

Why is there a Furling allowance?

A furling headsail has to cope with a very wide range of wind conditions. As a result it will usually be heavier than a sail specifically produced for a limited wind range. Since the sail has to furl it is normally manufactured with a flatter cut than a conventional sail and as a result is less efficient, especially in light winds. Furling headsails are normally smaller than the largest conventional headsail. The increase in area around the forestay when the sail is part-furled also creates turbulence and makes the sail less efficient.

The allowance is intended to compensate for the above.

Are there any exceptions whereby Furling Allowance is not available?

Yes, as follows:

1. No allowance for self tacking jibs – the reason being that it is unlikely that they will be used part-furled whilst racing. In extreme cases a storm jib would be a better option.
2. Cutter-rigged boats will only be eligible for ONE allowance, which would be based on the Foresail
3. Yachts that merely roll in the headsail, typically when flying a spinnaker or asymmetric, will not be eligible for either the Furling or FDH allowance. Examples are J109, Flying fifteen, many sportsboats.

How do I claim for the Furling (F) and Furling Drum Height (G) allowances?

Complete a Handicap Application form. In particular, if you are claiming for the Furling Drum Height allowance, you will need to supply dimensions for the height of the furling drum and the total forestay length. Details are given on the form.

Note that you can only receive the Furling Drum Height allowance if you have a furling headsail and the furling drum is wholly above the deck of your yacht. Any drum which is flush to or below the deck of your yacht will not qualify for a Furling Drum Height allowance, although you may still be eligible for a Furling allowance.

A “G” allowance is the combined amount for both furling and furling drum height.

How much does it cost?

Normal new applications cost £50. If you are changing from conventional sails to furling, the Alteration fee of £15 applies.

Sometimes due to family / crew numbers I would prefer to use a furling headsail. What should I do?

If you already have a furling headsail as part of your normal sailing wardrobe, you can use it without making a declaration (unless it is larger than a standard headsail for your yacht).

If you anticipate competing in some races where you would ONLY use a furling headsail, you should consider applying for DUAL certificates. Effectively this gives you TWO handicaps - one exclusively for using a furling headsail. You would have to make it clear to the race organisers prior to racing which handicap you intend to use.

And the cost to do this?

To change to Dual Certificates, £15. For a new Dual application the charge is £55.

Do I need a sail number on my furling headsail?

You should consult the Racing Rules of Sailing. RRS 77 and appendix G 1.3 refer. The Sailing Instructions for particular events may also prove relevant.

Is there a difference in the allowance between Dacron and high tech materials?

No.

Why am I limited to using only one furling headsail to get the allowance?

The allowance is given to compensate for the reduced efficiency of a furling headsail compared to having several sails to cover a full range of wind conditions. The ONLY exception is the option to use a storm jib.

Having a choice of different sizes or weights of sails means that you are less likely to reduce sail area by furling whilst racing, and as a result not incur the inefficiencies for which the allowance is offered.

If you wish to use more than one headsail, you should NOT claim for the furling allowance.

Can I use different furling headsails in different races?

As above, no you cannot.

What about using different furling headsails in different events?

We recognise that owners will purchase replacement sails, and these may be delivered at any time during a season. It is therefore impractical to prohibit the use of a different sail in a different event at a different time in the season. Owners should, however, respect the principle behind the allowance – that it is to compensate for disadvantage, and that disadvantage is not experienced by owners able to pick a sail to suit the weather.

Can I still carry or use “cruising” sails for delivery trips to and from a regatta?

Yes.

Why are you introducing this change now, particularly when you started tightening up on 130% overlap during the 2011 season?

The underlying principle, as already stated several times, has never changed. We had received several complaints in 2010 about abuse of the allowance, and took action to try to address the problem. But the normal process of handicap assessment followed its natural course during 2011, and it became progressively clearer that trends in yacht design were excluding many owners from the option of an allowance. Our revised policy, being implemented now, is intended to achieve the fairest compromise at the same time as removing obstacles to new owners thinking of getting involved in racing.