



R B F & R S

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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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Pete Boardman, General Manager Prevention and Protection, said: “Fortunately, the number of boat fires in the UK is relatively low but when they do occur they can have devastating consequences. However, by following this advice you can reduce the risk of fire and keep everyone onboard safe.”

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

ENDS.