

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 123 OF 2012

(Navigational and Seamanship Safety Practices)

Fire safety on board vessel during repair

The Accident

A pleasure vessel, moored beside a fish raft, was under repair to the fiber glass structure inside the forward cabin with a mixture of resin and drying agent. On the next day, the coxswain returned back to the vessel and found that the new compound material had not been hardened. He then switched on the electric fan inside the cabin and the exhaust fan inside the toilet of the cabin to speed up the drying process without first opening the windows to ventilate the flammable gas that had been accumulated inside the cabin over the night. While the coxswain was on his way back to the upper deck, a fire broke out inside the cabin. The fire was eventually put out within few minutes using portable fire extinguishers with the assistance of other people. As a result, the cabin of the vessel sustained serious damage, while the coxswain suffered serious injury.

2. The cause of the fire was due to the ignition of flammable gas by electric sparks when running the electrical appliances. Flammable gas was released by the compound material used in the repair of fiber glass structure. The gas concentration increased due to its accumulation inside the cabin over the night.

Important lessons to be learnt

3. When compound material of resin and drying agent is used for the repair of fiber glass structure inside a cabin, it is important that sufficient ventilation for such cabin should be maintained in order to remove the flammable gas, and any heat sources inside the compartments should be isolated during repair.

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