

ABC Marine - Mooring & Vessel Preparations – Typhoon Season 2026

By Alex Johnston, ABC Marine Services Manager

The ABC Marine Team would like to take this opportunity to remind you to make the necessary Mooring and Vessel preparations ahead of the 2026 typhoon/tropical storm season here in Hong Kong. This should include inspecting all of your vessel lines, and mooring swivels and shackles. These should be replaced, if old or damaged, as part of your regular repair and maintenance of your vessel on a fore/aft mooring(s), either in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter or on an individual swing mooring at Middle Island, Deepwater Bay.

It has been brought to our attention during the weekly mooring inspections that some vessels are still not using the advised mooring tackle and equipment with their vessel on a club mooring.

There should be a galvanised shackle (load bearing) attached to the ring on the top of the buoy, then the swivel (articulation), then another shackle (load bearing) onto your vessel's mooring lines, which should have a metal thimble to increase strength and reduce wear. Each component in the system needs to be able to move, in order to absorb the force and strain of the vessel on the mooring, while in use. Note that the force and strain are substantially and proportionally increased during high winds and swells, typhoon, or heavy weather conditions.

Some moorings have the swivel attached directly to the ring on top of the buoy, which is **not advisable** and results in wear/stress. There have been boats lost off moorings in past typhoons and tropical storms due to this incorrect practice.

All components in the system should be galvanized – not stainless steel, which becomes brittle or deteriorates over time when exposed to the marine environment. Never also use aluminum shackles, as these will deteriorate very quickly in salt water, which is why, as many boaters know,

most steel, or alloy vessels hulls/ outboard engines are protected by sacrificial aluminum anodes. If any of the shackles are stainless steel, old or in poor condition, please replace them before the tropical storm/ typhoon Season 2026 begins.

It is far too late to start attempting these measures if a tropical storm or typhoon is approaching HK waters. Prior vessel storm preparation is always time well spent, and never wasted.

All shackle pins securing the topside vessels mooring lines, must be secured with wire, not plastic cable ties. The correct method of attachment to a mooring buoy should be as follows:

Buoy ring - Shackle – Swivel – Shackle, on to the vessel lines with a metal thimble to prevent wear and tear on a particular spot. This allows movement of all of the components in the mooring system, which absorbs excessive energy, load and force on the vessel and its lines, while in use and especially during powerful storm conditions.

Please see the example images. An extra vessel mooring line and thimble can be attached to the lower shackle, as in the left image. This is up to the individual vessel owner's decision or preference.



A closer right image of the Shackle – Swivel – Shackle mooring tackle components. Please also note that all shackles in the system should

also be wired through the pin and shackle body, to prevent the pin becoming unwound when under load. Please do not use plastic cable ties, which are not as strong or healthy for the marine environment.

IMPORTANT: For the fore and aft club moorings in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter, please DO NOT tie your mooring buoy(s) together with an adjacent mooring (s).

This would put additional load and stress onto your mooring system. The mooring system and the buoys need to be able to move to absorb the energy when the wind or sea state is high during storm conditions, and not be rigid and static. To use a local Chinese metaphor: Please think – “light bamboo flexing in the wind, which does not break and yields, unlike a heavy banyan tree which is solid and does not move, and is therefore far more vulnerable in high winds and heavy torrential rain.” Plus, moorings also have to deal with any additional storm surge.

This is especially important and relevant with large heavy displacement powerboats or junks, with high side freeboards and cabins. Any vessel found tying moorings together on the ABC Club moorings in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter and thus causing damage to a mooring(s) or damage to other neighbouring vessels, will be potentially held responsible by the Club, if subsequent post storm repairs and maintenance are required.

Typhoon Vessel Preparation - Some Important Reminders.

- Ensure that your vessel has sufficient large fenders on both sides of the vessel if moored in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter (TYS). Powerboats which have high freeboards should have



large fenders at both at-deck and water level, to prevent contact with other vessels. Fenders must be secured so that they do not get blown onto the deck, during a storm or typhoon.

- Place extra storm mooring lines with suitable chaff protection through the fairleads on the deck of your vessel. You will require extra lines on to your mooring buoys, fore and aft – if in the Aberdeen TYS and on a swing mooring at Middle Island in Deepwater Bay. **Top tip – use washing up liquid to provide some lubricant through the fairleads; this will reduce chaff on the vessel's mooring lines.**
- All loose equipment such as tenders, paddle boards or other loose equipment or vessel kit, must all be securely tied down or stowed below or in deck lockers. During a storm, any loose items will be blown away and lost, causing damage to either your vessel or others in the vicinity.
- All sails on yachts should be secured with extra lines over the main sail cover or removed entirely. On boats with furling jibs, the sail should be dropped and stowed below – especially if on an open water mooring which is more exposed to the weather. If a furling jib becomes loose during a storm, it will flog in the wind and potentially put the yacht's mast and rig at risk, due to the excessive stress.
- Yacht halyards should be placed forward to act as additional security for the rig. If secured to the base of the mast, they will hit the rig and chafe in the high

winds.

- Drop the boom onto the deck, if possible, and tie securely, to avoid overloading the boom gooseneck connection with the mast and overloading the vang.
- All hatches and openings in the hull and cabin should be closed securely and watertight.
- Secure or remove all Bimini covers and frames, which should be lowered or securely tied down.
- Make sure all cockpit drains and deck gunnels are clear, to allow excessive water to drain overboard.

Once a T3 signal is issued – please see following revised ABC Sampan service:

ABC - Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter Sampan Service – T3 Storm Level Operations

Pre – storm: The ABC Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter Sampan Service will operate within the breakwaters of Eastern Aberdeen harbor basin only, to service members boats on ABC fore & Aft moorings and members private moorings, as follows:

Up to two hours before a T8 signal is issued and only during daylight hours. Within two hours of an impending issuance in HK of a T8 tropical storm or T9/T10 typhoon level warning, the service will be suspended.

Post storm: The ABC Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter Sampan Service will recommence operations, as follows: **1.5 hours after the T8 signal has been replaced and the T3 signal has**

been issued, after the tropical storm or typhoon has passed Hong Kong waters.

There will be no service to ABC Middle Island or Club Deepwater Bay swing moorings, until the T3 signal has been lowered.

Please note: These are general guidelines. Storm force weather conditions can, by their nature, be very unpredictable and can change very quickly, even after a storm has passed, so these times may be altered, without notice, if required for club marine safety practices.

A post typhoon inspection is always performed, post storm and once safe to do so, by the Marine Services Manager or Chief Marine Coxswains. Any issues or damage observed is reported to the Senior Management, Flag Officers and Club Committees, as soon as possible, if required.

Last year's Tropical Storm and Typhoon Season was a record breaking one, so please be prepared as early as possible and keep checking – or have a designated person do it for you, after each storm has passed, if you are out of town. There is no doubt that the power and ferocity of these summer and autumn Pacific Storm systems are becoming more frequent and increasingly more powerful and destructive in recent years.

Finally; please do not underestimate the ocean environment and always maintain respect for mother nature, for despite all of the trappings and technology of modern boating and yachting life which we all enjoy, nothing on the planet even gets close to match a Super Typhoon's wrath, with its ferocious winds, high storm surge, and torrential rain, if it "decides" to make trouble for all of the HK Marine community.

If you have any additional questions regarding your vessel typhoon preparations, or any marine or sailing related issues – please contact Alex Johnston: Marine Services Manager in the ABC Marine & Sailing Office: 2552 - 8182 – Ext 835; email: marine.services@abclubhk.com.