



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Inspections and Compliance Directorate
2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, Stop 7501
Washington, DC 20593-7501

MSIB Number: 41-13
Date: December 6, 2013
Contact: LCDR Michael Lendvay
Phone: (202) 372-1218
E-Mail: CGCVC@uscg.mil

Fixed Water-Based Local Application Fire-Fighting Systems

This bulletin addresses the intentional securing of fixed water-based fire fighting systems onboard certain vessels.

1. Machinery spaces onboard vessels are particularly high risk areas for fires. Locations such as main and auxiliary engine tops, fuel oil purifiers, burners and incinerator burners are major areas of concern. Fires in these areas can spread very quickly, causing serious damage placing vessels, their crews, and the ports they visit at risk. To protect against this fire risk, Category A machinery spaces containing oil-fired boilers or oil fuel units must be fitted with a fixed fire-extinguishing system (SOLAS II-2/10.5.1.1). In addition, Category A machinery spaces above 500 m³ in volume must have an approved type of fixed water-based or equivalent local application fire-extinguishing system (SOLAS II-2/10.5.6.1). This fixed water-based local application fire-fighting system is intended to protect the crew and affected machinery quickly, and without the necessity of engine shutdown, personnel evacuation, or sealing the space.
2. Where the Category A machinery space protected by the local application fire-extinguishing system is periodically unattended, the system must be provided with both automatic and manual release capability.
3. During recent port state control examinations, units have observed fixed water based fire-fighting systems that protect periodically-unattended Category A machinery spaces secured either by closing supply valves or otherwise placing the system in a manual mode of operation. Doing so disables the system's quick response capability, reducing the effectiveness of the system by not having it ready for immediate use when the machinery space is unattended. Vessels found in such a condition may be at risk for a port state control detention.
4. When the system that requires automatic operation capability is placed in manual mode, the sensors and alarms are not engaged; increasing the chances a fire will spread in an unattended machinery space. Ships which operate with periodically-unattended machinery spaces must therefore ensure any local application water-based fire-extinguishing systems are placed in automatic mode whenever the protected machinery space is unattended.
5. In the case of continuously-manned machinery spaces, including spaces served by a continuously-manned engine control room, the fire extinguishing system is only required to have manual release capability.

Questions regarding this issue should be forwarded to the Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Foreign and Offshore Vessel Division (CG-CVC-2) at **202-372-1218** during regular business hours or by email at CGCVC@uscg.mil.

Commander Michael B. Zamperini, Chief, Foreign and Offshore Vessel Compliance Division (CG-CVC-2) in the Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance sends.

-uscg-