

Ceilidh Compression Post

By Cliff McKay

The cabin top seemed to give a bit under my feet just forward of the companionway. A compression post was needed if we took a breaking sea in a storm. A one and one quarter inch stainless tube provided the strength. The top plate needed enough size to distribute the load (5"x12"). I located the post just forward and inside of the half-bulkhead backing the Nav Desk, so it wouldn't intrude into the passage way. The upper plate meets the cabin top under the companionway cover so that bolt heads don't show and are protected from spray and rain. I tapped the bolt holes in the plate so I wouldn't have to hold nuts in place underneath. I drilled holes for the bolts from underneath, through the plate once it was in position. The bottom plate is small and rides on the cabin sole. I welded a small cylinder to each plate, top and bottom, the size of the tube's interior diameter. To install the post, you fit the pipe over the top cylinder and swing it over the bilge hatch in front of the sink....put the bottom plate in the pipe and with a slight upward pressure on the cabin top, ease it into position just forward of the bulkhead trim. Then screw it in place.

There was one slight complication since the post itself had to run through the interior ceiling board. Locating the exact spot to drill the hole in the ceiling board was a project in itself in addition to the awkward task of balancing the board while we installed the post. The resulting neat looking installation was worth the extra effort. I added a small teak collar to cover the hole cut in the ceiling board, it provided a little "forgiveness" and to match the collar around the mast. I painted the post black to match the other interior trim. Visually, the post completes the low, partial bulkhead and further divides the galley/Nav station from the main salon. Practically, the post provides a great hand hold in rough seas. It blends in to the extent that friends who have been aboard before don't notice the addition, and other owners of this same model boat fail to notice it for the first few minutes.

As in all projects, the three keys to success are: Plan, Plan, Plan

Cliff McKay on Ceilidh

