

Battery power bank explodes in cabin

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On a vessel, a power bank exploded and caught fire at night whilst it was being charged.

What happened?

The crew member to whom it belonged was woken up by the explosion and started to extinguish the fire with a soaked towel. A “pre-warning” fire alarm sounded on the bridge and crew proceeded to the cabin to investigate the alarm, but the fire was already put out. There was minor damage to fittings and furniture in the cabin.

This had the potential for escalation to a larger cabin fire, smoke damage to adjacent areas, activation of fire systems, loss of accommodation, and possible injury from burns or smoke inhalation. The fire was extinguished. The crew member reacted quickly and smothered the fire with a wet towel.



What went wrong?

Our member permits the charging of power banks — and all personal electrical equipment — only when supervised or watched. Our member prohibits unsupervised charging of power banks and all personal electrical equipment on their vessels.

Power banks and chargers sourced from third-party or uncertified suppliers may be unsafe and pose a serious hazard. Our member in this instance permits only CE-

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Bypassing safety controls

approved personal electrical devices on board their vessels.

Lessons to learn

- Leaving USB chargers and battery power banks on charge unattended should be avoided at all times, both at work and in the home.
- Charging equipment – mains plugs, mains adapters, USB cabling, and battery banks should be certified equipment sourced from a reputable supplier. Poor quality uncertified equipment of this sort obtained at modest cost can be potentially hazardous – not only “buy cheap, pay twice” as “buy cheap, maybe cause a fire”!

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