

Criteria Vary Widely According to Cruising Range

To try to determine the most appropriate kit for certain types of voyages, *Practical Sailor* split first-aid kits into four categories and established basic standards for each. The categories are as follows:

Group I—For boats operating on lakes, rivers, or bays where professional medical help is readily available. Cost is less than \$100. (*PS* June 2008)

Group II—For boats sailing the coasts or cruising within populated waters where medical help is available within 12 hours. Cost is less than \$300. (*PS* August 2008)

Group III—For coastal sailing or cruising where medical help may be up to 24 hours away. Cost is less than \$500. (*PS* October 2008)

Group IV—For vessels engaged in offshore passagemaking or remote cruising, where medical assistance could be several days or more away. Cost is less than \$1,000.

The leading tester on this project was Dr. Ed Mapes, a doctor of veterinary medicine and veteran of 30-plus years sailing inland and offshore. Mapes has relied on several books as well, namely “National Ski Patrol’s Outdoor Emergency Care” by Dr. Warren D. Bowman; “Advanced First Aid Afloat” by Dr. Peter Eastman; and “Where There is No Dentist” by Dr. Murray Dickson. “Preparations for Offshore Sailing and Cruising” and “Further Offshore,” both written by Mapes, contain chapters devoted to the care of patients with a wide array of injuries and illnesses aboard vessels at sea.

Mapes assessed each kit according to the quantity and quality of its medications and supplies, the suitability of the containers in which the items are stored, and price. Additionally, each kit was evaluated based on minimum standards adopted for that particular group.