

Newspaper Article 4: Anchoring

There are basically two reasons to anchor. First is to attach your boat to the bottom of the lake as you enjoy lunch, fishing or spend the night. In other words, to enjoy your nautical experience.

The second reason is because you have an emergency that requires you to keep your boat in its present position. For either reason you need to know the best techniques to follow and then practice so that the procedure goes off without a hitch.

What type of anchor is best? That depends a lot on your boat, what kind of anchoring you do and the make-up of the bottom. There are several different types of anchor including the plow, grapnel, mushroom and danforth. However, the techniques cited apply to all anchors.

When buying your anchor, the merchant should have a chart which will recommend the size of the anchor relative to the size of your boat. I do a lot of anchoring and choose to buy one for the next larger size boat than mine.

Many of us also attach 6 to 12 feet of chain between the anchor and the anchor line. (The anchor line is called a 'rode'.) This puts additional weight on the anchor and makes 'getting a hook' easier and dragging less likely.

The useable length of the rode should be at least as long as 10 times the depth of the water you usually anchor in. In my case the rode is 100' in length. Normally you want the 'scope' to be 7 to 1. That is, the depth of the water times 7. So, if you have 100' of rode you can anchor in water that is 14' deep and have a scope of 7 to 1. If you are just anchoring for a short time and the weather is good, it's okay to reduce the scope to 3 to 1 or 5 to 1.

Here is a good anchoring procedure.

Choose your site by motoring around where you want the anchor to be, to determine if the water depth is okay. Also, when your boat swings around the anchor, due to wind or current changes, the boat will not go aground, or hit something.

Next, cruise up to your chosen anchoring spot heading into the wind. Come to a complete stop and slowly lower the anchor. Do not throw it! Throwing may tangle the rode with the anchor.

Once the anchor is on the bottom, slowly back the boat until there is about 3 times as much rode out as there is depth. Holding the rode in your hands you will be able to feel the anchor as it drags over the bottom. When it "sets" firmly into the bottom, you will feel that also and the boat will stop.

After the anchor is set, let out the rode some more to get the correct scope. You may then want to "tug" on the rode by adding a little reverse power; to be sure you have a good hook. Then attach your end of the rode to a cleat on the boat

As you can see, it is important to know how much rode you have in the water. That can be done by previously marking your rode every ten feet with duct tape or some other marking. Then remember how many markers have gone into the water.

It is a good idea to look at several land objects, like special trees, rock formations or buoys. If these objects stay in their position relative to the boat, then you are not dragging. If they change position, you may need to re-set the anchor.

Experience is the best teacher, so next time you are on the water, practice the procedure so that when you need it you won't have to practice!

So,

"Anchors Aweigh, my boys, anchors Aweigh.

Farewell to foreign shores,

We sail at break of day, day, day----"