

## Where's the West Marine Tether?

**A** new safety tether that was among those *Practical Sailor* recommended earlier this year (January and April 2007) is reportedly having trouble meeting standards set by the International Sailing Federation. According to Chuck Hawley, director of product development at West Marine and an advisor to U.S. Sailing (the ISAF governing body in the U.S.), the tether manufacturer, Stearns Inc., is withholding further distribution of the new tether. The tether in question, the elastic tether with a Kong hook and a stress-indicating flag, first became available at West Marine stores last spring. According to Hawley, some of the

tethers showed physical signs of strain after being subjected to the standard dynamic load test (220 pounds dropped 2 meters). He said some double tethers, in particular, seemed to have problems with the test. *Practical Sailor* testers did not note any harm to the West tether during testing, which included our own dynamic load test. (The tether was weighted with a 155-pound "dummy" and dropped 2 meters.) The product, which was marketed as ISAF-compliant, is not being recalled at this time. According to Hawley, all of the tethers that West Marine has sold did pass the drop test and are safe to use.

