

Fire safety on boats

You can reduce the risk of fire on your boat by following some simple safety steps. You should know what to do and be prepared if there is a fire on board when you are at sea or docked at the marina.



Common causes of fire on boats can be listed as follows;

- Smoking in closed sections on board
- Stoves and/or ovens left on
- Build-up of butane or propane gas in the bilges
- Wrong wiring
- Gasoline/petrol vapor build-up in the engine bay
- Incorrect stowage of flammable paints and solvents

We may list the precautions which can be taken for fires that may arise from such reasons;

Cigarette

It should be ensured that the cigarette butts thrown into the garbage cans are extinguished and smoking should be avoided inside the boat, especially in the cabins.

Installing a smoke alarm

A smoke alarm can alert you to the risk of fire on board and give you time to escape or alert the emergency services.

Installing Carbon Monoxide (CO) and gas detectors

A CO detector will warn you of toxic carbon monoxide on board. If you have any fuel and/or gas burning device, an engine or a generator on board, a suitable audible carbon monoxide alarm can be fitted for additional security.

If you are using a gas cylinder on board: install a gas detection system if possible. When replacing gas cylinders, make sure all cylinder valves are closed before disconnecting. Frequently ventilate areas where such cylinders are stored, such as closets, enclosed spaces, and bilges to avoid potential build-up of butane or propane gas.

Cooking safety

Never leave it unattended while you cook your meals - in case you need to leave, turn off your stove or oven until you return.



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Graduated from Maritime Academy of ITU in 1991. He served as a deck officer and Chief Mate at Zodiac Maritime, London on various size of OBO vessels, Bulk Carriers and tankers up to 1998. He worked as a Chief Mate and Master Mariner on container vessels at sea and respectively as Marine Superintendent and Marine Insurance Manager at Office in Arkas Holding up to end of 2017. As of February 2018, he joined Türk P&I family as Claims Group Manager.



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Electrical safety

When purchasing electrical products and heaters, always be sure these are marine type. Prefer a trained marine electrician to install, maintain and/or cable electrical components on board, be careful not to overload your adapters - use one plug per socket, do not use multiple plugs or multiplexers, and be sure to use the correct fuse or circuit breaker to avoid overheating.

It should be noted that the battery terminals are connected correctly and that there are no conductors around that may cause the terminals to contact. The liquid level of the batteries should be checked regularly and they should not be allowed to overheat due to overcharging.

Fuel/oil fires

Especially in hot weather, when operating a boat engine, you should ventilate the engine compartment before starting and/or after any maintenance. You should also regularly check the fuel circuits and tanks for any cracks or leaks, as fuel vapors accumulating in the compartment or fuel leaking from the circuits can ignite with a spark from the battery terminals and/or starter motor. Oily cloths or rags should not be left in the engine compartment, the bilge should be kept clean at all times and checked regularly. Before refueling, stop the engine and make sure that all flammable devices are turned off.

Paint and solvent fires

If materials such as paint and solvent have to be kept on board, it should be ensured that their lids are completely closed, well stowed and stored in an spacious area.

If there is a fire on board, the important points to consider are:

In the marina;

- Alert everyone on board.
- If safe, cut off gas, fuel or electricity sources depending on where the fire started.
- Firefight with the nearest fire extinguisher or fire blanket according to the starting point of the fire.
- If you cannot see the burning part due to smoke, cut off the contact of the smoked part with the air by closing all relevant entrances and exits.
- If possible, cool down fire with sea water from outside.
- Never use water in electric and oil/fuel fires other than ordinary fires.
- Make sure all crew are wearing life jackets.
- Call the Fire and Rescue Service.
- Warn neighboring crafts.

In the sea;

- Alert everyone on board.
- Only firefight if it's safe.
- If safe, cut off gas, fuel or electricity sources depending on where the fire started.
- Firefight with the nearest fire extinguisher or fire blanket according to the starting point of the fire.

- If you cannot see the burning part due to smoke, cut off the contact of the smoked part with the air by closing all relevant entrances and exits.
- If possible, cool with sea water from outside.
- Never use water in electric and oil/fuel fires other than ordinary fires.
- If possible throw the fire source overboard.
- If possible, adjust your course and speed to the nearest land.
- Never use water in electric and oil/fuel fires other than ordinary fires.
- If possible throw the fire source overboard.
- If possible, adjust your course and speed to the nearest land.
- Contact the Coast Guard/Fire and Rescue Services and provide your location.
- Make sure all crew are wearing life jackets.
- Prepare an emergency kit (flares, VHF radio, compass) and life raft.
- Do not open the engine panel, if possible cut off the contact of the burned part with the air.

According to the regulations;

- In boats with one or more engines and a fixed fuel tank; There should be 1, 6 kg portable fire extinguisher per machine.
- Boats without cabins, with outboard engines and with portable fuel tanks must have 1, 2 kg portable fire extinguisher.
- 1 x 2 kg portable fire extinguisher should be in the cabin in the boats with cabins.
- Boats with a galley must have a 2 kg portable fire extinguisher.
- In commercial boats, a total of 4, 6 kg. Portable fire extinguisher should be available in engine room, galley, messroom and bridge.
- Fire extinguishers must have certificates and must not have expired.
- The fire blanket should be kept in a handy place in the galley, close to the stove.

Have a nice trip...