



# SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

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Subject:

## **SHIP'S ALARM AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM**

As a result of an investigation into a truck fire incident on board a passenger ferry, it has come to our notice that precious time was lost in assessing the situation due to cumbersome emergency procedures and the crew's lack of familiarity with the alarm system.

A crew member assigned to carry out fire patrolling duties activated the fire alarm using a "manual pull station" near the fire scene upon noticing a tractor-trailer was on fire. Failing to hear the expected fire alarm he then activated more manual pull stations from other locations. This action confused the bridge team as to the location of the fire, which in turn caused delay in fighting the fire. Such delay can be crucial to controlling it. It was only after the crew member contacted the bridge via telephone that the general fire station alarm was sounded by the bridge.

In ferries, passenger vessels, modern cargo vessels and fishing vessels, the automatic and/or manual fire alarms trigger a ZONE alarm in the fire control panel on the bridge. After a predetermined time delay, maximum 2 minutes, the audible general fire alarm is automatically sounded throughout the crew accommodation, control stations, service and machinery spaces. This delay permits the bridge team to assess the situation to minimize "False Alarms" and avoid panic among passengers and/or off duty crew.

To avoid delays in raising the alarm in a real fire situation, fire patrols should have an efficient direct *Radio* communication with the bridge and all crew members *must* have familiarization training with the alarm system on board their vessel and for alternate communication arrangements. Manual pull stations with a time delayed alarm should be appropriately labelled such that those activating them will know if an alarm should be sounding.

### Keywords:

1. Communication
2. Passenger Ferry
3. Fire alarm

### Questions concerning this Bulletin should be addressed to:

AMSP  
G. Rangar  
(613) 998-0663

Transport Canada  
Marine Safety  
Tower C, Place de Ville  
11<sup>th</sup> Floor, 330 Sparks Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N8

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