

Information from the Danish Maritime Authority no. 01-2011
Recommendation on the testing of sprinkler systems and PA systems
as well as precautions when recharging electric cars

1. Purpose

On the basis of indications following the fires on board the LISCO GLORIA and the PEARL OF SCANDINAVIA in the autumn of 2010, the Danish Maritime Authority (DMA) finds reason to recommend shipping companies operating passenger ships under the Danish flag to go through and, if relevant, revise their internal procedures on:

- the testing of sprinkler systems and PA systems in passenger ships; and
- onboard recharging of batteries in electric cars.

It is emphasized that the recommendation is only based on indications and that there are not yet any conclusions about the accidents mentioned above.

2. Contents

a. Re. testing of sprinkler systems and PA systems

The following tests should be carried out and be incorporated in the ships' ISM procedures on maintenance and testing of safety equipment:

- Sprinkler systems in the accommodation:
 - Monthly auto start-up of sprinkler pump at drop of pressure.
 - Quarterly test of all alarms in all sections.
- Sprinkler systems on car deck or ro-ro deck:
 - Monthly start-up of pump for sprinkler system, including control of pump pressure, valve positions and valve movements.
 - Quarterly testing of at least one sprinkler section.
- PA systems:
 - Weekly testing where it is ensured that all crewmembers designated to operate the PA system are able to operate it correctly.

The recommendation is based on the IMO recommendations of MSC/Circ.850, "Guidelines for the maintenance and inspection of fire-protection systems and appliances".

b. Re. risk when recharging vehicles on the car deck

The DMA attracts the shipping companies' attention to the following warning, which the DMA issued on 18 November 2010:

“On 17 November 2010, a fire arose on the car deck on board the passenger ship PEARL OF SCANDINAVIA during a voyage. According to the preliminary information, the fire arose in an electric car while it was being recharged. Probably, electric cables belonging to the vehicle’s owner were used. The specific reason for the fire is not yet known. As an immediate precaution, ferry companies are recommended to take the relevant preventive precautions on the basis of this information.”

At present, it is presumed that the fire arose in the battery of the electric car, while being recharged. The DMA recommends that the shipping companies include this presumption when deciding on the relevant preventive measures to be taken.

3. Additional information

Should you have any questions about the above, please contact the Centre for Ships for further information by e-mail: cfs@dma.dk or by telephone: +45 39 17 44 00.