



Mandarin Siren: December 28th 2011

What happened?

While on a cruise in Raja Ampat on the 28th December 2011, a fire broke out below decks while the guests were on a morning dive. After investigation it was deemed that the fire was caused by static in the lint trap of the tumble dryer in the laundry room (one of the number one causes of house fires with more than 16,800 reported in the USA in 2010 alone – www.nfpa.org), which then quickly spread to the engine room. The guests were diving at the time and therefore were never in imminent danger. Our crew did everything they could but in the end were unable to contain the blaze and were forced to abandon the vessel, which was subsequently lost. No one was hurt in the incident.

Our other Indonesian vessel, Indo Siren, was very near at the time of the fire and diverted immediately to pick up the guests and crew from the tender where they were awaiting pick up. A speedboat was then dispatched to pick everyone up from Indo Siren and return them as quickly as possible to Sorong where they were met by fleet owner Frank and the ground team who provided everyone with fresh clothing, accommodation, and assistance. The next day they were flown to Jakarta to pick up travel documents. WWDAS's office had already sent ahead photos and info required of the relevant embassies. This allowed emergency travel documents to be issued within 24 hours. All the guests were assisted in rearranging their travel and they all subsequently flew home to be with their families over New Year.

What was done to try and avert the incident?

As soon as the fire alarm sounded the crew immediately searched for the source of the fire and began to fight with the extinguishers that were on board for just such an occasion. Unfortunately this was a losing battle. As soon as it was clear the fire was out of control the decision to abandon ship was made.

An emergency call was made on the radio to which our own vessel, Indo Siren, answered and the crew on-board left the boat. To reduce further potential danger all pressurised cooking gas, oxygen, and diving tanks were thrown overboard and crew and guests alike retired to a safe distance to wait for Indo Siren.

Were any specific lessons learned in the aftermath of this incident?

Though all manufacturer recommendations were already followed regarding dryer maintenance (this varies by manufacturer but tends to vary between 25 hours of usage and 1 year of ownership) we updated our procedure to "ensure the tumble dryer exhaust pipe is cleaned after every use and free from excess lint and the surrounding area is clean so that air can circulate freely"



SIREN FLEET

Our advice to guests on-board was always that passports should be kept in the safes provided in guest cabins, however, as several guests lost travel documents in the incident it was decided that a 'grab bag' would be the norm on Siren Fleet vessels. Guests are asked to keep essential travel documents in this waterproof bag which can be grabbed easily by any crew member leaving the boat in an emergency and among other things "should contain all guest and crew passports, guest liability releases, vessel documents, radio equipment and other essential documents" This means, among other things, that if immediate transit home is required then it can be arranged immediately.

Fire drills are practiced regularly on-board all vessels, you can see examples of these at the following links:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhfT7YbCJGA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciiTC3W8QiQ>