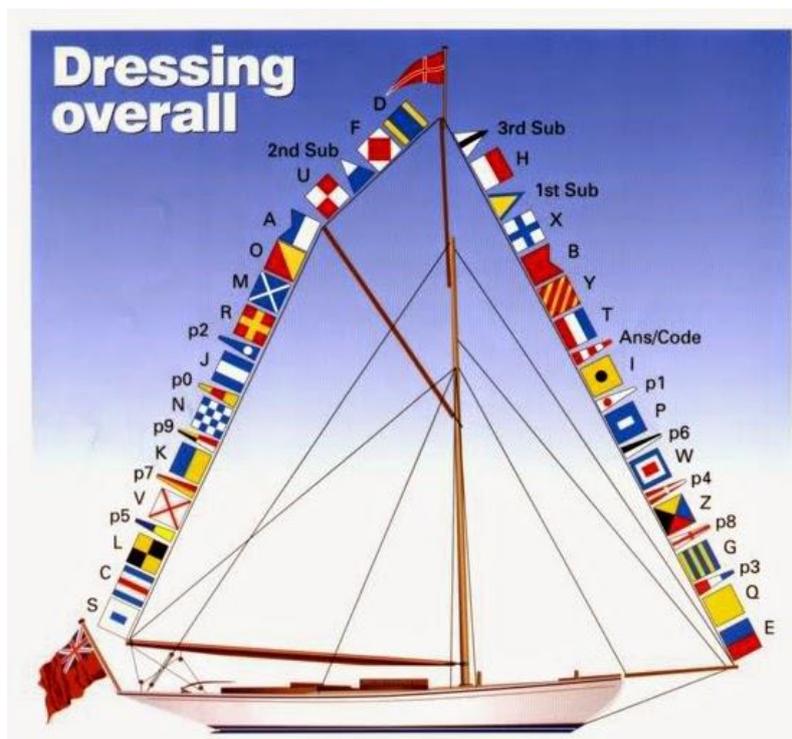
When "Dressing Ship" with International Code Flags to celebrate a regatta or some other special event, care must be taken to prevent an inadvertent message being signalled.

Both sequences given below give an interesting colourful display and are not believed to signal a confusing message. There is no rigid rule concerning the order of flags.

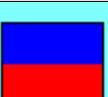
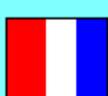
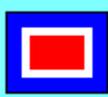
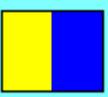
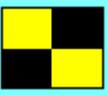
E, Q, No3, G, No 8, Z, No 4, W, No 6, P, No 1, Code/Answer, T, Y, B, X, 1st Substitute, H, 3rd Substitute, D, F, 2nd Substitute, U, A, O, M, R, No 2, J, No 0, N, No 9, K, No 7, V, No 5, L, C, S.

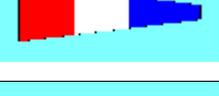
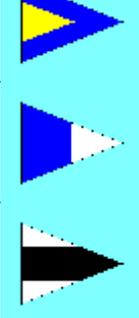
A, B, No2, U, J, No1, K, E, No3, G, H, No6, I, V, No 5, F, L, No 4, D, M, No 7, P, O, 3rd Substitute, R, N, 1st Substitute, S, T, No 0, C, X, No 9, W, Q, No 8, Z, Y, 2nd Substitute.

N.B. Vessels should only Dress Ship while anchored or alongside. Vessels underway should never be Dressed.



Meanings of International Maritime Signal Flags

	A - Diver Below Keep Well Clear		N - No (negative)
	B - I am taking on or discharging dangerous Goods (e.g. explosives)		O - Man overboard
	C - Affirmative		P - Vessel is about to proceed to sea.
	D - Keep clear of me, I am manoeuvring with difficulty		Q - I request free pratique
	E - I am altering my course to starboard		R - No meaning as a single flag.
	F - I am disabled, communicate with me		S - I am operating astern Propulsion
	G - I require a pilot		T - Keep clear of me
	H - I have a pilot on board		U - You are standing into danger
	I - I am altering my course to port		V - I require assistance
	J - Vessel on fire, keep clear		W - I require medical assistance
	K - I want to communicate with you		X - Stop carrying out your intentions and watch for my signals
	L - Stop your vessel instantly		Y - I am dragging my anchor
	M - My vessel is stopped		Z - To be used to address or call shore stations (also I require a tug)

Meanings of International Maritime Signal Flags			
	Answering Pennant Code and answering pennant.		6
	Numeric Pennants 0		7
	1		8
	2		9
	3		Substitute Pennants
	4		Substitute 1
	5		Substitute 2
			Substitute 3

Club Flagstaff

The Club Flagstaff, in common with those of most maritime institutions ashore, loosely follows the rigging pattern of the aft mast of an old square-rigged ship. At the top of the mast is a cap called the Truck from which the Club Burgee is flown. A Gaff spar is rigged at the after end, away from the sea. The Club Ensign is flown from here. The two yardarms are used to fly signal flags.

The Club Ensign and the Club Burgee should be hoisted daily at 08:00 from April to October and 09:00 from November to March. They shall be lowered daily at sunset.

The Club Ensign shall be lowered to Half-mast on the day that a Club Member is known to have died. It shall also be lowered to Half-mast on the day of the funeral.

The Club Ensign may also be lowered to Half-mast on other occasions, such as a day of National Mourning, at the discretion of the Admiral.

The protocol for hoisting the Club Ensign to Half-mast shall be as follows:

The Club Ensign shall first be fully raised to the peak, and then lowered to the Half-mast position.

The Half-mast position is reached when the top of the Club Ensign is one flag-width from the full hoist.

The Club Ensign shall always be fully raised to the peak before it is lowered completely.

Salutes

The Admiral may direct any of the following Salutes:

A Salute of twenty-one Guns for the President of Ireland, or any foreign Head of State on an official visit to the Club. There shall be an interval of five seconds between guns being fired.

A Salute of nine guns on the official visit of any other distinguished visitor. There shall be an interval of five seconds between guns being fired.

A Flag Officer may direct any of the following Salutes:

A Salute of five guns for any Member, returning on his yacht to the Club, after winning an important prize, or on the completion of a meritorious cruise. There shall be an interval of five seconds between guns being fired.

One gun may be given on the hoisting and lowering of the Club Ensign and Club Burgee on the Club Flagstaff.

Salute to a vessel of the Defence Forces, or to the Admiral on a formal occasion as in a Parade of Sail.

When sailing past a ship of the Irish Defence Forces, once their Ensign is in View it is regarded as a courtesy to lower the RCYC Ensign. This may be done by a physical lowering with the RCYC Ensign being held in that position until the salute is recognised by the Naval vessel (by lowering and raising their Ensign), when the RCYC Ensign may be restored to the full hoist position. Many members fly their Ensign from a short pole; in that case the pole and Ensign should be removed from the socket and held horizontal until acknowledged by the Defence forces vessel.

Last Word(s)

Members should note that flag protocol is not an exact science. It is a mixture of legal requirements, privilege, tradition, courtesy and practical common sense. There are many different vessel designs, rig configurations and circumstances where flags are flown. These guidelines cover only a part of the subject. Care should be taken before flying some flags, for example national or regional flags, as inappropriate or incorrect use of flags can cause offence. The use and the position of a flag on a vessel always have a significance.