

Marina Fire Safety Information



Marina fires are violent, devastating, and catastrophic events. They are very difficult and dangerous to fight. Marina fires progress extremely rapidly. The most effective opportunity to save lives and minimize property damage lies in fire prevention methodology.

Many boat owners only think about fire prevention aboard their boat after news stories have aired pictures of charred boats and burnt out hulls. The fact of the matter is that boat owners need to focus on the key measures to take with regard to prevention of marina fires.

Some boat owners fail to recognize the hazards that may exist aboard their vessels. An effective measure to prevent a fire is to educate boat owners on hazard recognition for their own personal safety and the safety of the marina their vessel is moored at.



Fire Prevention for Boat Owners

It's a fact that most marina fires start aboard an individual boat. By adhering to the following guidelines, the chance of a marina fire starting can be minimized.

- ✚ Use Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) marine approved cords and connectors. Don't use extension cords at the dock. Don't hook up if you observe burn marks or your cord will not firmly connect to the shore power connection.
- ✚ Turn off all electrical loads before connecting cords.
- ✚ Cords connecting your boat and the power pedestal should be arranged so that there is slack to allow for boat movement, and placed so that cords can't be crushed, chafed or touching the water.
- ✚ If you find a cord set strained or damaged in any way, replace it immediately.

- ✚ Periodically replace cords. Worn and/or overloaded cords or shore power connections are a common cause of fire.
- ✚ Regularly inspect electrical and fuel systems aboard your boat. Have a marine professional upgrade the wiring to maintain the needs of your navigational equipment and other upgrades or appliances.
- ✚ Never leave operating electrical equipment, including heaters, unattended. If you leave your boat for any reason, turn portable heaters off.
- ✚ Smoke alarms are important life saving device and should be installed on your boat.
- ✚ Plan your escape. Having an escape plan can save your life in an emergency.
- ✚ Practice a safe egress from your boat and from the dock in the event of fire.
- ✚ Have U.S.C.G. approved fire extinguishers on board and know how to use them. Fire extinguishers should be mounted in a conspicuous location, near your exit, so you are moving toward an exit as you access the extinguisher.
- ✚ Keep the dock clean and clear. Don't leave debris, carts, engine parts, tools, or other equipment on the dock.
- ✚ Dispose of oily rags in a metal container with a tight fitting lid. Leaving oily rags wrapped up in a grocery bag is not safe.
- ✚ Be proactive about regular maintenance of your vessel, especially electrical and fuel systems.
- ✚ If you leave your boat for any reason, turn off any portable heaters you may have on board.
- ✚ Things you bring from home to use on your boat are not always suitable for boat use. The movement of the boat, the marine environment, and the fact that some appliances are intended for unattended, extended use can make home appliances risky. Space heaters, microwave ovens, vacuum cleaners, home battery chargers, and even lava lamps have been the cause of boat fires. If you use them, make sure they are unplugged or shore power is shut off when you're not around.
- ✚ It's a good idea to have double pole breakers and a polarity meter in your AC panel. If the marina does have the polarity reversed, you'll know it and juice will be cut off in the event of any shorts you might have in any appliances. If you have older style single pole breakers, turning off the breaker won't stop the flow of electricity if the polarity is reversed.
- ✚ When connecting or disconnecting power at your boat, always make sure the power is first disconnected at the dock pedestal.

Boat owners must take responsibility for preventing fires on board their boat and in the marina. The most common causes of boat fires are electrical malfunctions, unattended portable heaters, and poor housekeeping.

If you observe a fire hazard, report it to marina management immediately.

In the event of a fire...

Think “S.A.V.E.”

- S** – Save the people.
- A** – Alarm the authorities.
- V** – Ventilate the area.
- E** – Extinguish if possible.

Fire Extinguishers

If properly operated, fire extinguishers can help stop a small fire before it has a chance to get out of control. U.S.C.G. approved portable fire extinguishers required for boats are B-I or B-II classification and have specific marine type mounting brackets. Look for the part on the fire extinguisher label that says, “Marine Type U.S.C.G.” It’s recommended to mount fire extinguishers in a readily accessible and conspicuous location, away from the areas where a fire could easily start, such as the galley or the engine compartment.

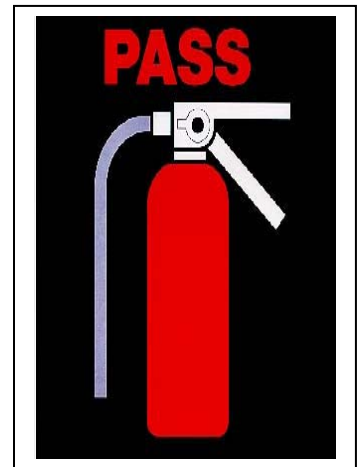
Used properly, a portable fire extinguisher can save lives...

Remember “P.A.S.S.”

Here’s how you work a portable fire extinguisher:

PASS stands for:

- **P**ull the pin, release a lock latch, or press a puncture lever.
- **A**im the extinguisher nozzle, horn, or hose at the base of the fire.
- **S**queeze or press the handle.
- **S**weep from side to side in most cases, but extinguishing techniques vary.



Be Prepared

- Immediately dial 911 and notify the authorities in the event of an emergency.
- Training and practice are the best ways to prepare for emergencies.
- Know and understand the S.A.V.E. and P.A.S.S. systems.
- Understand how to safely use a fire extinguisher before you ever need to.
- **DO NOT** attempt to fight a fire that makes you uncomfortable or puts you at risk.
- **DO NOT** let a fire come between you and your exit.
- Fire extinguishers are small quick fixes. If you are unable to put the fire out with one extinguisher – **LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!**