



11 March 08

Ref: 08 - 002

BSS EXAMINER NEWS

Dear examiner,

This BSS Examiner News presents a summary of boat accidents and incidents in 2007 and then sets out how information from you can help prevent more people dying and getting injured. This information is drawn from our collected records which includes information received from BSS Examiners such as examination report forms and, 'dangerous boat' reports. There is further data and a more detailed breakdown of the information in the attached annex.

Remember that accident trends might lead to new BSS requirements or advice checks, or alternatively they could lead to new or revised BSS awareness information. Never lose sight of the fact that the BSS is not just about verifying the condition of boats every four years, it is also about helping save lives related to how boaters use their boats. We recorded **15** deaths on the UK's inland waterways (inc. N. Ireland) from powered boat-related activities in 2007 and another **18** people were seriously injured. These are much higher figures than previous years.

Also provided is some information about current and planned BSS Office activity triggered by the safety information. I hope that you find the information of interest to you and that it helps you feedback safety information to your customers and encourages you to let us know if you hear about a fire or CO incident or if you examine a boat you consider is a 'dangerous boat'.

From our records of the 2007 accidents and incidents....

...many more incidents were recorded – So far for 2007 we have 134 reports of incidents, up from 89 reports for 2006 (as at this time last year). Although this represents a rise of around 50%, this is likely to be due to greater levels of reporting. If you hear about a boat fire, or any other type of boat incident, let us know because the more reports we have and the sooner we get them, the more we will learn about the causes and the more relevant and effective our risk avoidance measures can be. We anticipate that we will learn of a further 10% more incidents for 2007 as time goes on.

...many more boat fire deaths than normal - On inland waterway boats last year four fires were fatal, the most we have recorded in any one year. In the past five years one person has died on average each year as a result of fire or explosion on an inland boat.

...yet again two people died from CO poisoning – this has remained constant for 10 years.

... boats used for residential purposes feature strongly - From the statistics seven people died (out of 15 deaths, 47%) using their boat for residential purposes and five people (out of 18, 28%) were hospitalised. A total of 30 incidents were recorded for boats used for residential purposes (out of 96 inland incidents, 32%).

... deliberate fire setting is the second highest cause of fire on inland waters - If more information was available, it would be useful to see how many of the affected craft were in regular use and how many were in an abandoned or semi-abandoned state. However, only five reports of the 14 craft set on fire in our records have craft names.

... the causes of 17% of reported inland fires remain not known – you can help reduce this figure by letting us know if you hear about a boat fire.

... a smoke alarm could have made a difference - It is clear that the consequences of three of the four fatal fires in 2007 could have been changed by having a suitable and effective alarm.

BSS Office Activity – current and future

Gap in knowledge – The reporting of incidents has been widely encouraged by the BSS and it is recognised that full data will drive the BSS to be more effective. We are getting many more reports from Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) and Warwickshire FRS put fire investigators into every boat fire scene. We anticipate direct access into FRS data reporting system shortly.

Boats used for residential purposes – we are working with Warwickshire FRS to complete the pilot that will result in firemen talking directly with those boaters seen as ‘most at risk’ about the risks and hazards presented on the specific boat. It is hoped that the success of this initiative will lead to the expansion of the project nationwide.

Carbon monoxide (CO) – In 2007 we were pro-active with media releases and communicating with all navigation authorities and the navigation authorities have been pro-active in providing safety information direct to their customers. The front page of the BSS website continues to focus on the risk of CO and how to avoid it. The BSS is applying for funds to provide significant research into CO dispersion in boats and surveying inherent levels of CO in boats.

Solid fuel stoves – BSS reviewed and revised its boater safety information and this has a prominent position on the ‘Fire Portal’ on the BSS website. If you haven’t yet viewed the Fire Portal, you are strongly recommended to do so. Please promote the BSS Fire Portal to any of your customers having internet access. We intend to promote further advice on choosing the correct type of fuel and further damping, cleaning and maintenance advice. We anticipate the British Standard concerning the installation of solid fuel stoves on boats will be out for public comment by the end of the year.

Rapid spread of narrowboat fires – In 2007 we developed the recommendation for appropriate smoke detector alarms in boats with accommodation (again, see the Fire Portal for detail). In 2007 we will measure the success of this recommendation and will seek examiner volunteers to conduct a survey of smoke alarm usage and effectiveness.

Boat Fire Safety Week – FRS’s across the UK are participating this week in the second Boat Fire Safety Week organized by Central Government’s Community Fire Safety Department during the Whitsun Week.

The importance of completing Examination Report Forms & ‘dangerous boat’ reporting

Completing BSS Examination Report Forms at the time of your first visit helps establish trends that can be used to make the Scheme more effective in keeping boaters safe. So please continue to fill them in at the right time, you could save lives by this action alone.

Ringling in to Tracy or Kerry with ‘dangerous boat’ reports remains a critical tool in preventing potential accidents and incidents and identifying risk trends, so please continue to do so. The reporting procedure is set out in Appendix B of your Examination Checking Procedures.

Please help keep inland boaters safe – if you know of a recent fire report it!

I repeat that if you hear about a boat fire, any other type of boat-related incident, or indeed ‘near misses’ such as problems with solid fuel stoves, let us know. The more reports (especially with pictures) we have and the sooner we get them, the more we will learn about the causes and the more relevant and effective our risk avoidance measures can be.

I’ll be asking for your help with the smoke alarm survey in about one month’s time.

Best regards,



Graham Watts, **BSS Manager**

Records of the 134 Accidents and Incidents Collected to date by the BSS for 2007

Fire, explosion and CO incidents = <u>114</u>		
The number of fire, explosion and arson events recorded on inland waterways is: <u>69</u>		
<i>The overall number of boat fires and or explosions recorded from all sources (including coastal) is: <u>105</u></i>		
The number of CO incidents on inland waterways is: <u>7</u>		
<i>The overall number of CO incidents recorded from all sources (including coastal) is: <u>9</u></i>		
The breakdown of the suspected causes of the <u>76</u> reported inland fire and CO incidents is as follows:		
Solid fuel stoves - <u>16</u>	Deliberate - <u>14</u>	Not known - <u>13</u>
Gas escape/appliance - <u>7</u>	Conflagration - <u>5</u>	Engine/engine room - <u>5</u>
Other - <u>5</u>	Electrical system - <u>3</u>	Galley incidents/accidents - <u>3</u>
Appliances (not SFS) - <u>2</u>	Oil fired stoves/heaters - <u>2</u>	Petrol leak - <u>1</u>

Other incidents = <u>20</u>	
The number of other incidents reported on inland waterways is: <u>20</u> (<i>this was the total of all other incidents recorded</i>)	
The breakdown of the 20 reported other incidents is as follows:	
Capsize, collision and sinking – <u>12</u>	Man Overboard - <u>6</u>
Cleat break away - <u>1</u>	head injury on bridge - <u>1</u>

Severity of inland waterways incidents	<u>15</u> people died	<u>18</u> serious injuries
Capsize	2	1
CO	2	1
Explosion/fire, petrol, gas, fume ignition	1	8
Fire, galley accidents	2	-
Fire, solid fuel installation	1	3
Fire, not known	1	1
Man overboard	4	3
Personal injury (the cleat and bridge incidents)	2	-
Sinking	-	1

Completing Examination Report Forms 2007

The top ten faults recorded on BSS examination report forms for 2007 are:

Count of Faults	Check list item	% of all faults recorded
2047	8.9.1	8.50%
955	6.1.1	4.00%
943	3.1.2	3.90%
646	2.13.3	2.70%
623	2.10.2	2.60%
612	3.1.3	2.60%
576	7.6.2	2.40%
568	8.1.1	2.40%
556	7.8.1	2.30%
548	6.2.1	2.30%

A breakdown of all faults recorded BSS examination report forms for 2007 by section indicates that 42% of all faults concern the LPG system or appliances.

A key message to take away from the list above is that the top three faults have remained the same for the last three years. These represent 16.4% (15.2% 2006) of all faults found. Fault 8.9.1 is advisory so perhaps we should not expect any change year on year, however 6.1.1 and 3.1.2 are not advisory and a fresh approach will be taken to help ensure boaters maintain compliant boats.

'Dangerous Boat' Reporting 2007

The number of 'dangerous boat' reports received from examiners and then actioned by the BSS Office is: **189**. 49 separate examiners provided reports, of which 11 (22%) are Thames-based.

189 reports represents 1.7% of the total examinations carried out, the breakdown of the reports is as follows:

129 (68%) covered gas leaks	28 (15%) covered other significant gas faults, including 1 report of a gas caravan fridge on petrol boats
49 (26%) covered significant shortfalls of ventilation	14 (7.5%) covered significant flue faults
2 (1%) covered fuel leaks, both petrol	6 (3%) covered unsafe situations

The geographic spread of the reports generally reflects the spread of boats;

94 reports (50% of the total number of reports) concerned boats on BW waters	59 on EA –Thames (31%),
15 on EA – Anglian (8%),	17 on Broads Authority waters (9%),
6 on the National Trust's river Wey (3%)	2 on the Basingstoke Canal (1%)
1 on Middle Level Commissioners	1 on EA Medway
1 each on Lower and Upper Avon Navigations	1 on Middle Level Commissioners