

Storm Sails

Description of purpose of storm & heavy weather sails

A submission from James Dadd, SRSC Member

Purpose or Objective

To provide some clarification of the purpose for which storm sails and heavy weather sails should be designed and manufactured, so that it is clear to all that the primary role of these sails is as safety equipment.

Proposal

4.27.1 Design

- a) the material of the body of a storm sail purchased after 2013 shall have a highly visible colour (e.g. dayglo pink, orange or yellow),
- b) aromatic polyamides, carbon and similar fibres shall not be used in a trysail or storm jib, but HMPE and similar materials are permitted,
- c) sheeting positions on deck for each storm and heavy-weather sail,
- d) sheeting positions for the trysail independent of the boom, and
- e) the maximum area of storm and heavy weather sails shall be lesser of the areas below or as specified by the boat designer or sailmaker.
- f) **the primary purpose of any storm sail or heavy weather sail shall be to provide propulsion and steerage in storm & heavy weather conditions, and they shall be designed, manufactured and maintained as such. Storm sails shall be designed to provide propulsion and steerage in Beaufort scale 8 and on all points of sail. Heavy weather sails shall be designed to provide propulsion and steerage in Beaufort scale 6 and on all points of sail.**

Current Position

The purpose of storm & heavy weather sails relies on 1.01 Purpose and Use, which does not specify the conditions for which these sails should be designed, built and maintained.

Reasons

1. The use of staysails has increased and the use of storm & heavy weather sails as staysails has become common practice, so as to reduce the number of sails required to be carried on board. Without better definitions of the purpose of storm sails, there is concern that the design and build of these sails is focussed more on their performance as a staysail, than the requirements of a storm or heavy weather sail. Establishing a clear purpose for storm & heavy weather sails clarifies their primary role as safety equipment.
 2. Without a definition of the conditions that storm & heavy weather sails should be designed and manufactured for, it is possible for a boat to carry such sails that meet the words of the current rules, but that are not capable of fulfilling their role in storm or heavy weather conditions.
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