

Demystifying yacht classification : Class A, B, C and D

Large boat (yacht)
classification

Since 1998, CE certification is required for all recreational boats entering or being sold in Europe obliging boat manufacturers to respect certain building and security standards. Therefore, yachts (boats) are classified into four categories depending on their aptitude to confront navigational conditions taking into account both force of the wind and height of the waves. The categories are not to limit the area and distance of navigation (that is defined by security equipment onboard) but to sensitize the owner and/or captain of the boats capacities to navigate in complete security.

Let us start with the Beaufort Scale. A scale for classifying the force of the wind ranging from 0 (calm) to 12 (hurricane). It was devised by an admiral in the British Navy, Francis Beaufort, to uniform the description of the effect of different winds at sea.

There is a direct link between the Beaufort scale and boat classification. For discussion purposes, we will use only the 6, 7 and 8 forces.

A Class A yacht (boat) is a vessel that is built to navigate the open ocean and surpass a force 8 on the Beaufort scale and surpass waves higher than 4 meters. These yachts are constructed to be self sufficient in hostile seas.

A Class B yacht (boat) is a vessel built to navigate on the offshore waters (200 miles and less) and can sustain UP TO force 8 and waves UP TO 4 meters.

A Class C boat is a vessel built to navigate inshore such as lakes, rivers, bays and close to the shore and can sustain UP TO force 6 and waves UP TO 2 meters.

A Class D boat is built for protected or sheltered waters such as canals, rivers, small lakes and sustain a force 4 and waves UP TO .3 meters (less than 1 ft).

With this said, you can understand that the Class A yacht (boat) respects a rigorous building code more so than a Class B and so forth. But regardless of the class, it is strongly discouraged to navigate in a force 7 for the reasons of safety and comfort as « pleasure » should always be on the agenda. Always consult the weather forecast prior to leaving any port and check hourly the weather situation.