

Nautical Flags and Their Meanings

Signal flags are used to communicate messages, at times because radio silence is required. Here are their names and meanings, both International and/or specific to the Navy, as well as meanings when used in a Sailing Regatta. There is also a signaling system called Semaphore which uses the position of the flags relative to a person to denote the letter.



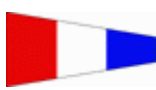


International Code Flags

Flag	Name & Phonetic Pronunciation	Meaning
	A lfa AL-fah	I have a diver down; keep well clear at slow speed.
	B ravo BRAH-voh	I am taking in, discharging, or carrying dangerous cargo.
	C harlie CHAR-lee	"Yes" or "affirmative". Change of Course (Sailing Regatta)
	D elta DELL-tah	I am maneuvering with difficulty; keep clear.
	E cho ECK-oh	I am directing my course to starboard.
	F oxtrot FOKS-trot	I am disabled; communicate with me. On aircraft carriers: Flight Operations underway
	G olf GOLF	I require a pilot.
	H otel hoh-TELL	I have a pilot on board.

	I ndia IN-dee-ah	I am directing my course to port. (International) Coming alongside. (Navy) Round the Ends Starting Rule (Sailing Regatta)
	J uliet JEW-lee-ett	I am on fire and have dangerous cargo; keep clear.
	K ilo KEY-loh	I wish to communicate with you.
	L ima LEE-mah	You should stop your vessel immediately. Come Within Hail or Follow Me (Sailing Regatta)
	M ike MIKE	My vessel is stopped; making no way. Mark Missing (Sailing Regatta)
	N ovember no-VEM-bur	No or negative. Abandonment and Re-sail (Sailing Regatta)
	O scar OSS-kur	Man overboard.
	P apa pah-PAH	All personnel return to ship; proceeding to sea (Inport).
	Q uebec kay-BECK	Ship meets health regs; request clearance into port. (International) Boat recall; all boats return to ship. (Navy)
	R omeo ROH-me-oh	None. (International) Preparing to replenish (At sea). Ready duty ship (In port). (Navy)



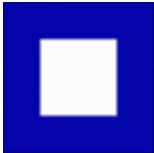
	<p>Sierra see-AIR-ah</p>	<p>Moving astern. (International)</p> <p>Conducting flag hoist drill. (Navy)</p> <p>Shorten Course (Sailing Regatta)</p>
	<p>Tango TANG-go</p>	<p>Keep clear; engaged in trawling. (International)</p> <p>Do not pass ahead of me. (Navy)</p>
	<p>Uniform YOU-nee-form</p>	<p>You are running into danger.</p>
	<p>Victor VIK-tah</p>	<p>I require assistance.</p>
	<p>Whiskey WISS-kee</p>	<p>I require medical assistance.</p>
	<p>Xray ECKS-ray</p>	<p>Stop carrying out your intentions and watch for my signals.</p> <p>Individual Recall (Sailing Regatta)</p>
	<p>Yankee YANG-kee</p>	<p>I am dragging anchor. (International)</p> <p>Ship has visual communications duty. (Navy)</p> <p>Wear Life Jackets (Sailing Regatta)</p>
	<p>Zulu ZOO-loo</p>	<p>I require a tug.</p> <p>20% Scoring Penalty (Sailing Regatta)</p>
	<p>Code/Answer Code or Answer</p>	<p>Message is understood. Also, numeric decimal point. (International)</p> <p>Flag that follows is from the International Code of Signals. (Navy)</p> <p>Postponement (Sailing Regatta)</p>
	<p>First substitute (First Repeater) First sub</p>	<p>Substitute for the first flag in this hoist. (International) Also "repeats" the first flag or series of flags in this hoist</p> <p>Absence of flag officer or unit commander (In port). (Navy)</p> <p>General Recall (Sailing Regatta)</p>

	<p>Second substitute</p> <p>Second sub</p>	<p>Substitute for the second flag in this hoist. (International)</p> <p>Absence of chief of staff (In port). (Navy)</p>
	<p>Third substitute</p> <p>Third sub</p>	<p>Substitute for the third flag in this hoist. (International)</p> <p>Absence of commanding officer (In port). (Navy)</p>
	<p>One</p> <p>WUN</p>	<p>None. (International)</p> <p>Numeral one. (Navy)</p>
	<p>Two</p> <p>TOO</p>	<p>None. (International)</p> <p>Numeral two. (Navy)</p>
	<p>Three</p> <p>TREE</p>	<p>None. (International)</p> <p>Numeral three. (Navy)</p>
	<p>Four</p> <p>FOW-er</p>	<p>None. (International)</p> <p>Numeral four. (Navy)</p>
	<p>Five</p> <p>FIFE</p>	<p>None. (International)</p> <p>Numeral five. (Navy)</p>
	<p>Six</p> <p>SICKS</p>	<p>None. (International)</p> <p>Numeral six. (Navy)</p>
	<p>Seven</p> <p>SEV-en</p>	<p>None. (International)</p> <p>Numeral seven. (Navy)</p>
	<p>Eight</p> <p>ATE</p>	<p>None. (International)</p> <p>Numeral eight. (Navy)</p>
	<p>Nine</p> <p>NIN-er</p>	<p>None. (International)</p> <p>Numeral nine. (Navy)</p>

	Zero ZEE-roh	None. (International) Numeral zero. (Navy)
	Pennant one PEN-ant WUN	Numeral one. (International) Pennant one. (Navy)
	Pennant two PEN-ant TOO	Numeral two. (International) Pennant two. (Navy)
	Pennant three PEN-ant TREE	Numeral three. (International) Pennant three. (Navy)
	Pennant four PEN-ant FOW-er	Numeral four. (International) Pennant four. (Navy) Postponement (Sailing Regatta)
	Pennant five PEN-ant FIFE	Numeral five. (International) Pennant five. (Navy)
	Pennant six PEN-ant SICKS	Numeral six. (International) Pennant six. (Navy)
	Pennant seven PEN-ant SEV-en	Numeral seven. (International) Pennant seven. (Navy)
	Pennant eight PEN-ant ATE	Numeral eight (International) Pennant eight. (Navy)
	Pennant Nine PEN-ant NIN-er	Numeral nine (International) Pennant nine. (Navy)
	Pennant zero PEN-ant ZEE-roh	Numeral zero (International) Pennant zero. (Navy)

Race Committee Flags

Flag/Shape	Name	Sounds	Meaning
	X	1 when raised	Individual Recall
	First Substitute	2 when raised 1 when lowered	General Recall
	AP	2 when raised 1 when lowered	Postponement
	I	None when raised 1 when lowered	Round the Ends Starting Rule
	C	Repetitive	Change of Course
	L	1 when raised	Come Within Hail or Follow Me
	M	Repetitive	Mark Missing
	N	3 when raised 1 when lowered	Abandonment and Resail
	S	2 when raised	Shorten Course
	Y	1 when raised	Wear Life Jacket

	N over H	3 when raised	Abandonment Return to Shore
	Z	1 when lowered	20% Scoring Penalty
	Black	1 when lowered	Hard Start: Disqualification
Class Flag Raised	Warning	1	5 minutes to start
	Preparatory (or I or Z or Black Flag) Raised	1	4 minutes to start
	Preparatory (or I or Z or Black Flag) Lowered	1	1 minute to start
Class Flag Lowered	Start	1	Start

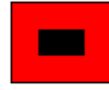
Miscellaneous Flags



Small Craft Warning
Up to 38 mph winds



Gale Warning
39-54 mph winds



Storm Warning
55-73 mph winds



Hurricane Warning
74+ mph winds



USCG Auxiliary



US Power Squadron



Race Committee



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Signalling System](#)

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