



**Northern Ireland  
Fire & Rescue Service**

**Protecting Our Community**

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 7**

### **FIRE SAFETY ON BOATS**

A fire aboard a boat, yacht or barge can be a dangerous and terrifying event, but its effects become even more serious when escape is either difficult or requires you to abandon ship. Reduce the risk of fire on boats by following these simple tips:

- Fit a smoke alarm. Test it each time you board. Optical sensor alarms are best for boats.
- Ensure furnishings, foam and insulation are fire retardant.
- Fit an appropriate fire extinguisher in the engine compartment and the cockpit locker.
- Ensure batteries are secure and that battery boxes are vented.
- Fit a marine bubble type leak detector in the gas locker and check on a regular basis for leaks.
- Ensure gas appliances are installed and maintained by a qualified engineer.
- Ensure electricity supplies are well maintained and serviced by a marine electrician.
- Fit a Carbon Monoxide alarm to BS EN 50291.
- Ensure appropriate ventilation in the cabin is maintained especially during cooking or heating.

#### Causes of fire

- Take care when refuelling, put out naked flames first and clean up any spillage immediately.
- Never leave cooking unattended. Keep the cooking area clean and a fire blanket close.
- Avoid cooking if you are under the influence of alcohol or prescription drugs.
- Dispose of cigarettes carefully. Put them out, right out!
- Never smoke in bed or if you feel drowsy.
- Never leave candles unattended and use secure/stable candle holders on a moving boat.

#### Have an emergency plan

- Make a fire action plan and ensure all crew members are aware of what to do if there is a fire before you set out on your journey.
- Make sure people know how to isolate gas and fuel supplies.
- Familiarise yourself on how to use any extinguishers on board.
- Prepare an emergency grab bag containing flares, VHF radio, handheld GPS, torch, spare batteries and drinking water.
- Keep exits clear. Don't lock or bolt doors from the outside.
- Track your location so you can tell emergency services where you are if needed.

#### What to do if a fire occurs at the marina

- If safe to do so, isolate gas and fuel supplies.
- Evacuate the craft and ensure all crew are wearing lifejackets.
- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire & Rescue Service.
- Stay out. Do not enter a smoke filled space.
- Warn neighbouring craft.

#### What to do if a fire occurs at sea

- Only tackle a fire if it is safe to do so.
- Contact the Coastguard/Fire & Rescue Service.
- Identify position or give landmarks.
- Ensure all crew are wearing lifejackets.
- Prepare for possible evacuation; emergency grab bag and life raft.
- If safe to do so, isolate gas and fuel supplies.
- Do not open the engine panel; starve the fire of air.
- Only as a last resort abandon ship.

For further information phone NIFRS HQ 028 9266 4221 or visit [www.nifrs.org](http://www.nifrs.org)



**#STOPfire**