

# Marine Information Bulletin

## Morse Cable Controls

### Background

During an engine room fire aboard a Cairns based, class 1B passenger ship, heat damage to morse type control cables caused the failure of both the fire smothering system and fuel tank shut-off valves. Heat affected the morse cable conduit liners causing the cable to seize within the conduit.

### Comment

Morse cable installations for systems used in the day-to-day operation of a ship such as throttle and gear cables should be of a quality that will not deteriorate under normal operating conditions. Installation of control cables should take account of conditions normally encountered such as the heat of an engine exhaust system.

Control cable installations for essential and emergency systems of a ship such as fuel shut-off and activation of fixed fire smothering appliances should be designed and tested to ensure the system does not malfunction in conditions likely to be prevalent at the time of an emergency such as an engine room fire.

As part of their general safety obligation, ship owners and operators as well as accredited persons should ensure that control systems operate reliably whether the system is used in the normal operation of a ship, or is required in the event of an emergency.

### Recommendation

Morse cable control systems and associated equipment must be able to withstand the temperatures reached during normal operations. Controls for essential and emergency equipment must be able to withstand those temperatures reached in fires. Design and installation methods used to ensure control is maintained may include:

- protective routing of morse type cables;
- stainless steel control cables run in metal pipe and with metal pulleys to ease cables around corners where necessary;
- locating cylinders for fire smothering medium outside the engine space (this may also provide for manual/local operation of a smothering system).

Morse and other cable control systems require frequent inspection and testing. The full and easy travel of the control must be checked at both the controlling end and the controlled end.

## Contact information

If you require further information about this Marine Information Bulletin, please contact: 07 3120 7341 or [msqmail@msq.qld.gov.au](mailto:msqmail@msq.qld.gov.au)

Other Marine Information Bulletins covering various topics relating to the safe operation of ships may be obtained from the Maritime Safety Queensland website at [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au) and at the following Marine Operations Centres.

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