



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Inspections and Compliance Directorate
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Passenger vessel compliance and operational readiness

On September 2, 2019, the small passenger vessel CONCEPTION caught fire and sank off the coast of Santa Cruz Island, California with loss of life. A Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation (MBI) has been convened and will conduct a thorough and comprehensive marine casualty investigation to determine the causal factors that contributed to this tragic incident. The Coast Guard and the maritime industry do not have to delay until the MBI has completed their investigation before taking immediate and positive action.

This bulletin identifies regulations related to firefighting, lifesaving, preparations for emergencies, and means of escape that serve as a reminder for owner and operators to ensure the safety of the passengers and crew while onboard. It is recommended that owners, operators, and masters of passenger vessels immediately complete the following:

- Review the routes and conditions listed on the vessel's Certificate of Inspection (COI) including the number of passengers and overnight passengers permitted. Ensure crewmembers are aware of and clearly understand their obligations including any additional requirements detailed on the COI.
- Review emergency duties and responsibilities with the crew and any other crewmember in a safety sensitive position to ensure they comprehend and can comply with their obligations in an emergency to include the passenger safety orientation. Ensure emergency escapes are clearly identified, functional, and remain clear of objects that may impede egress.
- Review the vessel log book and ensure records of crew training, emergency drills, and equipment maintenance are logged and current. Additionally, it is recommended that the master complete log entries to demonstrate to the Coast Guard that the vessel is operating in compliance with routes and conditions found on the COI.
- Ensure all required firefighting and lifesaving equipment is onboard and operational.
- Reduce potential fire hazards and consider limiting the unsupervised charging of lithium-ion batteries and extensive use of power strips and extension cords.
- Review the overall condition of the passenger accommodation spaces and any other space that is readily available to passengers during the voyage for unsafe practices or other hazardous arrangements.

Owners, operators, or masters of passenger vessels that are unsure of the requirements placed on the vessel's COI or otherwise required by regulation are encouraged to contact their local [Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection](#). Alternatively, questions may be forwarded to Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Domestic Compliance Division (CG-CVC-1) by email at CGCVC@uscg.mil.