Marine Information Bulletin

Fuel systems on recreational ships

Last reviewed 11 June 2021

Background

Fuel systems on recreational ships are a potential source of explosion and/or fire. Instances of poor-quality installation, specifically with regard to connections, hoses, and accessibility to inspect and maintain fuel systems, have been identified. In addition to creating the potential for explosions and fire, fuel leaks can lead to pollution.

Comment

As part of their general safety obligation, ship owners and operators, should ensure that critical systems operate reliably and are appropriately maintained whether the system is required in the normal operation of a ship, or is required in the event of an emergency.

Components of fuel systems from the fuel tank through to the engine and back to the tank should be checked regularly for leaks, wear, deterioration, and general damage.

Recreational ship designers and builders should ensure that all fuel system components are installed to the manufacturer's recommendations. Fuel lines should be of a fire-resistant type suitable for application in a marine environment.

They should be kept away from sources of heat and should not be located where they may be subject to any abrasive actions.

As guidance, ship owners and operators, as well as ship designers and builders may refer to appropriate standards published for recreational ships by the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) or the International Standards Organisation (ISO).

Alternately, the *National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C Section 5A - Machinery, Chapter 4 – Fuel Systems* may be used. Although intended for commercial ships, this standard provides requirements for the design and installation of fuel systems that may be useful for recreational ships. The document can be downloaded from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) website www.amsa.gov.au .

Designers and builders should also ensure that fuel systems are installed in such a way that critical components can be readily accessed for both inspection and maintenance

As with other critical ship systems, owners and operators should consider keeping an accurate record of all maintenance work performed on the fuel system including what work was done, when, and by whom.

Further information

For further information contact your local Maritime Safety Queensland office:

Airlie Beach	4841 4500
Bundaberg	4132 6600
Cairns	4052 7400
Gladstone	4971 5200
Hervey Bay	4194 9600
Mackay	4944 3700
Mooloolaba	5373 2310
Brisbane	3632 7500
Gold Coast	5585 1810
Townsville	4421 8100

Other Marine Information Bulletins about the safe operation of ships are on Maritime Safety Queensland's website www.msq.qld.gov.au.