



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

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Great Lakes District
Prevention Division
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Carriage of Li-Ion Battery (LIB) Powered Micromobility Devices on Small Passenger Vessels (SPVs)

The increasing popularity of micromobility devices has led to a rise in their carriage, particularly onboard ferries. This Bulletin addresses regulatory compliance for SPVs in the Great Lakes that carry electric bicycles (e-bikes) and other devices (e-scooters, hoverboards, e-skateboards, etc.) with LIB capacities exceeding 100 Watt-hours. These devices pose distinct safety risks, such as fire hazards stemming from thermal runaway - a condition where the LIB overheats, ignites, and potentially releases toxic gases that threaten health and complicate emergency response efforts. While there is no explicit prohibition on the carriage of micromobility devices onboard SPVs, it is essential to understand and mitigate their risks.

As a potential fire source, LIBs must be considered when complying with applicable SPV regulations for crew training, fire protection, and emergency escape. Unlike other fire sources, LIBs have unique risks that require careful consideration to meet these standards. Prior to allowing the carriage of micromobility devices, operators should consider the following non-exhaustive list to ensure that SPVs remain in compliance with their Certificate of Inspection:

- **Means of escape should be maintained clear from obstructions, such as e-bikes (46 CFR §114.400, §175.400).**
- **Crew training should cover the duties they are expected to perform during a thermal runaway event and sufficient drills should be conducted to ensure proficiency (46 CFR §122.524, §185.524, §122.420, §185.420).**
- **Materials and arrangements not specifically covered by current standards, such as carriage of devices with LIBs, should be evaluated based on safe practices (46 CFR §115.800(a), §176.800(a), §115.830(a), §176.830(a)). Due to risks associated with special firefighting needs (46 CFR §118.400(a)(4), §181.400(a)(6)) and ventilation of toxic gases, micromobility devices are best stored on open decks.**

Specifically, for SPVs carrying more than 150 passengers or with overnight accommodations for more than 49 passengers:

- **Devices should not be stowed in safety areas to provide separation from the effects of fire. Safety areas include control stations, stairways, corridors, embarkation stations, areas of refuge, and escape routes to such areas. If stowed on open decks (open on one or more sides), the area must also not be an embarkation station (46 CFR §114.400, Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular No. 9-97, CH-1).**
- **Emergency Evacuation Plans must identify possible casualties involving fires, such as thermal runaway, and include procedures for managing them (46 CFR §116.520).**
- **If stowed in a Low Fire Load (Type 5A) Space, devices should be included in the performance guideline calculations as transient fire loads (46 CFR §116.427, Marine Safety Center Technical Note No. 01-13).**

When a wheelchair or other mobility aid equipped with LIBs are carried on SPVs, the provisions contained in 49 CFR §175.10(a)(17) should be considered. For further information, contact the Great Lakes District at the above email.

Sincerely,

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Chief, Prevention Division
By direction