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## **TECHNICAL ALERT No. 13-08**

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### **Port State Control – Firefighting and Fire Prevention Equipment**

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#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Bahamas Maritime Authority wishes to bring the circumstances relating to several PSC detentions to the attention of owners, managers & Masters of Bahamian Ships.

#### **2. Detentions in 2013 involving Fire Fighting and Fire Prevention Equipment.**

- 2.1. There have been 23 detentions of Bahamian Ships in 2013 involving defective firefighting and fire prevention equipment; this accounts for 32% of all detentions in 2013.
- 2.2. Of the 23 detentions, 5 have been due to engine room local application water mist systems being defective or not readily available for use (this has been a frequent finding in New Orleans, USA). A further 6 were due to quick closing valves being found defective. In several cases ships staff had known the equipment to be defective or had deliberately deactivated equipment.
- 2.3. It is a requirement of Regulation 14.2.1 of SOLAS Ch.II-2 that all firefighting equipment shall be kept in good order and readily available for use. It is also a requirement of SOLAS Ch.I, Regulation 11(c) that any defects which affect the safety of the ship or its continued compliance with statutory requirements are to be reported to the flag administration and the Recognised Organisation who issued the affected certificate on behalf of the flag administration.

- 2.4. **The deliberate deactivation of firefighting and fire prevention systems, without due cause, is not acceptable to the BMA.** Where such circumstances are brought to the attention of the BMA they will be investigated and, where appropriate, action will be taken by the BMA in accordance with the powers conferred by the Third Schedule of the Bahamas Merchant Shipping Act and other associated regulations.
- 2.5. All owners, managers and masters of Bahamian ships are to ensure that all firefighting and fire prevention equipment shall be kept in good order and readily available for use. It is also to be ensured that:
- Quick closing valves are regularly maintained and tested by crews and that they are not “gagged” or otherwise disabled. The inspection, maintenance and testing of quick closing valves is to be incorporated in the company’s Safety Management System and ship’s planned maintenance system.
  - All local application water spray systems are ready for use at all times. Where the local application system operates automatically, it is to be ensured that the associated fire detection systems are fully functional and will activate the local application system without manual intervention. All valves within the piping system are to be in the correct position to allow automatic operation.
- 2.6. Subsequent to the first revision of this Alert the USCG have published Marine Safety Information Bulletin 41-13<sup>1</sup>, this document may be accessed [here](#). The USCG Bulletin reiterates the risk of detention where fixed water based local application systems are found inoperable by USCG Port State Control Officers.
- 2.7. This Technical Alert has the full backing of the Board of the Bahamas Ship Owners Association.

### **3. Validity**

- 3.1. This alert is valid Until Further Notice.

### **4. Revision History**

Rev.0 (26 November 2013) – First issue

Rev.1 (12 December 2013 – Addition of paragraph 2.6

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<sup>1</sup> This Technical Alert is provided by the Bahamas Maritime Authority with the aim of highlighting incidents, lessons learnt and to increase awareness, which may help avoid similar incidents occurring elsewhere. Any queries on the content of the information provided should be referred to the party providing the information.