

16 May 08

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BSS EXAMINER NEWS

Dear examiner,

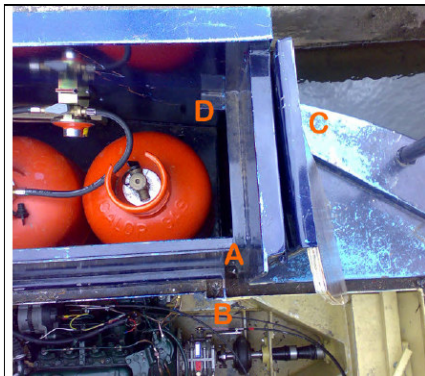
Another re-registration period is complete and the current total of registered examiners stands at 198, with a couple more of the newly registered examiners anticipated to join shortly. Welcome to the 11 new examiners currently registered.

This BSS Examiner News has some advice concerning examination and licensing issues and seeks your help with some important safety topics.

Watch out for gas lockers having drainage channels that lead into the engine space

Recently an examiner reported gas locker arrangements on a nearly new narrowboat whereby a rainwater channel within the locker could allow leaked LPG in to the engine space; take a look at the photo below. The arrangements are not compliant with check 7.2.1 which requires gas lockers to be LPG-tight to the interior of the boat to the height of the cylinder valve and high-pressure components. It seems that the design fault affected two new boats and by working with the BMF and the boatbuilder, the boats were soon made compliant.

This is not the first time this form of non-compliance has come to our notice. About three years ago a day hire boat blew up causing serious injury to three of the occupants as a result of a LPG leak path allowing leaked LPG into the engine space. The message for examiners is check gas lockers that have rainwater channels in them very carefully to make sure no leak path for LPG into the interior of the boat.



Concerning the photo:

- A is the point at which the rainwater channel enters the gas locker
- B is where the rainwater channel meets the engine space
- C is the metal locker cover
- D is the point where the channel leaves the locker

BSS Certificates for Argocats, PWCs and other oddments - what to say to owners?

Have you ever been approached by the owner of an Argocat all-terrain vehicle, personal water craft or even a motorised skip, wanting a BSS certificate for it? Probably not, but what would you say if an owner of an unusual class of vessel did ask? These types of vehicle/vessel, along with hovercraft, are not the type that can normally be licensed on inland waterways because of the lack of control at slow speeds and the associated hazards they present to others. It is of course possible to examine such vessels, but should you?

The answer is that if you are approached by an owner you should not carry out an examination but rather you should inform them to contact their navigation authority to seek advice as to whether the vehicle/vessel is of a type that could achieve a licence to navigate. If confirmed that it is suitable then the examiner should conduct an examination as per normal.

Solid Fuel Stoves – work on a new British Standard commences

With fires associated with the use of solid fuel stoves still at the top of the fire-cause league table on inland waterways, it is good news that the first tangible steps to the safer selection, installation and use of solid fuel stoves have been made with the start of work on a new UK code of practice.

Code drafting consultants, Gastec at CRE Ltd, have been commissioned and the work is to be overseen by the joint solid fuel and small craft British Standards Institution (BSI) committee of which I am a member. The Association of Waterway Cruising Club's Malcolm Wood is gathering together experiences of boat owners to feed into the development of the standard.

The final draft code will go out for public comment in about 9 months time and it is anticipated to be published within a year. It is likely that the BSS will draw upon this standard when considering requirements for solid fuel stove installations and guidance to boat owners. I'll let you know when the standard goes out for public comment, but in the meantime, if you have any strong views you would like me to place before the committee let me know as soon as you can.

Failure of gas cartridge portable fire extinguisher (PFE)

In the attached annex I've included details of a fatal incident on a coastal vessel involving the use of a large gas cartridge-type dry-powder PFE. This is provided for your information and to underpin the PFE condition checks at 6.1.3. It is also to highlight the good advice **not** to discharge a rusting extinguisher of this type. This advice is for anyone thinking of discharging the unit for fun or fire fighting practice.

BSS LPG Tightness Test - Update

I've been asked by the BSS Technical Committee to update you as to what is happening concerning the BSS LPG tightness test. This subject was last covered in the BSS Examiner News 06-005 and, as then the first thing to say is continue to use the existing tests until instructed to do otherwise. Remember also that we covered what to do if you confirm a small pressure drop through an appliance in Technical Update TN 02.07.FAQ03.

You will recall that, either at the time of your LPG re-assessment at Evesham College Gas Centre, or your more recent initial training, you will have received a hand-out concerning a revised LPG tightness test intended to be introduced at some future point in time.

I can update you that the existing slight mis-alignment with the test used by CORGI registered gas fitters involving an allowable pressure drop through appliances and a varied time period of the let-by and actual test is to be reviewed with marine and gas industry representatives. Once the review is completed I'll let you know the outcome.

2008 boat events – would you like to help?

We are again looking for examiners to help represent the Scheme at this year's busy summer season of events. Please let Tracy/Kerry know, on the usual number, if you can help out with any of the events below. We usually ask for a half day help so you get chance to see the show. We also provide tickets where necessary, and BSS red shirts for examiners who haven't got one. If there is a festival, show or rally in your locality and you would like to formally represent the Scheme, please let Tracy/Kerry know and Rob will call you back.

Event	Nav Auth	Date	Examiners needed
River Safety Days, Molesey Lock	EA Thames	24/25 May	1 each day
Crick Boat Show	National	24-26 May	6 (4 left)
Thames/Beale Park Boat show	EA Thames	6-8 June	1-3
Bristol Harbour Festival	Bristol HA	2-3 Aug	1-2
Bedford River Festival (STC)	EA Anglian/BW SE	12-13 Jul	2
NWF (IWA) – Wolverhampton	National	23-25 Aug	6
Ranworth Staithe (STC)	Broads Auth	Sept (tbc)	2

Watch out for Boat Fire Safety Week

Fire and Rescue Service's across the UK are participating in the second Boat Fire Safety Week organized during the Whitsun Week, 24 – 30 May 2008.

The aim of the week is to raise awareness of general fire safety and associated safety issues with boat owners on both coastal and inland waterways, in particular boat dwellers. Watch out for events in your area.

Smoke alarms - 20 volunteers needed

We are looking for about 20 interested examiners who can help us run a survey to inform us about the use of smoke alarms on boats. The survey will run for at least six months commencing from June and will involve examiners identifying the proportion of boats with alarms and classifying the type of any alarms found.

It will also involve asking a few questions of owners and recording the answers on a simple report form to be returned with monthly returns.

Any interested examiners, please let Tracy/Kerry know on the usual number. You will need to be familiar with our published guidance and recommendations to be found at http://www.boatsafetyscheme.com/site/FirePortal_216.asp .

Are you online yet?

This year we are investing in new IT that will improve the technical support service we offer examiners and will lead to the electronic transfer of examination data. New entrants for examiner training are required to be fully online - email and internet. I'm giving plenty of notice that at the time of next year's registration, applications to re-register as a BSS examiner must be made online and returns will have to be made online.

Examiners who haven't yet got email or internet or the skills to use them, must think seriously about getting them. If this describes you, then we recommend seeking a local business support scheme that can help you with this. Once you are online or have email please let us know.

River Medway?

There is talk circulating in official and non-official circles of the formal implementation of Scheme as a licensing requirement on the River Medway by April 2009. This is subject to various actions at government level and it is just as likely that the implementation date will slip. However, if the go ahead is confirmed, then we will advise all examiners via the next newsletter following any announcement. We will also send an email to all examiners self-registered for working in Kent just as soon as any news is confirmed.

We have made an offer to the Environment Agency Southern Region to help it communicate with owners of boats within scope of certification along the lines of what we have been doing on the Broads. Again if there are any opportunities to join in we will let you know.

Signs, banners and and clothing

We had queries from some examiners recently about the provision of signs, banners, flags and similar ways of attracting custom and letting boat owners know there is a BSS examination facility available. Rob is consulting with some suppliers and hopes that by the next newsletter he will have more information and price indicators.

We are also wondering if anyone would like examiner apparel such as overalls, fleeces, all weather coats, gilets, hats etc. Please let us know whether this is the sort of thing you would be interested in and what items you would like considered.

Best regards,



Graham Watts, **BSS Manager**

Failure of gas cartridge portable fire extinguisher (PFE)

The following report is reproduced courtesy of the Marine Safety Forum with no editing. The Marine Safety Forum supports the marine sector of the UK off-shore oil and gas industry. If you are interested in more information visit: <http://www.marinesafetyforum.co.uk/>.

Although the vast majority of PFEs encountered are stored pressure units with gauges it is possible that larger vessels such as Dutch barges will have 20lb gas-cartridge dry powder units like the one referred to in the report.

Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 07-2,7 Issued: 22nd October 2007

A fatal injury occurred resulting from the operation of a gas cartridge-type dry chemical powder-filled fire extinguisher. Upon activating the fire extinguisher, the bottom of the extinguisher body failed. The fire extinguisher propelled upwards and struck the fire extinguisher operator in the neck and chin area resulting in fatal injuries.

Lessons Learned - *There were signs of corrosion on the base of the extinguisher and it is thought that this may have contributed to the fire extinguisher failure. As a precautionary measure it is advised that all cartridge-type fire extinguishers (in simple terms those which do not have a pressure gauge attached) should be inspected immediately. Those which show signs of significant corrosion or severe pitting should be removed from service and replaced.*

Recommended Actions - *Visually inspect all gas cartridge operated fire extinguishers that are located in potentially corrosive environments. Check for signs of significant corrosion or severe pitting on the body and base of the fire extinguisher. Where there is a sign of corrosion or severe pitting on the extinguisher, take the extinguisher out of service immediately and replace it with a new unit. During inspection, accessories such as rubber bases or mounting brackets should be removed to ensure a complete visual examination of the unit. If you are in doubt of the severity of the corrosion, take the extinguisher out of service and have it tested in line with manufacturer's guidelines.*

Potentially corrosive environments include:

- *fire extinguishers stored outside, unprotected from the weather*
- *fire extinguishers stored in wet/damp environments or in standing water*
- *fire extinguishers stored near marine environments, jetties, platforms, shipping or any facility located near salt water*
- *fire extinguishers stored on or near chemical processing facilities*

NB: *An investigation team is currently working to determine the system causes of the incident and will report in due course. This may result in further recommendations.*

