

INSURANCE

Whilst insurance is voluntary in the UK, members are encouraged to have their boats covered. Do make sure that your insurance policy covers the waters in which you intend to sail. For example, if your policy is the UK coastal waters it will only cover you for a limited distance out to sea. Check with your insurers what this limit is, if your policy is for 'UK and Continental waters from Brest to the Elbe', you may not be covered in the Netherland waterways or other inland waterways. If you opt for an inland waterways policy, which is probably the cheapest and best for the majority of EFCC members, check it has coastal waters extension. Remember that it is warranted that the insured must give prior notification to the insurers of the dates you intend to go tidal. Keep a record so that you do not exceed the allowed time.

It is best to tell your insurers where you are going if you are in any doubt that your intended trip is not covered by your policy, and to ask to be "held covered". If you intend going abroad, extensions are not expensive, but again remember to ensure that the area(s) you intend sailing in are covered.

It is important to remember that for your insurance to be valid you must comply in all respects with both local laws and international agreements. If you do not have current standard navigation lights, nor, say, comply with French safety equipment lists when in France, your insurance may be held not to be valid.

Members considering taking out fresh insurance are advised to compare quotations from a number of brochures and companies. The conditions of a policy are more important than the precise level of premiums charged. Currently the limit for damage and personal injury is £230,000 plus interest and legal costs which can be significant. Therefore we recommend that third party cover should be at least £3,000,000.

A number of insurers are now offering legal protection for yachtsmen which pays professional fees - solicitors, barristers, expert witnesses - usually up to £100,000 for each claim and there is no limit to the number of claims you can make. Well worth having for the small premium it demands.