



R B F & R S

news release

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STAY SAFE AFLOAT THIS BOAT SAFETY WEEK

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is supporting national Boat Safety Week (25-31 May) by urging boat owners and people who hire boats for leisure to take steps to prevent the risk of fire onboard. On average, 89 fire-related accidents and injuries occur on boats every year. Furthermore, fires on privately owned boats kill at least three people every year. Fire can spread quickly on a boat but working alarms and detectors can help to keep those onboard safe.

You can reduce your risk of fire afloat by following these simple tips:

Alarms and detectors

- Optical sensor alarms with hush buttons and 'sealed for life' batteries are best for boats.
- Fit smoke alarms in places you will hear them clearly if they go off.
- Test the alarm when you board. Never disconnect it or remove working batteries.
- Fit an audible CO detector to alert you to any poisonous carbon monoxide.

Cooking and heating

- Never leave cooking unattended - turn it off until you come back.
- Keep fabrics away from cooking hobs to prevent them from catching fire.
- Check the flues and seals of coal and wood burning stoves for signs of leaks and blockages.
- Only use the fuel recommended by the heater manufacturer – other types may burn too hot.
- Ensure all hobs have shut-off or isolation valves.

Fuel and power

- Make sure you check and maintain your boat's fuel, gas and electrical systems regularly.
- Don't let oil or debris build up in the bilges.
- Take care when refuelling. Put out naked flames first. Turn off the engine and cooking before handling any fuel.
- Clean up leaks, spills and vapour immediately – they can ignite easily.
- Store gas cylinders outside, in a self-draining and fire resistant locker.
- Unplug electrical appliances when not in use or when you leave the boat.
- Never overload sockets – keep to one plug per socket.

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Firefighters from Windsor and Maidenhead will be offering Boat Fire Safety Checks at local marinas throughout the week. Crews will check existing smoke alarms to ensure they are in good working order and fit ten-year battery smoke alarms where necessary. They will also check that any hazardous substances are stored correctly and give fire safety information, including how to make a potentially lifesaving fire escape plan.

If you would like a FREE Boat Fire Safety Check, you can pre-book by calling 0118 932 2477 or come down to Windsor or Bray Marina on the following days and ask one of the firefighters.

Monday 25 May

Windsor Marina 10am - 1pm
Bray Marina 2pm - 4.30pm

Tuesday 26 May

Bray Marina 10am - 12pm
Windsor Marina 2pm - 4.30pm

Wednesday 27 May

Windsor Marina 10am - 1pm
Bray Marina 3pm - 5pm

Thursday 28 May

Bray Marina 2pm - 4.30pm

Friday 29 May

Windsor Marina 10am - 1pm
Bray Marina 2pm - 4.30pm

Saturday 30 May

Bray Marina 2pm - 4.30pm

Sunday 31 May

Bray Marina 10am - 12.30pm
Windsor Marina 10am - 12.30pm

Paul Thomas, Station Manager at Maidenhead fire station, said: "Fortunately, the number of boat fires in the UK is relatively low but when they do occur they can have devastating consequences. Boat Fire Safety Checks are completely free of charge and can help to dramatically reduce the risk of fire onboard.

"We hope that as many boat owners as possible will take advantage of the scheme and come and ask us for a safety check during Boat Safety Week."

If you are not available at any of the above times but would still like a Boat Fire Safety Check, please contact Julie Isaacs, Community Safety Coordinator, on 0118 932 2477.

For more information about boat safety, visit www.boatsafetyscheme.com.

ENDS.