

## Smoke Alarms and Cruising Vessels –Early Detection Saves Lives

When cooler weather sets in, it's time to crank up the heat for many live-aboard boaters on cruising vessels and sailboats. However, many cabin boats are not equipped with smoke alarms. The Oregon State Marine Board wants to appeal to owners of cruising vessels that the risk of fire on board your boat *can* happen, and it's worth the small investment to have the peace of mind of a smoke alarm.



An RV rated smoke alarm (label reads UL 217 RV) is approved for use on cruising vessels by the National Fire Protection Association. Unlike the smoke alarms used in homes, the RV rated alarms must withstand higher temperature variations, vibrations, humidity and mild saltwater exposure. However, due to the extreme environments in some areas, experts recommend regular inspections and a replacement cycle roughly every five years.

Cruising vessels have a variety of potential fire dangers, more than a typical home. Pleasure boats have a high fire load in the form of combustible fuel storage that supplies multiple on-board devices, an AC and DC electrical system (which are subject to regular moisture that causes corrosion, vibration and jarring as part of the normal use).

A boat's construction materials are extremely combustible as are interior furnishings. According to [Boat U.S.](#), 55% of boat fires are electrical in nature and will start in a smoldering state. Propulsion, fuel, engine and exhaust problems, as well as unattended cooking, careless smoking, heating devices and other appliances are also among the causes. In all of these cases, early detection of smoke can be the key to preventing a fire or stopping it in the early stages.

Many people have smoke alarms in their homes and RV's, so why not the boat? This simple device can save lives, protect neighboring boats, docks or structures if the boat is kept at a moorage. A smoke alarm is the cheapest insurance you can buy for your on-the-water home or pleasure craft.

For more information about the Marine Board and other required equipment, visit <http://bit.ly/2d0TMAI>.

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