

Boat Safety Scheme Technical Briefing

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BSS Check(s): ECP Part 2 & 8

BSS interim position on fuel tanks and supply lines for diesel appliances

Preface

This Technical Briefing Note and the accompanying document set out the interim approach Examiners must take when examining the fuel supply arrangements to permanently installed diesel appliances (e.g. heaters and stoves).

Description / scenario

The BSS are aware that an increasing number of automotive variant diesel heaters are being installed in small craft and that diesel heaters and stoves are being supplied into the small craft market with small capacity unmarked plastic fuel tanks and unmarked plastic/nylon fuel lines. At a meeting in October 2021 the BSS Technical Committee agreed to undertake a wide-ranging review covering the supply, installation and use of diesel appliances and their fuel systems. It's possible the review may lead to permanent changes to the published BSS Requirements.

However, until the full review has been completed the BSS Technical Committee has agreed an interim position regarding small capacity unmarked plastic fuel tanks and unmarked plastic/nylon fuel lines supplying permanently installed diesel heaters and diesel stoves.

The interim position has been agreed on the basis that the risks associated with small capacity unmarked plastic fuel tanks and unmarked plastic/nylon fuel lines are very low.

While portable diesel heaters and stoves are not covered by the BSS Requirements, if a diesel heater or stove is connected to a remote fuel tank, or permanently connected to the boat's electrical system then it is installed and no longer a portable appliance and it must be compliant with the BSS Requirements.

Implications for BSS Examinations

Examiners must apply the interim approach set out in the accompanying document with immediate effect.

The interim position permits Examiners to pass non-CE marked plastic fuel tanks provided their capacity is not greater than 10lt even though they do not comply with the existing published BSS Requirements.

The interim position also permits Examiners to pass unmarked plastic/nylon fuel lines (where they are connected to tanks of 10lt or less) even though they do not comply with the existing published BSS Requirements.

For every Examination where a 10lt or less, unmarked plastic fuel tank and unmarked plastic/nylon fuel line are passed even though they do not comply with the existing published BSS Requirements, Examiners must advise the boat owner in writing that the acceptance of such fuel tanks and fuel lines by the BSS is an interim position and possibly subject to change in the future.

For each such Examination the following text must be added to the Examination record on the BSS Database using the Additional Observation (AO) facility (in this way the advice will appear on the BSS Examination Report/Certification):

Where unmarked plastic fuel tanks of 10lt or less capacity and/or unmarked plastic/nylon fuel lines are connected to diesel appliances, the BSS currently accepts these installations even though they do not comply with all the existing published BSS Requirements. This acceptance is an interim position and may change - the use of these unmarked plastic fuel tanks and unmarked plastic/nylon fuel lines are under review and so may be deemed non-compliant in the future; which if that happens, they would need to be replaced with components that are known to be sufficiently fire resistant and suitably robust and fully compliant with the published BSS Requirements.

Guidance to boat owners on choosing diesel-fuelled appliances

The Boat Safety Scheme's guidance to boat owners when installing new diesel appliances or replacing an existing diesel appliance is to always choose an appliance and accompanying fuel system that is marketed by the manufacturer as being suitable for use in small craft and that comes with installation instructions for small craft.

Boat owners are also recommended to have such appliances and fuel systems installed by a competent person to the appliance manufacturer's small craft installation instructions.