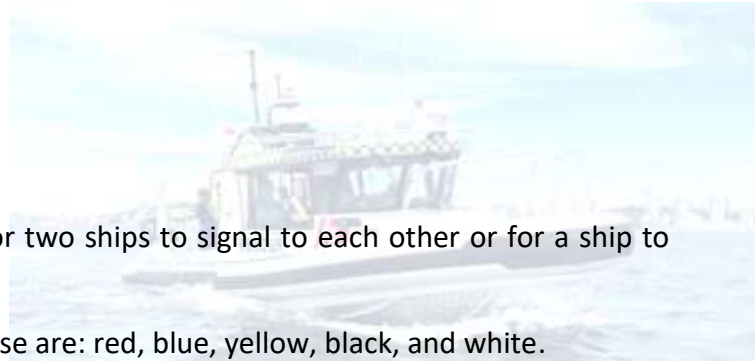


# Nautical Flags

Nautical flags are an international code system used for two ships to signal to each other or for a ship to signal to shore.



At sea, only a few flag colours are easily recognized, these are: red, blue, yellow, black, and white.

Nautical flags are made up of

- 26 square flags, representing the letters of the alphabet,
- 10 numbered pendants,
- one answering pendant and
- three substitutes' pendants.

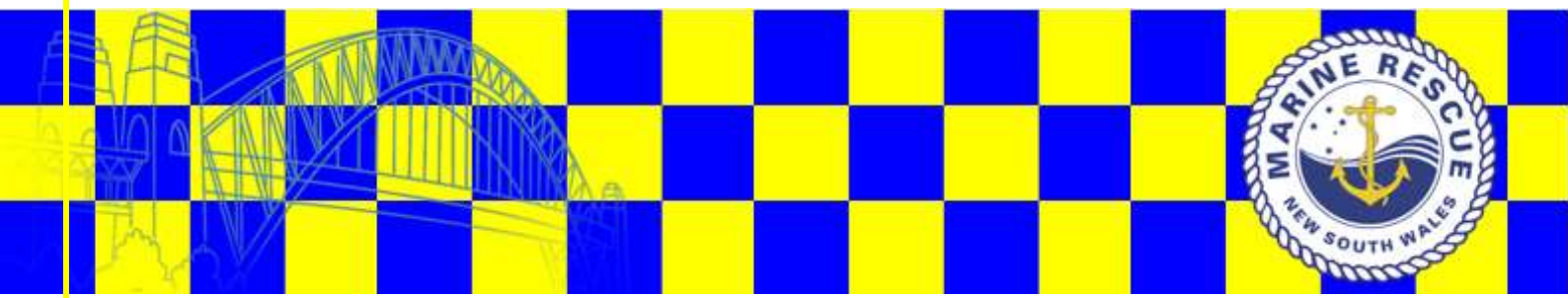
The flags can be used alone or in combination with another flag.

- Two-flag signals are used mostly for distress and manoeuvring.
- Three-flag signals are for points of the compass, relative bearings, standard times, and general code and decode signals.
- Four-flags are used for geographical signals, names of ships or bearings.
- Five-flag signals are used to relate time and position.

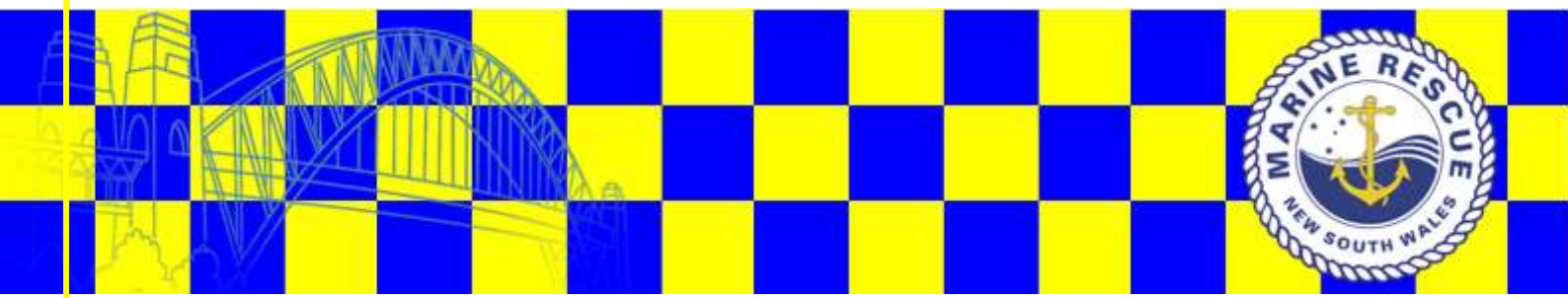
There are also flags used in nautical racing which signal to the competitors what they are supposed to do.














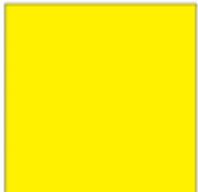
## Signal flags and meanings

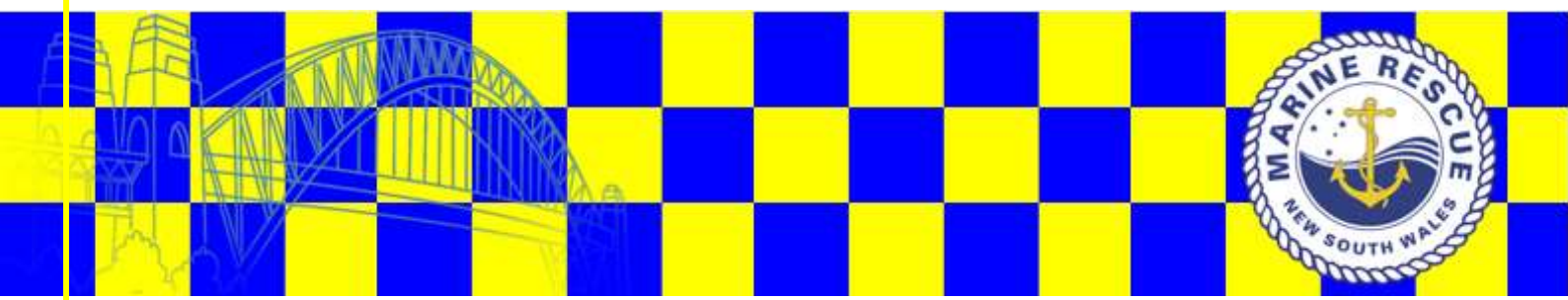
<b>A</b>		Diver down, keep well clear at a slow speed
<b>Alpha</b>		
<b>B</b>		Taking in, discharging or carrying dangerous goods. As observed on refuelling vessels
<b>Bravo</b>		
<b>C</b>		Affirmative or YES
<b>Charlie</b>		






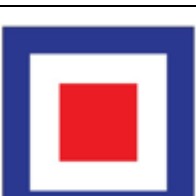



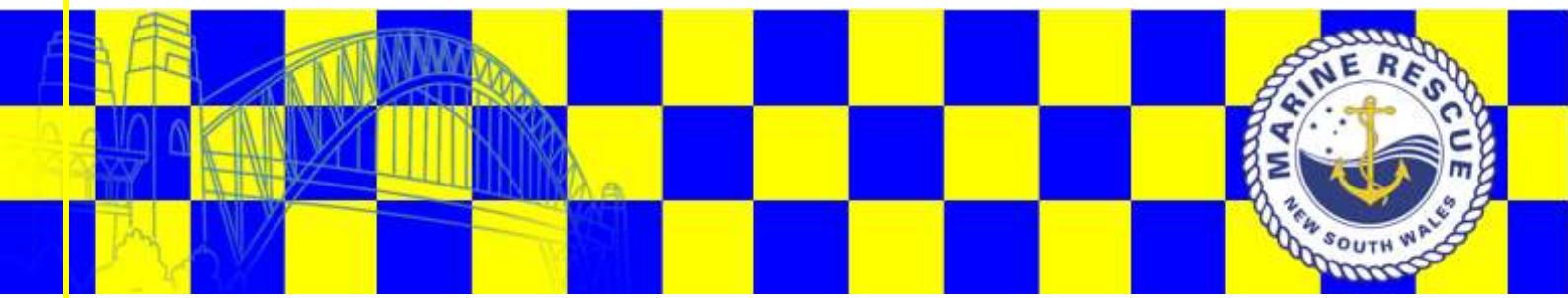
<b>D</b>		Keep clear, I'm manoeuvring with difficulty <i>The sound signal one long two short (Morse code for "D") is sounded by vessel that are RAM, NUC, constrained by draught, sailing, fishing, trawling or towing</i>
<b>Delta</b>		
— ● ●		
<b>E</b>		I am altering course to STARBOARD
<b>Echo</b>		
●		
<b>F</b>		I am disabled, please communicate with me
<b>Foxtrot</b>		
● ● — ●		
<b>G</b>		I Require a pilot
<b>Golf</b>		
— — ●		
<b>H</b>		I have a pilot on board
<b>Hotel</b>		
● ● ● ●		
<b>I</b>		I am altering course to PORT
<b>India</b>		
● ●		
<b>J</b>		I am on fire, dangerous cargo, keep well clear
<b>Juliet</b>		
● — — —		









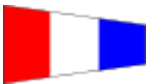

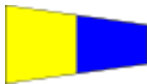










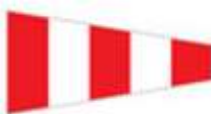




<p><b>K</b></p> <p>Kilo</p> 		<p>I wish to communicate with you</p>
<p><b>L</b></p> <p>Lima</p> 		<p>You should stop your vessel instantly</p>
<p><b>M</b></p> <p>Mike</p> 		<p>My vessel is stopped</p>
<p><b>N</b></p> <p>November</p> 		<p>Negative or NO</p>
<p><b>O</b></p> <p>Oscar</p> 		<p>Man Overboard</p>
<p><b>P</b></p> <p>Papa</p> 		<p>Recall – all persons to return on board – about to sail</p>
<p><b>Q</b></p> <p>Quebec</p> 		<p>Vessel is healthy – request free pratique</p>

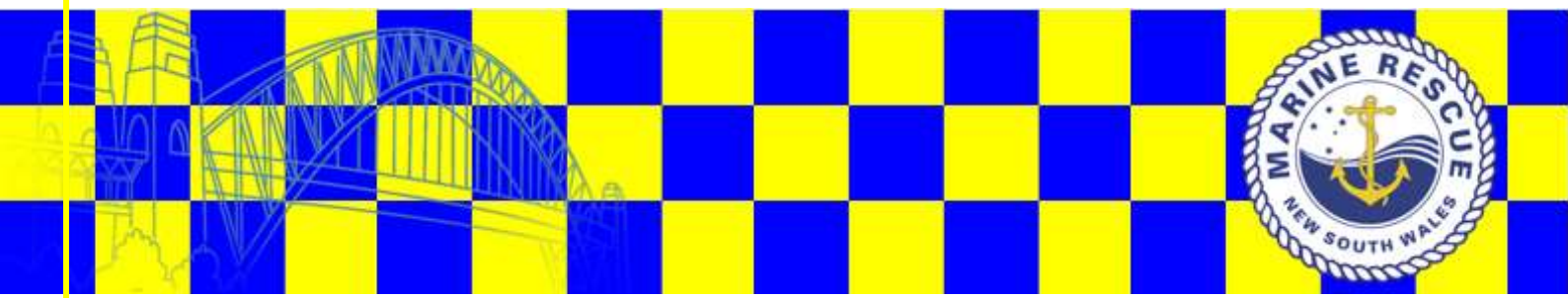


<b>R</b>		<p><i>No meaning when used alone</i></p>
<b>Romeo</b>		
● — ●		
<b>S</b>		<p>My engines are going full astern</p>
<b>Sierra</b>		
● ● ●		
<b>T</b>		<p>Keep clear of me, I am engaged in trawling operations</p>
<b>Tango</b>		
—		
<b>U</b>		<p>You are running in to danger</p>
<b>Uniform</b>		
● ● —		
<b>V</b>		<p>I require assistance</p>
<b>Victor</b>		
● ● ● —		
<b>W</b>		<p>I require medical assistance</p>
<b>Whiskey</b>		
● — —		
<b>X</b>		<p>Stop carrying out your intentions and watch for my signals</p>
<b>X-ray</b>		
— ● ● —		



<b>Y</b>		I am dragging my anchor
<b>Yankee</b>		
		
<b>Z</b>		I require a tug
<b>Zulu</b>		
		

<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	
<b>Nadazero</b>		<b>Unaone</b>		<b>Bissotwo</b>	
					
<b>3</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>	
<b>Terathree</b>		<b>Kartefour</b>		<b>Pentafive</b>	
					
<b>6</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>8</b>	
<b>Soxisix</b>		<b>Setteseven</b>		<b>Oktoeight</b>	
					
<b>9</b>				<b>Answer</b>	
<b>Novenine</b>					
					
<b>R1</b>		<b>R2</b>		<b>R3</b>	
<b>Replacement 1</b>		<b>Replacement 2</b>		<b>Replacement 3</b>	






**Combinations and meaning**

There are many common combinations in use. Here are some of the most common and their meanings.



**N-November**  
**Over**  
**C-Charlie**

This is a symbol of distress.  
*("yes" and "no", I am confused – I need help!)*

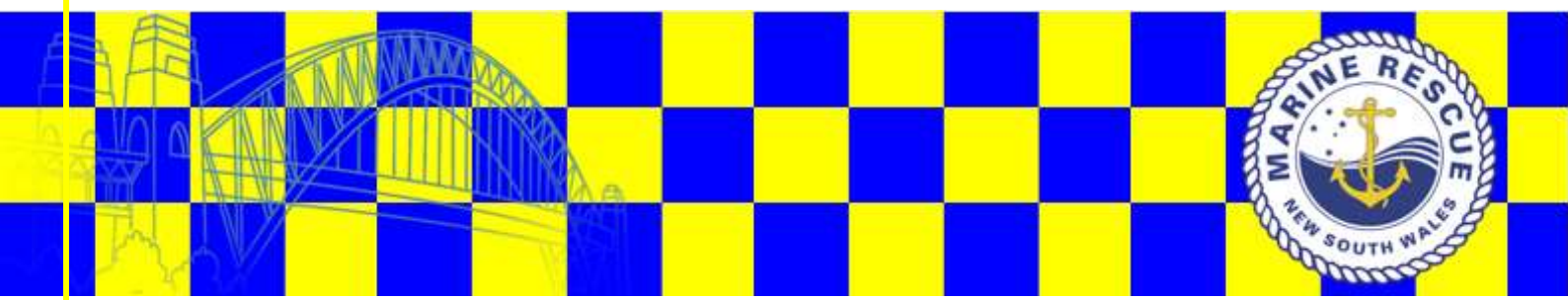


**R-Romeo**  
**Over**  
**Y-Yankee**

Proceed slowly when passing me  
*Often seen on marinas or vessels requiring no wash from other vessels*

Other common combinations:

<b>AC</b>	I am abandoning my vessel	<b>PD</b>	Your navigation lights are not visible
<b>AN</b>	I need a doctor	<b>PP</b>	Keep well clear of me
<b>BR</b>	I require a helicopter	<b>QD</b>	I am going ahead
<b>CD</b>	I require immediate assistance	<b>QT</b>	I am going astern
<b>DV</b>	I am drifting	<b>QQ</b>	I require health clearance
<b>EF</b>	SOS / Mayday cancelled	<b>QU</b>	Anchoring is prohibited
<b>FA</b>	Will you give me my position	<b>QX</b>	I request permission to anchor
<b>GW</b>	MOB, please take action to collect person	<b>RU</b>	Keep clear of me, I am manoeuvring with difficulty
<b>JL</b>	You are running the risk of running aground	<b>UP</b>	Permission to enter harbour, I have an emergency
<b>LO</b>	I am not in my correct position	<b>ZL</b>	Signal received but NOT understood



### Not a 'flag' but you should know

Although not considered a flag, the V sheet is a local distress symbol. The V sheet is only used in Australian waterways. The V sheet can be displayed on a vessel, even if it is overturned in the water and draped across the hull to indicate to aircraft or other vessels that your vessel is in distress.

