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Shipping Guidance Notice – 170

MGN 681 (M) Amendment 1 - Fire safety and storage of small electric powered craft on yachts

To: Masters, Shipowners, Operators, Yacht Managers, Designers, Builders, Certifying Authorities, and Recognised Organisations

References

- MGN 681 (M) Amendment 1 - Fire safety and storage of small electric powered craft on yachts
- Red Ensign Group - Large Yacht Code
- Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Marine Equipment) Regulations 2016
- Shipping Guidance Notice 093a - Marine Equipment

** All of the above referenced guidance or requirements are to be applied as per their respective latest revisions*

1. Introduction/background

1.1. As a result of an increase in the use of small electrically powered craft and other vehicles such as electric tenders, electric jet skis, electric foils (e-foils) and other personal watercraft powered by Li-ion batteries, and where consideration has been given to a potential shortfall in respect of fire prevention, detection and suppression measures in-place on large yachts where existing measures for petrol-fuelled craft may not necessarily be suitable, the United Kingdom Maritime & Coastguard Agency has published *MGN 681 (M) Amendment 1 - Fire safety and storage of small electric powered craft on yachts.*

1.2. Li-ion battery fires can be self-sufficient and continue to burn without access to additional oxygen, they may also continue to generate high amounts of heat following fire-extinction and are at risk of re-ignition.

1.3. The guidance is issued with yachts complying with Part A of the REG Yacht Code as its basis, but the concepts and practises provided can be used for any yachts that carry vehicles powered by Li-ion batteries. Furthermore, the guidance is provided as an addition to the statutory requirements and class rules to supplement them where applicable. Where there is discrepancy between the guidance contained in MGN 681(M) (as amended) and statutory requirements or class rules, the statutory requirements should take precedence, then class rules and finally the guidance provided within MGN 681(M) (as amended).

1.4. The guidance is primarily aimed for Li-ion batteries of over 100 Wh in capacity to align with the categorisation from UN 3171 for use with electric vehicles of any type. It is unlikely that personal equipment such as mobile phones and laptop computers will be powered by a battery larger than 100 Wh and the guidance is not intended to restrict the use and charging of these items onboard. That said, crew should be aware of the risk posed by these smaller Li-ion batteries, especially where they are stored such that the aggregate capacity of batteries is greater than 500Wh.

1.5. Typical battery sizes for electric powered personal watercraft:

- Electric Tenders 40–100 kWh
- Electric Jet Skis 20–50 kWh
- Electric Diver Propulsion Units (Bobs) 1–3 kWh
- Electric Foils 1–5 kWh
- Electric Stand-Up Paddleboards (SUPs) 1–5 kWh

2. Application of MGN 681(M) (as amended)

2.1. The guidance provided within MGN 681(M) (as amended) should be taken into account in respect of Gibraltar registered yachts subject to the requirements of Part A of the REG Yacht Code that carry vehicles powered by Li-ion batteries.

2.2. Not withstanding the above, the guidance provided within MGN 681(M) (as amended) can be used for any yachts that carry vehicles powered by Li-ion batteries.

2.3. While parts of MGN 681(M) (as amended) may only be practical to implement in new build vessels, other parts are applicable to vessels of any age. As such the guidance should be considered where practical for the vessel and incorporated into the vessels safety management system as appropriate.

2.4. Battery storage and charging containers type approvals

2.4.1. Pursuant to the *Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Marine Equipment) Regulations 2016 (as amended)*, and *Shipping Guidance Notice 093a - Marine Equipment (as amended),* the Gibraltar Maritime Administration will accept battery storage and charging containers approved and certificated by a UK Nominated Body as defined in Annex 2 of MSN 1874 (as amended).

2.4.2. Effective from 1st January 2027, battery storage and charging containers placed on board Gibraltar registered vessels must be type approved and certified by this date. Existing battery storage and charging containers on board prior to 1st January 2027 may remain on board, however, it is recommended that they are replaced with the appropriately approved and certified items as soon as possible.

Steve Gomez - Chief Surveyor
For & on behalf of the Maritime Administrator

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