



Barry Sheerman MP urges boaters to safeguard against carbon monoxide poisoning, following suspected case in Cumbria.

Barry Sheerman, Chair of the All-party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group (APPCOG) is urging all holiday makers to be 'carbon monoxide safe', as the media report a suspected carbon monoxide incident occurring on a private boat in the Lake District.

National media have reported that a 36-year-old woman and a 10-year-old girl have died from suspected carbon monoxide poisoning during an Easter boating holiday in Windermere. A man, who was also on the boat, is reported to be receiving treatment at the Royal Lancaster Infirmary.

While it is unconfirmed whether carbon monoxide is to blame in this incident, members of the public are being strongly encouraged to take appropriate steps to ensure that they are properly protected against the threat of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning while holiday making.

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless gas – often dubbed the 'Silent Killer' – and can kill quickly if inhaled in high concentrations. The symptoms of poisoning are similar to flu or food poisoning, and include headaches, nausea and dizziness.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is often only seen as a threat in winter months when faulty household boilers or other heating appliances can emit fatal levels of the deadly gas. However in recent years the APPCOG has heard of many other incidents, particularly in the holiday period where carbon monoxide has been to blame.

Charcoal BBQs, portable gas stoves, and generators can also produce lethal doses of the gas, especially within confined spaces such as tents or boats. In particular, the Boat Safety Scheme warns that CO build-up in boat cabins can occur with one or a mix of these factors:

with faulty, badly maintained or misused appliances

exhaust fumes from a boat's engine or generator-

escaped flue gases from solid fuel stoves

blocked ventilation or short supply of air-fuels need the right amount of oxygen to burn safely

Boat Safety Scheme Advice on avoiding a carbon monoxide incident is to:

- Install fuel burning appliances properly
- Maintain appliances and engines routinely
- Use the equipment correctly
- Don't allow engine fumes into the cabin space
- Deal with problems immediately
- Don't allow bodged repairs and maintenance
- Install a CO alarm
- Test the alarm routinely
- Never remove alarm batteries except to replace them
- Know the signs of CO poisoning and how to react.

Following this incident the APPCOG urge boaters to follow Boat Safety Scheme advice, which will help protect boaters from dying or being seriously injured from the noxious gas.

Barry Sheerman MP said: 'My condolences go to the family and survivors of this needless tragedy. The shocking event this Easter weekend strengthens our resolve to ensure holiday makers are kept safe from the threat of carbon monoxide poisoning. We've seen an increase in incidents throughout the last few years related to carbon monoxide from various different sources. Boat cabins are one of these environments where people need to be particularly careful. Through the All Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group we are working with the Boat Safety Scheme and many others to tackle these incidents.'

Graham Watts of the Boat Safety Scheme added: 'Over a million people go boating safely each year, but to enjoy a boat safely the risks need treating with due respect. Carbon monoxide in a small space like a boat cabin has to be avoided. By following the basic advice on our website and by having CO alarms on board as a back-up, you should have a happy and incident-free holiday.'

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Journalists seeking further information about the All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group should contact John Arnold at john.arnold@policyconnect.org.uk; 0207 202 8582.
2. The Boat Safety Scheme, or BSS, is a public safety initiative owned by the Canal & River Trust and the Environment Agency. Its purpose is to help minimise the risk of boat fires, explosions, or pollution harming visitors to the inland waterways, the waterways' workforce and any other users. Journalists seeking further information about the Boat Safety Scheme should contact Graham Watts at Graham.W@boatsafetyscheme.org
3. More information can be found via the boat safety scheme website [http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/stay-safe/carbon-monoxide-\(co\)](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/stay-safe/carbon-monoxide-(co))