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BSS EXAMINER NEWS

Dear Examiner,

This edition updates you with what's happening on the subject of solid fuel stoves and alerts you to a dangerous LPG cylinder re-filling practice a very small minority of boat owners are engaging in and that may affect your safety.

It also includes a safety warning about a range of European CO₂ fire extinguishers and emphasises the continuing need to provide owners with the blue copy of the BSS Certificate.

Solid fuel stoves – the latest information

In short, the BSS is not to introduce any new mandatory checks but there will be a new advice check. Reliance is being placed on safety improvements by way of encouraging owners to install new and replacement stoves to the new code of practice. Examiners have an important role to help persuade such owners and here is some added detail to help.

The BSI code of practice is published

Most of you will be aware that new guidelines regarding the installation of solid fuel stoves in boats have been introduced by the publication in February 2010 of BS 8511 *Code of practice for the installation of solid fuel heating and cooking appliances in small craft*. Unusually, this code had a year to bed in and so the guidance was implemented in February of this year.

Most of the major manufacturers of solid fuel stoves intended for boats now have stoves and components in-line with the code's provisions. This may include the supply of twin-wall insulated chimneys and, very importantly, provision of boat-related installation instructions.

The main safety impacts of the code are the introduction of clear guidelines as to how to insulate combustible materials from the heat of the stove and the importance of maintaining flue-gas temperature by selecting twin-wall insulated chimney sections.

Please take a look at the simple guidance on the impact of the code provided by the Solid Fuel Technology Institute (Soliftec); www.soliftec.com/Installation.htm.

The BSS position

The following bullet points set out the current position of the BSS concerning stove safety:

- Boat fires and carbon monoxide poisonings attributed to solid fuel stoves continue to feature in BSS incident report data.
- The BSS welcomes the introduction of the BSI code and encourages boaters adding solid fuel stoves or replacing existing stoves to have them properly installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- The BSS currently considers it to be more effective in achieving fewer incidents, to promote installation to the new code rather than having a BSS mandatory requirement – time-linked, retrospective or otherwise.
- The BSS considers that stove installation to the code is essential for added safety, but equally important is the way the stove is used and maintained.
- The BSS is issuing a news release and briefings promoting new and replacement installations to the code and providing a link to essential safety messages concerning having an effective stove/flue maintenance regime and taking care and being attentive during stove use.

- The BSS encourages boat owners to remain vigilant to the key hazards presented by solid fuel stoves, namely:
 - over-firing leading to a boat fire;
 - fires caused by stoves setting light to nearby materials;
 - carbon monoxide poisoning due to the escape of flue gases into the cabin.

What does all this mean for BSS Examiners?

Firstly, there will not be any new mandatory BSS checks as a result of the code's publication. It has been established that any practical, repeatable mandatory installation check for examiners would be difficult to achieve and it is less likely to be effective in reducing incidents than promoting the code.

The reasons for this conclusion are associated with the cause of recorded incidents being attributed in equal emphasis to a) poor installation, b) poor maintenance or c) inappropriate use of the appliances. It is considered that the latter two causes could not reasonably be assessed through the BSS examination process.

In addition, concerning installation, checking the actual effectiveness of any insulation of combustible materials from stoves could be difficult without tools or removing panels.

There is however to be a new advice check for 'non-intended' gaps in the body of solid fuel appliances above the fire bed; in order to address the risk of CO leakage into the cabin space.

It is recognised that examiners continue to have an essential role to play if this encouragement is to be successful in reducing the number of solid fuel stove incidents. Here is how examiners can help:

1. Ensure continued vigilance in applying the checks at 8.4 and 8.5.
2. Encourage any boaters fitting new or replacing existing stoves to install to the code. Suggest they ask their supplier to ensure the appliance, chimney and installation instructions meet BS 8511 and insist their competent installer installs to the code. Also, point to the Soliftec web guidance.
3. Once published in the waterways magazines, promote the BSS press release and point boaters to information on the BSS website containing all the essential safety messages concerning effective stove/flue maintenance regime and safe stove use.
4. Let us know if you hear about an incident involving a solid fuel stove, or any other boat-related incident for that matter.

What happens next?

Watch out for the press release in the waterways press and internet.

Watch out for re-vamped information in the BSS website.

Anticipate an ECP change instruction in due course.

The BSS warn boaters not to attempt to refill LPG cylinders intended for factory replenishment

We are very concerned at the content of a web forum that seems to encourage readers to attempt to refill small capacity LPG cylinders from a larger cylinder. Apart from the point that many cylinders are not generally the property of the customer, but belong to the LPG company, so refilling them runs into immediate legal problems, there are also many safety issues related to the refilling of LPG cylinders intended for factory replenishment.

In general terms, filling cylinders safely is a complex and controlled process the subject of regulations and standards. These exist so that the employees of the LPG cylinder supply companies are not put at risk when refilling the cylinders and so that customers can use the product safely.

Attempting to refill from an inverted LPG cylinder into another cylinder is very hazardous and a completely unsafe practice as the safety devices on the cylinders may no longer operate correctly and has the potential to lead to a serious incident in the event of an escape of liquefied gas. One volume of liquefied gas produces approximately 250 volumes of gas and thus a leak of liquid poses a considerable hazard.

In conjunction with UK LPG, the BSS is warning boaters not to attempt to refill small capacity LPG cylinders from larger cylinders.

What examiners should do if they know a cylinder has recently been re-filled this way

It is recognised that the likelihood of an incident is low and no reports have been received of incidents. However, decanting can overfill a smaller cylinder risking an escape of gas or liquid LPG if the ambient temperature rises.

If you are concerned that a LPG cylinder has been filled from a larger cylinder, please explain the risks to the owner or their representative, halt the examination and then ring the BSS Office to seek advice before proceeding.

The examination should only be resumed and completed if the gas cylinder is disconnected and replaced with an appropriate replacement LPG cylinder.

BSS Examiner Consultation – on the BSS Examiner Conditions of Registration

Just a reminder that there is little over one month left to respond to the consultation on the proposal to replace the BSS Examiner Code of Conduct (CoC) with BSS Examiner Conditions of Registration. Thank you to those who have already submitted views.

Responses should be received by the BSS Office by 17.00 on Tuesday 6 September. The BSS Examiner support site has all the information you need on this subject:

<https://pro.boatsafetyscheme.com/you-and-the-bss/agreements-and-expectations/conditions-of-registration-consultation>

Faulty 2kg and 5kg aluminium CO₂ fire extinguishers – safety warning

TOTAL, a manufacturer of portable CO₂ fire extinguishers advises that faulty extinguishers have been identified and due to the possibility of the valves failing and causing injury, the affected extinguishers must not be touched or moved. TOTAL considers the risk of an incident is extremely small however if found, the manufacturer should be contacted for advice immediately. It is known that some have been supplied to the marine industry.

Affected fire extinguishers will be branded TOTAL (Classic K2A, Classic K5), COSMOS (K5), Hansa, Hoenig, IBS, Neuruppin, Optimal, NWF, Stoll-Luxemburg or Waßmann. They are CO₂ extinguishers with 2 kg or 5 kg capacity, manufactured between 2006 and April 2011. Although the BSS has not identified a UK supplier, it is feasible that they could be found on a boat imported from Europe.

Click here for a product notice, issued with Lloyds Register Classification News, to help identify affected equipment.

Please continue to give owners the top and blue copies of the BSS Certificate

Please continue to issue the blue copies of the BSS Certificate and advise the owners to send the blue copy to the licensing or registration office of the relevant navigation authority.

Despite coverage in the last newsletter, some examiners are labouring under a misapprehension that the instructions have changed. They haven't; as emphasised to me in forthright messages from BW Customer Services about some examiners still giving their customers the wrong advice.

Best regards,



Graham Watts, **BSS Manager**