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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT**  
Shipping Directorate  
Private Bag X193  
**PRETORIA**  
0001

26 August 1991

**MARINE NOTICE NO 11 OF 1991**

NOTICE TO ALL PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, SURVEYORS, SHIPOWNERS, SHIP OPERATORS,  
MASTERS AND SKIPPERS

**FAILURE IN THE OPERATING SYSTEM OF A FIXED FIRE SMOTHERING GAS  
INSTALLATION**

1. It has come to the attention of the Department that the control systems on fixed fire smothering CO<sub>2</sub> gas installations have failed or could fail during operation.
2. In particular the above refers to the remote control mechanism making use of a charged pilot bottle. During a preliminary enquiry early this year into a fire on board a trawler whilst at sea, it was found that there was insufficient pressure in the pilot bottle to set off the main bank of bottles. It is suspected that this bottle had leaked.
3. Ships' staff are reminded that it would be prudent to ensure that when setting off a fixed fire-smothering gas system, they check that the system has actually discharged itself. This can, where possible, be done by checking on the bank of gas bottles, ensuring that the release levers have been activated and by taking note of frosting appearing on the necks of the bottles and associated piping shortly after discharge. Also the discharge of the system would in itself make a loud rushing noise that would indicate its successful operation.
4. However, the fact that the system needs a remote control to set it off, is indicative of it being situated in a compartment below deck or adjacent to the space it is protecting. Therefore, unnecessary risks should be avoided. Proper use should be made of a fireman's outfit.



**f DIRECTOR-GENERAL: TRANSPORT**

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