

#CarbonMonoxide

Ten Essential CO Safety Tips for Boats

Over 30 boaters have died in the last 20 years from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

It is a toxin that replaces the oxygen in the bloodstream, blocking supplies to vital organs. At low concentrations it can cause chronic illness, at higher levels it kills.

This deadly poison gas has multiple potential sources on boats including all fuel-burning appliances, flues, chimneys, engines and exhausts.

Staying safe begins with installing all such equipment properly, in the way the maker describes.

Letting maintenance drift, or putting-off repairs is a risk, as is ignoring running instructions. Crew members need to understand the risks and know the danger signs; they must always be watchful.

These are the ten CO essentials that will help keep you and your crew safe:-

- 1) All the crew should know the symptoms of CO poisoning and how to react if it is suspected
- 2) Install fuel burning appliances properly, in-line with makers directions
- 3) Follow servicing guidelines; maintenance should be routine and competent - Don't allow bodged repairs, adjustments and adaptations
- 4) Always use appliances as per the instructions and never use cookers for space heating
- 5) Don't block ventilation – appliance fuels like gas, coal, wood, oil, paraffin, etc. need sufficient air to burn safely
- 6) Don't bring charcoal BBQs on board, or have them near a cabin during or after use - *only stone-cold charcoal is safe*
- 7) Keep engine fumes out of the cabin space, never use a portable generator in or near a cabin
- 8) Learn about the danger signs, spot potential hazards before CO occurs
- 9) Deal with problems immediately, never use equipment you suspect has problems
- 10) Install a certified CO alarm (BS EN 50291-2), test it routinely and never remove the batteries

For more tips and advice to help you and your crew stay safe go to www.boatsafetyscheme.org/CO

