

Question: I was told by a customer that the Suffolk Marine Police require that fire extinguishers on-board have to be replaced every three years. Is this true?
Adrienne, West Islip

Answer: Mounted, automatic engine compartment extinguishers have to be inspected every six months and certified to be in compliance with the regulations. I believe that you are speaking of the portable B-I and B-II type ABC or BC fire extinguishers that we mount in the cabin and cockpit areas. These fire extinguishers are dated by the manufacturer according to the date the extinguisher was made. There is no expiration date indicated.

Two types of indicators that signify whether the extinguisher pressure is sufficient or not efficient for use are the dial type gauge and the green plastic "tit" that reappears when you press to test the pressure of the extinguisher. If the arrow on the gauge is "in the green" or the green "tit" reappears after being depressed, the fire extinguisher is in regulatory compliance. Though all the regulations require is that "all is in the green," there is another physical check that is made when the Vessel Safety Check is conducted by a USCG Auxiliarist or a Power Squadron Vessel Examiner.

The extinguisher is turned end over end to see if the chemical powder inside has become solidified. A clunk or thud is heard or felt if this has occurred. The extinguisher may have sufficient pressure but the powdered chemical will not discharge from the nozzle, making the extinguisher worthless. Shaking the extinguisher periodically will prevent solidification from occurring.

As explained below in an excerpt of an e-mail I received from Police Officer Gerard LeGoff of the Third Marine Police Precinct, the only recommended time requirement regarding the discarding of a USCG approved portable type B-I or B-II is regulated by the



by *Captain Stan Glatzer*

Replacing Fire Extinguishers GPS Antenna Height

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). At twelve years after the Manufacturer's date indicated on the extinguisher, you should discard the unit.

"During our inspection we will check that it is charged but checking the dial if so equipped, to see if it is in the green, in which case it would pass that part of the inspection. There is no regulation that I am aware of at this time that requires a replacement every 3 years. What is found on new labels of marine fire extinguishers is "This product must be removed from service 12 years from date of manufacturing per NFPA 10, 4-4-3. Year of manufacture located on bottom of cylinder". This is a requirement we would enforce. The label also contains a required USCG Approval number, Type and Size. If the label also states "Valid only with bracket P/N xxxxx", we would also enforce that requirement. The only reference to 3 years would apply to flares which are valid for 3 years from

date of manufacture and that date as well as the expiration date is stamped on the flare.

I hope this information has been helpful. The members of the Marine Bureau are always available to answer questions and assist and can be reach 24 hours a day at our office located at 150 River Rd, Timber Pt, adjacent to the Islip Town West Marina. Our main phone telephone number is 631 854-8382.
PO Gerard LeGoff"

Note: USCG approved flares are dated as expiring 42 months after date of manufacture. PO LeGoff states that the Suffolk Marine Police require replacing the flares every 36 months.

Question: I just bought a GPS with a remote antenna. How high should I mount the antenna for the best reception?
Gene, Islip

Answer: Information regarding the mounting of a remote GPS antenna, as given to me by Brian Gifford, the Northeast Marine Regional Trainer for Garmin Products, is as follows:

"As long as the antenna has a good (360) degree look at the sky, the accuracy of the unit will not be affected in any appreciable manner no matter what height you mount it. This advice must be qualified by noting that the higher up you mount the antenna, the greater the arc the unit will cover when the ship rolls in a seaway.

There may be a fuzzy or constant back and forth reading of your position on the screen as the antenna swings. The unit is accurate enough so that a 10 + foot arc could create a constant seeking of a position."

Note also that a GPS cannot read through fiberglass, wood or metal. A canvas or Sunbrella cover should not affect the accuracy of the unit.

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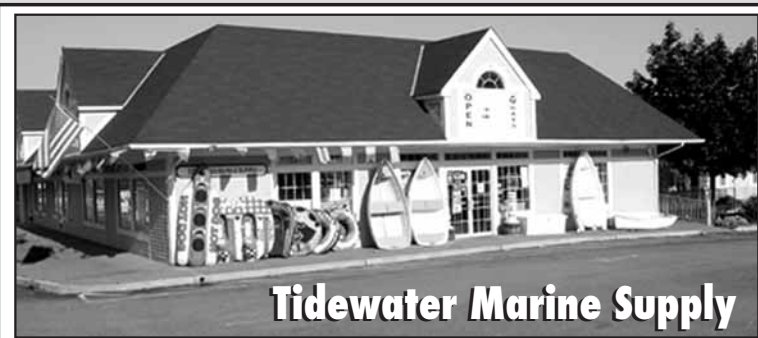
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