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BSS aims to hit the bullseye fire risk

They may have been fitted on boats for 100 years or more, but in summer, boats with domed-decklights, better known as bullseyes, could be at risk from fires breaking out in strong sunlight warns the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS).

Each year there's a handful fires or close escapes where sunlight, focussed and intensified by the domed-decklights, scorches fixtures or objects lying in the focal path of the lens.

Of the three the BSS knows about this year so far, the most serious was when the focussed rays of the sun were concentrated onto towels and a toiletry aerosol which caught fire which spread to the cabin.

Fixtures around bullseyes will now be checked as part of the BSS examination. Any signs of overheating, scorching, or charring to the material around a bullseye and the boat will not pass.

Graham Watts BSS Manager said, 'If you have a bullseye decklight fitted, please check any surfaces below it for signs of scorching.

'Even if there is no sign of damage make sure that anything that can be affected including any loose objects, are kept at least 300mm away from bullseyes'.

There is more information with photographs to illustrate the risks at

www.boatsafetyscheme.com/fire

<p>Charring in a hardwood circular surround fitted immediately below a bullseye</p>	<p>Scorching and burning away of a plywood lining as well as scorching of the insulation foam immediately below a bullseye just out of shot.</p>	<p>An illustration of the intensification of the sun's rays and of the focal length of that bullseye</p>

-ENDS-

Notes for editors

The BSS is instructing examiners to include the areas around bullseye decklights in the Check Items 8.4.1 and 8.4.2, where examiners check for signs heat damage and scorching around appliances see page 9 of chapter eight of the BSS Essential Guide see http://www.boatsafetyscheme.com/downloads/BSS_Guide_chap8.pdf

The BSS is a public safety project owned jointly by British Waterways and the Environment Agency. At least 12 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.

Reporter's contacts

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