

Boat Safety Scheme
64 Clarendon Road
Watford WD17 1DA
Tel: 01923 201278

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



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Boat Safety Scheme says – be cautious with spare petrol aboard

Don't carry spare petrol on board unless it is completely unavoidable, says the Boat Safety Scheme but if you must, please take every measure you can to reduce the chance of an accident.

The advice from the BSS follows the death of two men in boat fire this April, where the early indications are that a petrol container stowed in the aft cockpit of the cabin cruiser may have added to the intensity of the fire and may have made it more difficult for the new boaters to escape.

Graham Watts the BSS Manager said:

'With the recent worries about petrol supplies and with petrol already generally hard to find on the inland waterways, boaters may feel inclined to load up the boat with spare petrol cans but this could increase the risk of a serious fire.

'Spare petrol containers should not be carried on-board unless it is judged to be essential to assure the safe completion of a voyage or excursion.'

The BSS says that if you carry petrol, try to reduce the risk of a serious fire: -

- Limit the capacity! Don't forget that UK law allows you only to carry restricted amounts of spare petrol aboard.
- Use proper cans, specifically designed for petrol. Any other container not designed for petrol could allow fuel and vapours to escape.
- Protect petrol containers from direct sunlight wherever you can, but never keep them in the engine or cabin space.
- Store petrol cans and engines with integral tanks such as outboard motors and generators way from sources of ignition in drained lockers, or on open deck areas where any escaping petrol fuel and vapours will flow overboard.
- Decanting petrol from containers should be avoided if possible, and re-filling containers or equipment should take place in the open air on the bank and away from sources of ignition.
- Never use a bucket or other open receptacle to hold or transfer petrol or to mix petrol and two-stroke oil, add the oil to the engine's tank before filling with petrol.
- Containers should not be overfilled, because petrol expands and vapour pressure can build up in hot weather.
- Containers should be securely stowed to prevent them falling over and leaking.
- Take care to protect petrol containers, any that is dropped or treated roughly could start leaking.

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For more information on the nature of petrol and petrol vapour and the maximum capacity of petrol allowed to be carried, visit the BSS website -

http://www.boatsafetyscheme.com/downloads/BSS_Guide_chap5.pdf

- ENDS -

Notes:

The BSS is a public safety project owned jointly by British Waterways and the Environment Agency. At least 14 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.

The BSS examination and certificate BSS certificates have a life span of four years. Navigation authorities using the Scheme usually require a valid BSS certificate at the time of licensing, registration, toll renewal or similar. The certificate is issued to boat that is found to be compliant with all the BSS requirements relevant for that boat. These can be found in the BSS Essential Guide which can be freely downloaded or read on www.boatsafetyscheme.com. The compliance check is carried out by an authorized, independent practitioner known as a BSS examiner.