

Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 12-24

Issued: 13th May 2012

Subject: Accidental Discharge of CO2 Fire Extinguisher

Whilst on location, in what was described as moderate sea conditions, one of our vessel crew members was alerted by an “unfamiliar loud” noise, on investigation it was discovered that a spare CO2 Fire extinguisher in the ships store had partially discharged. The vessels spare extinguishers were stored in the deck store, horizontally on a shelf, over a period of time, due to the natural movement of the vessel the security tag had worn through. This had led to the pin falling out and the trigger mechanism was activated for a short period. The cause was identified as the extinguisher not being secured.



Original Stow picture



Modified Stow picture

On this occasion the consequences were negligible. Prolonged activation and subsequent release of the extinguisher could possibly result in an oxygen deficient atmosphere in the store area. Every vessel must ensure that items are suitably secured against vessel movements, in particular Life Saving Equipment. I realise that not every vessel will have a crewmember with the skills to manufacture such a frame. All vessels will have crewmembers with the skills to secure cylindrical equipment from rolling about. A few strategically placed wedges between the slats in the shelves or even a strategically placed bundle of clothes would suffice in the short term. Although I am sure you will agree the frame is much more effective and tidy. Well done to the crewmembers involved in the manufacturing of the frame, although I would question why the extinguishers were stored loose in the first instance?