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BSS EXAMINER NEWS

Dear Examiner,

This edition of BSS Examiner News provides an update on the examiner web improvements, invites you to apply for your place on the examiner electrical training and assessment course and asks you to contribute to an important safety survey about the effectiveness of older portable fire extinguishers.

1. Examiner website update

In this newsletter, you will learn that the examiner website can now be used to book your place on examiner training courses and the way to participate in important safety surveys with examiners.

The BSS Examiner material ordering facility went live on 7 May and things seem to be going well with report pads and certificates generally arriving with examiners on time, although we cannot stress too much the importance of predicting ahead and ordering in good time (see item 6). Please follow the 'How to Guide' closely if difficulties and stress are to be avoided when attempting to order materials.

The next facility to be launched will be online examination recording planned for a staged release very soon. We are currently working with an examiner test group to help refine the process and as soon as it is running smoothly, it will be released to further batches of examiners.

The next website item to arrive will be another 'How to Guide'. It will take you through amending your own personal details or county listings etc and will offer you the choice to add the initials of your professional organisation, e.g. MABSE or IMarEST, to your details. This additional feature will be part of a new look 'search for an examiner' results page coming soon to the public website.

Other eagerly awaited website features such as technical and policy guidance supporting the examiner role will be rolled out on the examiner website throughout the second part of the year, beginning in August.

2. Bullseye fire hazard

Remember the article about the fire hazard presented by bullseye, domed glass or prismatic decklights in BSS Examiner News 06-010 and the FAQ in Technical Newsletter TN01/07?

Examiner Iain Jones provided this excellent photo illustrating the potential for direct sunlight to be magnified causing any surrounding combustible materials to heat up and/or catch fire? I thought you would like to see the photo.

Remember that if you find scorching beneath a bullseye decklight, you must inform the owner of the obvious risk; record the fact that the owner has been informed and report the details to the BSS Office, by email, fax or phone.



3. Portable fire extinguisher (PFE) survey

At the BSS Technical Committee the question was raised about the level of assurance provided by older PFEs and any need for servicing or replacement.

At present, BSS examiners visually check compliant PFEs are in general good condition and only PFEs having passed the manufacturer's express 'expiry' or 'replace by' dates have to be supported by evidence of servicing in accordance with BS 5306 by a service technician.

Although the BSS database is a far from records are incomplete applies; the general impression from incident records collected by the BSS is that PFEs generally work and work effectively to help prevent small fires from escalating. We have no records of PFEs failing to operate when needed but we have seen anecdotal reports of a failure and partial discharges.

In order to help the BSS Technical Committee decide upon this question, a survey of examiners knowledge and experience of any PFE failures or partial failures to discharge is seen as a very important source of evidence.

Accordingly, I request your help by completing the very simple and quick survey to be found on the BSS Examiner website by following the link: <http://survey.boatsafetyscheme.com/>

It is very important for the quality of the research that you complete the survey, whether you know of any PFE failures or not.

4. BW re-organisation – impact of BSS Office staffing?

Some of you will have heard about British Waterways' (BW) internal restructure of its operations and, as the BSS is administered by BW, may be wondering how or if this affects BSS Office staff. The plans include the removal of a layer of BW management and, subject to consultation with staff and trade unions, approximately 100 redundancies from office staff.

The BSS is moving from within the BW Technical Directorate to the BW Operations Directorate but at present, there is no threat to the BSS staffing levels, which are reducing under a pre-existing business plan. For more information about BW's plans visit:

<http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/newsroom/all-press-releases/display/id/2414>

5. BSS Examiner electrical training and assessment – book yourself on the course

Applications for places on the BSS Examiner electrical training and assessment course are now invited. Select your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices course dates/locations by following the link: <http://application.boatsafetyscheme.com>. *The username and password are case sensitive*

The username is: BSSExaminer

The password is: Brightspark

In view of the summer holiday period applications can be made up and until 31 August. Once your application has been submitted you will receive an email confirming receipt of your application. Confirmation of the venue allocations and invoices will follow shortly afterwards.


6. Plan ahead with your BSS material ordering – swine flu is coming!

Having just survived a couple of days when the BSS Office had no power, water, phones or web-based Essential Guide orders, we are now planning for swine flu to affect office staff and all of us at the same time. During the power failure we managed to meet all of the material orders without any delays, however we have to anticipate that swine flu epidemic may have a greater effect. So please ensure your orders are made well in advance.

6. The next BSS Examiner News

The next edition will be with you in about a month. It will include summary of the incidents that occurred in 2008 and the associated BSS risk management activity as well as news of a photo competition.

Best regards,



Graham Watts, BSS Manager