

## Visiting Protocol & Courtesies

A yacht club is no different from a person's home with respect to guests.

A club is owned and financed by its members primarily for their own use. Both federal and state tax codes, and liquor laws reinforce this. *There is nothing automatic about reciprocal privileges* despite the fact that uninformed individuals and organization pass this word along.

Most yacht clubs in Southern California that reciprocate with other yacht clubs in the area will do so on a formal basis. This is typically done through exchange of reciprocal cards that are approved and issued on an annual basis. This activity is between two specific clubs that wish to offer the mutual exchange and use of their facilities. These reciprocal privileges are not intended to entitle guests "wholesale" use of the other's facility.

Under no circumstances, should a yachtsman assume that all yacht clubs are reciprocal, and before requesting entrance to another club, should check with his club to ensure a reciprocal agreement exists. **A prudent yachtsperson will make his/her visit to another club more enjoyable if he/she follows the simple rules of courtesy as follows:**

1. Verify you have reciprocal privilege  
(see list - [www.SantaMargaritaYachtClub.com](http://www.SantaMargaritaYachtClub.com)).
2. Call ahead so:
  - a. The club can ensure proper space is available.
  - b. Your visit will not conflict with other club functions.
  - c. The club can plan all other arrangements necessary.
3. When making arrangements, ask about club and marina rules pertaining to pets, dock parties, electrical service, etc.
4. Always sign the guest register. In some areas this is mandatory by club charter, leasing agreements, the ABC, etc.
5. Always have a current membership card from your yacht club, and, upon request; be prepared to show it courteously to staff and member of the club that you are visiting.
6. Wear a name tag or badge from your club.
7. Ask for a copy or location of club rules and observe them as the members of the club must; you are their guest.

8. Always be courteous to club employees, remember, their directions come from the club officers and are not of their making.
9. When planning cruise-type visits, make arrangements early in the year with the appropriate officials.
10. Patronize the facilities of the club. They may have brought in extra staff and provisions just for your visit.
11. Under no circumstances, board or make fast to any vessel, unless specifically asked to or after obtaining permission.
12. Under no circumstances, use hoses, stairs, mops or other materials belonging to the slip holder without permission.
13. Many skippers leave lines, particularly spring lines at their slips, to assist in docking upon their return. Never use and most particularly do not retie these lines as your action could cause serious damage to vessels and crew.
14. Always follow good environmental practice consistent with the concerns for proper trash disposal and discharges from your vessel into the water; leave a clean wake.
15. Write a thank-you note and mention any members or employees who were particularly helpful.
16. If you have been invited to participate in a regatta or race, you and your crew are guests just as much as on any other visit to the host club and must conduct yourself as a guest.
17. If approaching by sea, fly your burgee.

Most clubs want you to enjoy your visit at their facility. Traditional yachting protocols, courtesy and a thank-you will help them achieve this goal.

*Taken from the Southern California Yachting Association "Yachting Protocol Guidelines" Fifth Edition, First Printing April 2022.*