



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

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Use of Engine Shut-Down Override of Automatic Fire Extinguishing System When Operating in Constrained Waters

While conducting investigations into recent inadvertent engine shutdowns initiated by a pre-engineered fire extinguishing system, US Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay has recognized an additional navigational safety concern should a pre-engineered fire extinguishing system automatically shuts down the engine(s) while transiting constrained, high-traffic, or otherwise hazardous waterways.

Many inlets and waterways within the Sector Delaware Bay area have geographical and man-made features that are challenging in addition to heavy vessel traffic. Having the main engines shut down without warning when transiting these waters can make a bad situation rapidly spiral into a catastrophe. During an emergency, such as an engine room fire, the vessel master must be able to maneuver the stricken vessel safely out of traffic and harm's way.

In consultation with Fireboy, their recommendation to vessel operators is that the pre-engineered fire extinguishing system be placed in the override position when operating in or transiting constrained, challenging, and high-traffic areas. Operators in our area have stated that they are unaware of this recommendation when asked by our marine inspectors and have not made it a practice of placing their systems in override when transiting such waters.

Sector Delaware Bay highly recommends that those vessels with installed Fireboy pre-engineered fire extinguishing systems, place the system in override while transiting challenging waterways. Those vessels should establish a set of operating procedures and provide all vessel masters and senior deckhands (where applicable) with familiarization training.

While placed in override, the pre-engineered system will still indicate an alarm if a fire is detected, but it will not shut down the engines or ventilation systems. The system will need to be deployed by the vessel crew once it is safe to do so. The procedures and training on the practice of placing the system in override must include re-setting the system to its normal position once the risk area is cleared.

For questions regarding this notice, please contact the Sector Delaware Bay Prevention Department at (215) 908-9827.

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