

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
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Recreational Boating Product Assurance
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16762
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MR JOHN ADEY
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
AMERICAN BOAT AND YACHT COUNCIL
3069 SOLOMON'S ISLAND RD
EDGEWATER MD 21037

Dear Mr. Adey:

This is a follow up to my letter of July 21, 2004, concerning audio speakers installed on recreational boats. At that time there was evidence that OEM installed speakers had been the source of ignition for several boat fires. Since then, Imanna Laboratories has conducted significant testing in this area and has provided me with a copy of their test report. Imanna tested various speakers, up to ratings of 100 amps and determined that some sort of abnormal condition would have to exist to allow the speaker or wires to become a source of ignition.

Furthermore, additional investigation of the reported boat fires revealed that, in at least one instance, the speakers were improperly wired allowing 110 volts to be present in the speaker wires.

Based on the testing results and investigative information gathered since my July letter, the Coast Guard no longer considers audio speakers a source of ignition, when installed properly. Boat manufacturers are cautioned, however, to carefully follow the instructions of the electronic equipment manufacturer, and to consider carefully the proximity of the speakers to fuel system components. Although not necessary in all installations of speakers, manufacturers are advised to place some sort of barrier or enclosure between speakers and fuel system components to avoid any condition which may inadvertently cause a fire or explosion.

Sincerely,

P. J. CAPPEL
Chief, Recreational Boating
Product Assurance Division
By direction of the Commandant

Copy: Tom Marhevko, NMMA