

# Sail Numbers & National Letters

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*Sail inspection*



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*Prepare your sail before the event to avoid pressure and mistakes!*



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*Measurement Day!*

All this is important to comply with the class rules and making a neat and clean look on the sail. Checking the sail numbers and national letters is mandatory at many international and national events and when the Notice of Race or the Sailing Instructions specify this.

The check will only take a few minutes. Correcting mistakes takes a lot longer.

Thanks to our Chief Measurer Jean-Luc Michon for his technical input.

[www.laserinternational.org](http://www.laserinternational.org)

## *Questions, Answers and Tips for applying Laser Standard, Laser Radial and Laser 4.7 sail numbers and national letters.*

Before applying the numbers and national letters on your sail please read these notes:

### How to apply letters and numbers?

The Racing Rules of Sailing and the Class Rules specify the size and placing of sail numbers and letters. All boats must comply with these rules for racing. ILCA has an easy GUIDE for the application of numbers and letters. **If you follow the GUIDE on our website your numbers and letters will comply with the class rules:** <http://www.laserinternational.org/info/sailnumbersandletters>

### Are there differences between the dimensions of numbers and national letters?

Sail numbers and national letters should have the same dimensions. The numbers and letters on Standard and Radial Sails are larger than those on the 4.7 sail.

### Can I use any number on my sail?

NO. You must use the full six digit hull ID number of your Laser, shown on the plaque at the aft end of the cockpit. The numbers must all be the same style and size and be clearly visible by a Race Official from a distance. The last 4 numbers must be a dark colour or black and any preceding numbers in a different contrasting colour. Numbers and Letters must be only adhesive and not created by ink pens or markers.

### Can I use the digital 8 for national letters?

While some letters can easily be made from a digital 8 (C, L, H, etc), others can not (e.g. B, D). Some of the letters can be made with a little extra work and using two digital 8s (such as R or A). For the letter R you need to cut the bottom of the 8 and make a diagonal forward 'stepping' leg and an A must have a pyramid shape. Look at the class recommendations for country letters on the above Laser website.

### Is there a space to respect between national letters and numbers?

Yes, for the Radial and Standard the **minimum** is 50mm so use 60mm to be sure the numbers and letters are not too close. For the 4.7, the **minimum** is 30 mm so use 40mm. Numbers and letters should be regularly spaced.

### Is the red diamond mandatory for women?

Yes, it is in the class rules.

### How long does it take to put the numbers and letters on a sail?

Allow at least one hour especially if it is the first time. A lot of this time is for measuring. Check and check again and mark guide lines for placing the numbers and letters. Do not wait until you arrive at the regatta as there may not be a good space to lay the sail out and you may be under pressure to complete the application. Both of these can lead to mistakes and more pressure. If there is an inspection of sails at the event you may miss your place in the inspection timetable and then have to wait for a later time.

### What do I need to properly apply my letters and numbers?

A well-sharpened pencil, a measuring tape, a good straight edge at least a metre long plus an eraser to remove pencil lines and marks if you wish. If you use light lines for marking you can leave them on the sail as they will not be seen from 10 metres away. Make an accurate pattern 300 x 200mm (220 x 150mm for 4.7) cut from a piece of card to assist in getting numbers like 1, 3, 5, etc vertical with correct spacing. A strip of card 300 x 60mm (220 x 40mm for 4.7) is also helpful for correct spacing between numbers and letters.

### How do I begin to apply the numbers and letters?

Follow the instructions on the ILCA website. Always start with numbers on the starboard side of the sail. Make sure you draw the long horizontal **Base Line** to keep all numbers or letters on the same level, with the bottom of each number or letter on the line. Draw a **Leech Guide Line** 300mm line up from the **Base Line** and 100mm parallel to the leech. The first starboard side number must just touch the 100mm line. There is a +/- 12 mm tolerance on this measurement.

When you have finished the starboard side numbers turn the sail over and draw a new horizontal **Base Line** for the port side numbers. Draw a new **Leech Guide Line** 100mm from the leech for the port side numbers. **The port side numbers and letters are applied starting with the number/letter closest to the leech. This will not be directly below the starboard tack numbers/letters as the leech does not run 90 degrees to the Base Lines. The number/letter must just touch the Leech Guide Line**

Start the application of letters on the starboard side of the sail. The positioning rules for the numbers and letters are the same.