

CO-Gas Safety Unintentional Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Case Study

KEN JEFFERY, Deceased in 2017



Ken Jeffery and Samba

Age: 73

Fuel: Petrol

Appliance & Location: Engine of his own boat

Notes by CO-Gas Safety: This case study is written by Ken's wife, Margaret Jeffery. This case is not held within our statistical database, as Ken lived and died on the Island of Jersey, which is outside our geographical remit. However, Ken's family wish to do all they can to raise awareness and CO-Gas Safety recognise the importance of this tragic example.

See also: www.bailiwickexpress.com/jsy/news/family-man-who-died-boat-warns-dangers-carbon-monoxide/#.XclJw252vMV

My husband Ken Jeffery was found collapsed on board his boat on the 16th February 2017. Paramedics were unable to resuscitate him. An inquest found that he died from carbon monoxide poisoning. There was 68% carbon monoxide in his blood.

Boat canopy filled with CO

He had been starting the engines of the boat under the canopy in the cockpit. The engine was powered by petrol. The fumes or products of combustion were being funnelled back into the cockpit from the exhaust outside the boat. Tests carried out found the canopy filled up with carbon monoxide in a matter of minutes.

An unknown danger, despite years spent in boats

Ken was an extremely experienced sailor, first learning to handle a dinghy when he was about seven years old. He was a former ship's pilot in Jersey which is well known for its dangerous coast. He was in the merchant navy, graduating to first officer. He spent several years on huge cargo ships going all over the world. He owned a boat of some sort all his adult life. He was a very careful man who seldom took risks. He believed in belt and braces. He would never knowingly put his life or the lives of others in danger. Yet in spite of this, he died in a devastating accident which could so easily have been avoided.

Minimising risks on-board boats

Mr Lee Battrick, marine surveyor and consultant, who completed an accident report on Ken's death said there are a number of things individuals can do to reduce the risk of being poisoned. Alarms should be fitted on boats as they pick up the slightest amount of carbon monoxide in the air. However, on boats, they need to be special marine alarms. He said maintenance is also extremely important. Boat owners should regularly check their engines, exhausts and anything else which is in a confined space that can give off the gas. People should also be cautious about going straight into a space where they see someone unconscious because the level of gas may still be high.

Mr Battrick has since distributed safety leaflets to the marine office, island chandlers, engineers and boatyards providing information on protection from the deadly gas. To view this leaflet go to www.boatsafetyscheme.org and search 'carbon monoxide'.

Sorely missed

Ken was a wonderful, devoted husband and father who was adored and respected in return, not least by his faithful canine companion Samba. Ken was brave, tenacious and patient - he never gave up. He suffered several tragedies. He fought, and won, personal battles in his life. He constantly strove to be a better person and always tried to put other people's needs before his own. As someone remarked at his funeral, 'he was a gentleman and a gentle man'.

I have lost my soulmate and my best friend. His daughter has lost her beloved father. We just hope that by publicising the cause of his death we may help others to avoid the same fate.

Kind regards,

Margaret Ann Jeffery 07.02.18

CO-Gas Safety comment

Please see the film of Margaret telling us about what happened to her husband Ken:

<http://www.co-gassafety.co.uk/please-watch-this-clip-of-brave-margaret-jeffery-who-lost-her-husband-ken-to-co-in-a-boat/>

