

Ship Harbor Yacht Charters

ANCHORING!

A major portion of your cruise may involve anchoring. Mooring buoys can sometimes fill up very quickly in the islands. Proper technique and etiquette is essential to ensure a pleasurable trip for you.

Preparing to Anchor:

1. Be observant. Is your anchorage protected in the event of a major weather change or current change?
2. Plan your anchoring. Remember where you drop the anchor is not where your boat will end up. **Observe** other boats, the direction they are sitting related to their anchor lines, and the **currents or prevailing wind**. Head up into the wind or current to where you will drop anchor. Remember if you are in 20 feet of water, you will be paying out between 80-120 feet of rode. Check the **clearance** behind you to make certain you have room. Consider the **swing** of your vessel if wind and current conditions change. Consider depth if the boat swings through a complete arc. Will you always have sufficient space between you and your neighbor? Are you dropping your anchor on someone else's anchor or rode?
3. Keep monitoring water depth and the wind. **Check your tides** and remember sometimes you can lose up to twelve feet of water below your keel! A 4:1 scope is recommended in most anchorages but that scope might need to be adjusted as to conditions. A 7:1 might be necessary if stormy conditions occur.
4. If you have an anchor windlass, make sure the breaker has been turned on. Talk with your crew about a means of **communication** using hand signals.

Anchoring:

1. When vessel stops, **slowly** lower the anchor. With many boats, you will need to nudge or lift the anchor a bit to get it started. Secure a small amount of chain on the chainwheel and lock the clutch to ensure the anchor does not let go without warning. Once the boat's headway has completely stopped, and the boat is headed into the wind, slowly let down the anchor either by the chainwheel clutch or pressing the "down" button on the electric switch. **DO NOT** let the anchor chain fall free and uncontrolled! The chain would fall on the anchor and foul! **KEEP your hands and fingers a safe distance from the chain at all times!**
2. Once the anchor hits the bottom, back the boat slowly. Try to keep the boat headed into the wind and monitor the amount of rode being released. Once the rode is out, either tighten the chain wheel or secure the anchor on the mooring cleat. **Reverse** the boat down hard to **set the anchor**. (On sailboats this may mean full power. On powerboats a couple of good reverse throttles will do the trick). You should feel the boat come to a halt as the anchor digs in. If you are not sure, give it another dose of reverse making sure you have the room behind you! If it does not set, it may be necessary to raise the anchor and try again. **DO NOT** consider you're anchoring complete until you have a solid set!

3. Once set, **adjust your rode** according to the water depth. If you're observing only a 45-degree angle of your rode into the water, you are only at a 2:1 ratio! The more you have out, the more secure the anchor will lay. BUT, check the other vessels around you especially if they are on a Parks **mooring can** or have all chain payed out (perhaps only 3:1). Their arc of swing will be much tighter than yours. Last, after you have let out the proper rode, secure the anchor rode by using the chain stopper, chain hook, or mooring cleat. The chainwheel on the anchor windlass is **not made to hold weight** and the movement of the boat may damage the windlass if not secured properly.

4. Stay on the boat for at least an hour to watch as she swings. **Check your bearings.** Line up a marker on the land such as a tree or house to double-check that you are not drifting back. You will swing so using a couple of reference points is a good idea. Remember wind, tide, and current will change your location. If you have an anchor alarm on your GPS, you may set it. Remember to factor in the amount of distance you will swing (perhaps up to 300 feet).

Retrieving the Anchor

1. Prepare to get underway. All set to go? Take one more walk around the boat to check that all is secured especially the dinghy if it is towed or loose lines that may fall overboard and get in a prop. Start your engine(s) and warm them up. Activate anchor windlass breaker and wash down pump if applicable. Or have a large bucket of water to wash off any mud.

DO's and DO NOTS

DO NOT operate the anchor windlass unless the engine is running! It draws too much and will suck your batteries. DO NOT use the windlass to bring the boat up to the anchor. This can burn up the mechanism. DO use the engine to slowly move towards the anchor, using the windlass only to take up slack. (Small bursts of forward followed by a lull in neutral works great.)

Once the boat is over the anchor, secure the rode/chain with a chain stopper or a cleat. DO power slightly over the anchor to break the grip on the bottom.

DO NOT use the windlass to break the anchor free!

2. Begin pulling up the chain taking your time to stop if necessary to clear the rode of seaweed or mud. Keep your boat as stationary as possible and keep a sharp watch to make sure the anchor does not hit the side of the boat. Use the wash down hose or bucket and brush to make sure the chain and anchor come aboard clean. Use short bursts of the windlass to pull it into position on the bow pulpit.

3. **Secure the anchor** by the pin or using available hardware. Anchor MUST be made secure before getting underway!

HAND SIGNALS

Shifting Gears

Thumb Pointed Up
drop

Shift and Idle Forward

Thumb Pointed Down
Fist

Shift and Idle Reverse
Shift to Neutral

Other

“OK” hand sign

Hand held Up
(Palm Out)

Finger drawn across throat

Anchor ready to

Stop the Boat!

Cut the engine(s)

Steering/Rudder

Arm extended, straight Out

Go straight

Arm extended horizontally

Turn in indicated direction