



YACHTOWNERS
LIABILITY INSURANCE FROM SHIPOWNERS

▶ BULLETIN

Yacht fire safety awareness while docked in a marina

In the past year, several high-value yachts have caught fire while docked inside a marina. Fortunately, so far, no casualties have been reported. However, some of the yachts were either a complete loss or suffered thousands of Euros in damages.

When any yacht catches fire inside a marina there is a very high risk that the fire will spread rapidly to adjacent yachts. Therefore, fire safety awareness and the mindfulness of crew on board should not only be limited to their own yacht but also to surrounding yachts while docked inside a marina.

What are the risks?

During the winter season most yachts will scale down in crew size or some yacht owners will decide to leave their yacht in the marina without crew. This reduction in manning level should always be carried out in conjunction and with the approval of the vessel's certifying authority. Yachts docked without any crew on board are left without any regular fire safety watch. In addition, some of the older and smaller yachts might not have automatic fire suppression systems (e.g. high fog, FM-200, Novec) and therefore are at high risk of catching fire.

Causes of yacht fires can come from numerous places, some of the major causes include:

- Defective or overloaded electrical wires/circuits equipment.
- Burning cigarettes
- Defective fuel/gas fired boilers-heaters
- Leaking fuel or gas lines
- Overloaded laundry dryers
- Hot surfaces like portable electrical heaters, halogen lamps, cooking equipment, laundry irons in combination with flammable, combustible or explosive materials, liquids or oily rags
- Arson

Recommend precautions

Detailed below are some recommended practical precautions that owners, managers and crew should follow to prevent fires:

- Crew members or an external care taker should keep a regular fire safety watch on board.
- Keep an eye on surrounding yachts for any signs of smoke or fire.
- No smoking should take place on board and a dedicated smoking area should be set up outside of accommodation.
- Follow safe fuel oil bunkering procedures.
- Regular visual inspections and maintenance of electrical wires and equipment, lighting systems, galley and laundry equipment, fuel and gas systems and auxiliary machinery should take place.
- All electrical circuits should have protection against overload and short circuit.
- All outboard electrical switches, wires and fuses should be protected from rain or water spray.
- Charging lead-acid batteries must be stored inside well ventilated areas and protected from accidental arcing and explosive gasses.
- After use, close off and properly store all flammable liquids (e.g. paint, thinner, chemicals) inside ventilated lockers, preferably outside of living spaces.
- Turn off all electrical, oil or gas appliances after use (e.g. galley, laundry).
- Always keep engine rooms, engine room bilges, machinery spaces and galleys clean.
- Regular inspection and maintenance of fire detection systems (smoke, heat detectors) should take place.



YACHTOWNERS
LIABILITY INSURANCE FROM SHIPOWNERS

▶ BULLETIN

Yacht fire safety awareness while docked in a marina

Preparing to respond in an emergency

Yacht owners, managers and crew should always be prepared to respond adequately to fires while docked in a marina;

- Have contact details at hand of local emergency services, the marina manager, dock master, yacht manager / owner.
- Have a sufficient quantity of portable fire extinguishers on board, in accordance with flag / class requirements.
- Regular inspection and maintenance of all portable and / or fixed firefighting equipment and systems, as per flag / class, requirements should take place.
- Conduct regular in-port crew fire drills.
- Always have sufficient crew members on board while docked in a marina; for large yachts, it is recommended to have sufficient crew on board to fight a fire, or to cast off and sail out of the marina when an adjacent yacht is on fire.



The Club would like to thank Mr. B. Maaswinkel, Independent Marine Consultant for Dutch Swiss Marine, for contributing this bulletin.

London

St Clare House
30–33 Minories
London EC3N 1BP

T +44 207 488 0911

F +44 207 480 5806

E info@shipownersclub.com

Singapore

6 Temasek Boulevard
#36–05 Suntec Tower 4
Singapore 038986

T +65 6593 0420

F +65 6593 0449

E info@shipownersclub.com