

# Boat Safety



## Safe use of Fuel

Treat Petrol and LPG with respect. Every year boat fires and explosions, due to the ignition of fuel vapour, cause injury and destruction. This leaflet explains how to reduce the risk to you, your family and your crew by using and storing Petrol and LPG safely.

### Petrol

**Before refuelling your inboard fuel tank, outboard, generator etc.**

- Stop the engine
- Turn off all cooking heating and lighting appliances and extinguish all other naked flames
- Turn off ignition systems on all appliances
- Switch off your mobile phone.

**And whilst refuelling, remember**

- Do not smoke or allow any one else to smoke anywhere nearby or anywhere that petrol vapour could reach.
- Never be tempted to use your mobile phone, it is safe in your pocket or bag
- Never allow children to handle petrol and keep them well away from refuelling activities.

**And then after refuelling ...**

- Check for and wipe up any spills or overflows straightaway. Dispose of the wipe carefully remember it will give off vapour for some time.
- If you smell petrol vapour, ventilate the boat. Open doors and windows and raising deck boards until the air is clear throughout the cabin space and bilges before you start the engine or use naked lights again.
- If fitted, run the bilge blower system according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Tightly secure the filler cap.

### LPG

**When changing cylinders or if you suspect a leak!**

- Stop the engine
- Turn off all burner taps on cooking, heating and lighting appliances and extinguish all other naked flames
- Turn off ignition systems on all appliances
- Don't operate electric switches (apart from the above)
- Don't smoke or allow anyone else nearby to smoke until the area is safe from the threat of escaped gas.
- Don't use your mobile phone – keep it in your pocket or bag and never touch any of its buttons if you can smell gas.

**Before changing LPG Cylinders**

- Check that the valve on the empty and full cylinders are turned off. If you need to use a spanner, make sure it's the correct size for the connections. Remember to tighten firmly.

**Once you have replaced the cylinder...**

- Refit the plastic safety cap or plug on the disconnected cylinder
- If a leak is suspected after changing a cylinder and opening the valve, check the cylinder valve with ammonia-free soapy water or leak detection fluid and watch for bubbles to detect the leak. NEVER use a naked flame
- If a leak at the cylinder cannot be stopped, move it to a safe place in the open, well away from the boat and ensure that people in the area are warned of the danger. Call your supplier and keep people safely away from the cylinder until it has either stopped leaking or your supplier has made it safe.

**If you detect or suspect a leak, don't panic, but follow the safety first point and then ...**

- Try to get as much through-flow of fresh air as possible by opening doors, hatches and windows and raising deck boards
- Tie up or anchor – keeping a safe distance from other craft. If possible, get everyone off the vessel and warn other people in the immediate area. Try to inform the local harbour navigation authority or moorings staff.

**And remember ...**

- An 'empty' cylinder may still contain some LPG vapour and is still potentially dangerous – treat it as if it were full.
- Always ensure ALL cylinders, empty or full, spare or in use, are secured vertically on deck away from openings, are in a drained cylinder locker.
- Beware – 'empty' butane cartridges or portable camping appliances will still contain some gas – dispose of them in a safe place. They must NEVER be discarded or stored within the vessel because gas will continue to seep out.

## Ventilation

An ample supply of air is vital.

Fires must be able to 'breathe' in order to function efficiently, whatever type of fuel they burn. To 'breathe' they need a constant and sufficient flow of air. Many boats have draught proofing or double-glazing fitted. Roof and door vents are, therefore, essential to provide a free flow of air and should never be blocked or covered.

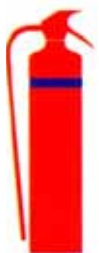
## Solid Fuel Appliances

Occupiers should:

- Check that air vents are present and open, and not blocked in rooms that have solid fuel appliances.
- Check that chimneys and flues have been swept in the last year - even if burning smokeless fuel.
- Ensure that ash has been emptied regularly - if ash is allowed to build up, the fire may not burn properly and this may also damage the appliance. Also remember to clean the throat plate of any build-up of ash or debris.
- Have appliances regularly serviced by a qualified heating engineer.

**Our advice to an occupier, if there is any doubt about the suitability or condition of heating appliances, is to contact a qualified engineer and get the appliance serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.**

## Portable Fire Extinguishers



They provide an immediate response to a small fire and help the crew escape to a safe place.

Keep in easy to reach positions close to escape routes and the fire risk points, eg. the engine space and galley.

Ensure they carry a certifying mark such as the Kitemark, are in good working order and regularly serviced.

Always read manufacturer's instructions.

Never use water extinguishers on electrical fires.

Never use carbon dioxide extinguishers inside an occupied cabin space.

Always have a fire blanket conforming with BS1869 or BS6575 fixed near the cooker or inside the galley.

- Ensure adequate 25mm clearance between roof/flue junction.
- Do not store combustible materials or furniture within 3' radius of stove.
- Check condition of protective tiling heat shield. Do not light fire if damaged or missing tiles present.

## Staying Safe is Simple

- **Never block cabin ventilators or air inlets**
- **Never use LPG cooking appliances for space heating**
- **Never leave LPG appliances on overnight, unless they are of the room sealed type**
- **Never use mobile (cabinet) gas heaters – they are not suitable for use in boats**
- **Never bring a lit barbecue into the cabin – charcoal gives off CO gas**
- **Ensure all appliances comply with the latest standards and are suitable for use in boats, properly installed and maintained by competent CORGI registered fitters**
- **Check for signs of faults and never use an appliance you think may be faulty or unsafe**
- **Never operate petrol powered generators inside an enclosed space, or close to any opening or ventilator which lead into the cabin space**
- **Never run a boat's petrol engine with the craft moored against another object such as a wharf, a lock wall or another boat – the exhaust gases could easily deflect back onto the boat. Avoid running your engine when moored in a crowded marine.**

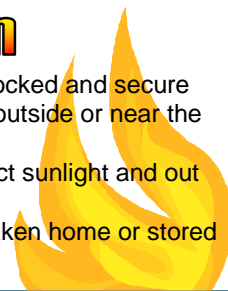
## And for additional peace of mind ....

Consider fitting a carbon monoxide detector (or CO detection). Ask your supplier if it's suitable for marine use and is certified to British Standard BS7860. But remember **ALARMS ONLY DETECT**, they cannot prevent the dangerous build up of carbon monoxide. The Council of Gas Detection and Environmental Monitoring CoGDEM offers advice.

**Tel 01462 434322  
or visit [www.cogdem.co.uk](http://www.cogdem.co.uk).**

## Arson Prevention

- Ensure when not in use your boat is fully locked and secure and all rubbish is taken home and not left outside or near the boat.
- Ensure any matches are stored out of direct sunlight and out of reach from children
- Any portable petroleum containers to be taken home or stored in a locked cabinet



## Considering fitting a smoke alarm?

You can ring the freephone number below to arrange a smoke alarm to be fitted.



**Community Fire Safety Helpline:**

**FREEPHONE : 0800 389 0053**

**SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES!**

**[www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)**

