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## **Summer is here, the BBQ is out, but use it safely off the boat**

It's time to dust off the barbeque and so the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) has a simple message, 'We love barbecues, but never on a boat – use them ashore, enjoy them safely and avoid the twin risks of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning.'

Highlighting some of the risks based on actual incidents, Graham Watts, BSS Manager said:

'With the BBQ off the boat the threat to decks or on-board combustible materials being set alight by the heat from the red hot charcoal or loose embers is removed.'

'Even on land be careful not to place a disposable BBQ where it could set alight wooden jetties, boardwalks, or dry grass and vegetation.'

The BSS makes the additional points that BBQs need to be far enough away from the boat so that any hot embers blowing in the wind can't reach boat furnishings, or any anything else that can burn, like newspapers or clothes.

The carbon monoxide (CO) risk is real and immediate. In recent years several campers have died from carbon monoxide poisoning when they have used disposable BBQs in, or near the confined spaces of tents and awnings.

Graham Watts added:

'The lessons from camping that boaters need to take on board is stark and concerns life or death decisions.'

'Hot or cooling charcoal produces dangerous amounts of the highly toxic gas, and continues to do so for hours after the cooking is over.'

'This means it is never safe to have a lit or cooling BBQ in a cabin or covered cockpit area.'

'The stay-safe mantra is that the only safe charcoal to have on a boat is that which is absolutely stone-cold.'

At high concentrations, carbon monoxide can kill without warning, sometimes in only minutes and BBQs can create those concentrations.

CO cannot be seen, smelt, tasted, or felt, that's why it's known as the silent killer and so it's essential to recognise the early signs and symptoms of CO poisoning – headaches, bad temper, dizziness and nausea, because if CO is there in high concentrations, these symptoms could quickly escalate to difficulty breathing, collapse, unconsciousness and death.

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The BSS/CoGDEM 'Carbon Monoxide Safety on Boats' information can be downloaded from the BSS website [www.boatsafetyscheme.org/co](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/co) and contains essential safety information every boater should know about the steps they can take to stay safe, and about recognising problems early or before they arise and the importance of getting fresh air and seeking urgent medical attention if CO poisoning is suspected.

For anyone preferring paper versions, printed leaflets are available from some boat clubs, marinas, lock offices and fire services'.

The fire service also publish good advice about safely enjoying BBQs outdoors, check out your local fire service website or Facebook pages.

Lastly, before you dispose of a used charcoal BBQ, double-check that it is completely cold to the touch, either let it burn out and go cold in an open, safe place, protected from wind; or pour plenty of water onto the smouldering embers. Used charcoal should be disposed of responsibly.

– ENDS –

### **Notes for editors:**

**The BSS** is a public safety project owned jointly by Canal & River Trust and the Environment Agency. At least 12 other navigation and harbour authorities have also adopted it. The navigation authorities' purposes for the Scheme are to help reduce the risks of fire, explosion and pollution on small craft. This is done by promoting fire safety and pollution avoidance advice to help boat owners keep themselves and their crews' safe as well as regular examination of fuel systems, gas systems, electrical systems and appliances.

### **Reporter's contacts**

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