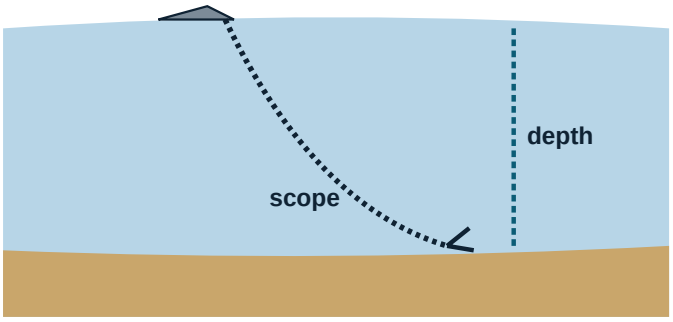
19 ANCHORING

Choose the spot, give her scope, and check she is holding.

SCOPE

scope = length out ÷ depth at high water (+ bow height)



All chain	3 : 1 in good conditions, 5 : 1 or more if it blows
Rope with some chain	5 : 1 to 7 : 1
Ships	often 4 to 6 shackles in moderate depth; follow company and pilot guidance

Use the depth at high water, not now. A shackle is 15 fathoms, 27.4 m.

SHOWN

- Day: one black ball forward.
- Night: all-round white forward; 50 m or more, a second lower white aft.
- Fog: rapid bell for 5 s every minute; over 100 m, gong aft too.

CHOOSING THE SPOT

- Shelter from the wind and swell expected, not just now.
- Good holding: sand or mud; avoid weed, rock and coral (and it may be a green zone).
- Swing room all round, clear of moorings, cables and channels.
- Enough water at low tide for the swing.

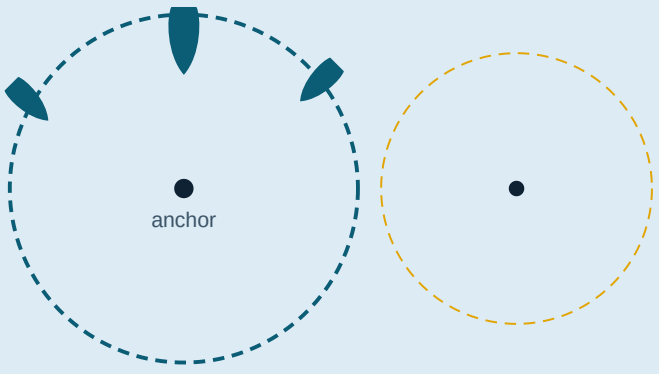
IS SHE DRAGGING?

- Set the GPS anchor alarm and a swing circle.
- Take a transit or two bearings, and check them.
- Feel the chain: it jumps or judders when the anchor drags.
- She lies beam on to the wind instead of head to it.

LETTING GO AND WEIGHING

1. Head to wind or stream, stop.
2. Let go as she starts going astern.
3. Pay out as she drops back, then snub it to dig in.
4. Back down gently to test.
5. Weighing: motor up to the anchor, do not haul the boat on the windlass.

ROOM TO SWING, GROUND TO HOLD



Swing circles must not overlap: leave room for the wind to change.

Holding ground

Sand	good
Mud	good
Shingle	fair
Weed	poor: avoid
Rock	poor: avoid
Coral	poor: avoid

Study aid only. Not for navigation.
Check the current official rules. Card 19 · v1.7 · © Nautical Bridge