

Boat Safety Scheme
First Floor North,
Station House,
500 Elder Gate,
Milton Keynes MK9 1BB
Tel: 0333 202 1000

Email: bss.enquiries@boatsafetyscheme.org
Website: www.boatsafetyscheme.org



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Enjoy your barbecues this summer, safely off the boat

As the barbeque summer finally arrives, the BSS has simple request, 'If you see or hear of it happening, please advise your fellow boaters to never use a barbecue (BBQ) on board a boat - take it ashore, enjoy it safely and avoid the twin risks of fire and carbon monoxide.

The BSS is calling upon boaters to spread the safety messages by conversation on the mooring, or by phone, Facebook, tweeting or other social media – enjoy the BBQ ashore.

Graham Watts, BSS Manager said:

'With the BBQ off the boat there's no threat to decks or on-board combustible materials being set alight by the heat from the red hot charcoal or loose embers.

Even on land be careful not to place a disposable BBQ where it could set alight wooden jetties, boardwalks, or dry grass and vegetation.

BBQs need to be far enough away from the boat so that any hot embers blowing in the wind can't reach boat furnishings, or any anything else that can burn, like newspapers or clothes.

The carbon monoxide (CO) risk is real and immediate. In the last 18 months, seven campers have died from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by bringing disposable BBQs into, or near small and confined spaces of tents and awnings.

The lessons from camping that boaters need to take on board is that hot or warm charcoal produces dangerous amounts of the highly toxic gas, and continues to do so for hours after the cooking is over.

This means it is never safe to have a lit or cooling BBQ in a cabin or covered cockpit area. The only safe charcoal is that which is absolutely stone-cold.

Graham Watts said:

'The knowledge about CO we want boaters to share, is that at high concentrations, carbon monoxide can kill without warning, sometimes in only minutes and BBQs can create those concentrations.'

'CO cannot be seen, smelt, tasted, or felt, that's why it's known as the silent killer and so it's essential to recognise the early signs and symptoms of CO poisoning – headaches, bad temper, dizziness and nausea, because if CO is there in high concentrations, these symptoms could quickly escalate to difficulty breathing, collapse, unconsciousness and death.

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The BSS/CoGDEM 'Carbon Monoxide Safety on Boats' information can be downloaded from the BSS website www.boatsafetyscheme.org/co and contains essential safety information every boater should know about the steps they can take to stay safe, and about recognising problems early or before they arise and the importance of getting fresh air and seeking urgent medical attention if CO poisoning is suspected.

For anyone preferring paper versions, printed leaflets are available from some boat clubs, marinas, lock offices and fire services'.

Lastly, before you dispose of a used charcoal double-check that it is completely cold to the touch, either let it burn out in a safe place protected from wind and go cold or pour water onto the fire.

Used charcoal should be disposed of responsibly.

– ENDS –

Notes for editors:

The BSS is a public safety project owned jointly by Canal & River Trust and the Environment Agency. At least 12 other navigation and harbour authorities have also adopted it. The navigation authorities' purposes for the Scheme are to help reduce the risks of fire, explosion and pollution on small craft. This is done by promoting fire safety and pollution avoidance advice to help boat owners keep themselves and their crews' safe as well as regular examination of fuel systems, gas systems, electrical systems and appliances.

www.boatsafetyscheme.org