Anchoring Hand Signals

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I've made a few changes, like changing feet to fathoms on the depth signal (up to 30 ft with one hand).

From Foredeck to the Helm

Direction and thrust Arm and hand extended fully pointing in desired direction. When hand is vertical with thumb up, forward thrust is desired. When hand is flat with palm down, continue direction, but put engine in neutral, giving no additional thrust. In other words, continue coasting in the direction indicated by the extended arm.

Slow down Arm extended with palm down and hand motioning up and down.

Stop Arm extended with hand made into fist; no motion.

Back up Palm facing aft with repeated motion towards stern.

Back down on Anchor to Set Use both hands in back up signal.

Dropping anchor Thumb pointing down.

Anchor broken free, but not up OK symbol with hand (index finger and thumb making circle). This is a hand signal that we use in particularly crowded anchorages to indicate that the anchor has broken free from the bottom. This lets the helmsperson know that the boat will now be subject to currents and/or wind. After receiving this signal the use of minimal thrust from the engine may be needed to avoid drifting into other boats or obstacles while the anchor is being fully raised. Care must be taken at this time so as not to snag any debris with your anchor or foul your own prop with your rode.

Anchor up, boat free to maneuver Index finger pointing straight up and making a circle. This signal lets the helmsperson know that all ground tackle is free and clear and there is no longer any danger of fouling the prop.

Helm to the Foredeck

Depth of water Indicate number of **fathoms** with fingers of one or both hands as needed. The bow person must have this information in order to put out the appropriate amount of scope when anchoring. Once the anchor is down and the boat is backing away, the foredeck should snub the rode when the scope reaches 3:1 and signal the helm to try to set the anchor. If there is a successful set, the boat should back down until the desired scope is out (5:1, 7:1, 10:1 depending on conditions and if it's lunch or overnight).

Drop anchor Thumb pointing down. Because we've found that the helmsperson usually has a better perspective relative to other boats in an anchorage than the bow person, we've begun letting that person make the call as to where and when to drop the anchor. Always remember to take into account the amount you will fall back after the anchor has set.

Either Way

Anchor set and holding Two thumbs up. The helmsperson has the best perspective to take a shoreline bearing and ensure that the anchor is set and holding while the engine is in reverse. A simple line up of a single point on your boat, like a shroud, with point on shore, like the chimney on the red house, indicates that your anchor is set if the points no longer move relative to one another. The foredeck can verify that the rode tightens and doesn't vibrate.