



SAFETY ALERT – TECHNICAL No. 7

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING ON BOARD FISHING VESSELS

It has recently been brought to our attention that an experienced crewman of a 16 metre potter, who was both working and living on board the vessel, died as he slept due to carbon monoxide poisoning. This was caused from the exhaust fumes of a petrol-driven generator running inside the fishing hold which the crewman had brought onboard himself to power an electric heater, TV and radio.

The bulkhead between the fish hold and the crewman's sleeping cabin was not watertight, nor gastight.

Putting a petrol generator inside the fish hold introduced a number of hazards to the vessel:

CARBON MONOXIDE:

- Has no smell or taste
- Symptoms of poisoning are similar to the flu
- People may not be aware they are being poisoned

FIRE/EXPLOSION:

- Petrol gives off highly flammable fumes
- Petrol engine below decks can potentially cause explosive fumes
- Other neighbouring boats could also be destroyed

ELECTRICAL HAZARD:

- House-hold appliances are not designed for use in conditions often found onboard fishing vessels
- Correct wiring essential

When living on board a vessel it is crucial to conduct a risk assessment:

CHECKLIST

- ✓ **SUFFICIENT POWER** is provided for accommodation and lighting
- ✓ **ADEQUATE VENTILATION** (more needed for burners and stoves)
- ✓ **ADEQUATE ALARMS** to warn sleeping crewmen of problems
- ✓ **CREW CAN ESCAPE** from accommodation in an emergency
- ✓ **It is safe for a lone crewman to board or leave the vessel at night**

For further information please contact:
Fishing and Code Vessel Safety Branch
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Tel: +44(0)23 8032 9150
Email: fishing@mcga.gov.uk