

# Beware What's Brewing in Your Galley



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for WorkSafeBC

In 'fair weather' and foul, most fishermen see the galley as a sanctuary. But you need to be sure your galley's not really a danger zone.

I remember one halibut trip, running across the Gulf of Alaska to sell our catch in Vancouver. Everyone but the person on the wheel was sleeping or reading when the cook climbed out of his bunk to check something in the galley. Next thing, he was yelling, "Fire, fire, fire!"

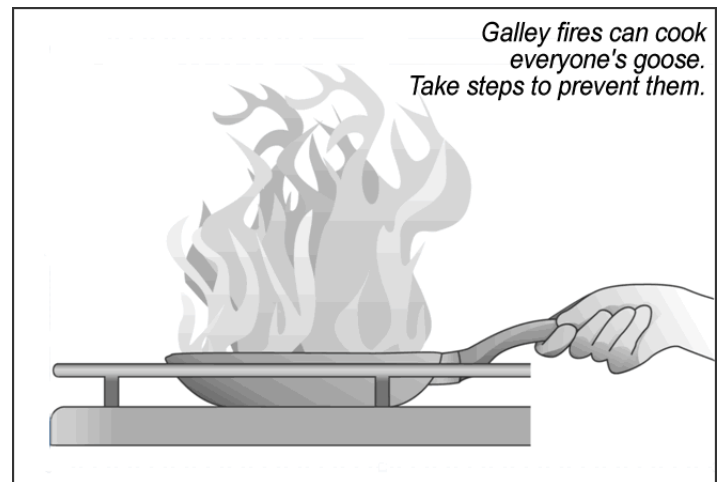
Jumping from our bunks, the crew divided between running to the galley and the life raft. Fortunately, the cook was able to douse the flames with one extinguisher. A towel hanging over the stove had caught fire and fallen onto another towel hanging from the oven door.

Fire is a prime hazard in fishing boat galleys, and leading problems are stoves that leak fuel or are used carelessly. They put the vessel at risk — and the crew, from burns and scalding caused by hot liquid spilling, and from accidentally touching hot pots and pans. That's why it's imperative that you:

- Gimbal your stove and fit it with guards, rails, cross bars or springs to stop pots and utensils from sliding off.
- See that fire extinguishers are up-to-date, fully charged and inspected periodically.
- Keep a close watch on wash cloths, towels, gloves, hats or other items hung over the stove to dry.

Another serious galley hazard is illness. I don't mean indigestion, but being knocked flat because of contaminated food. These tips can help prevent that.

- **Cold Storage** — Always store meat, fish and poultry at temperatures below 40° Fahrenheit (5° Celsius). While not killing bacteria, this will slow their growth. Use a thermometer periodically to check food temperatures in the freezer, fridge or on ice.
- **No Touching** — Keep raw meat, poultry and fish from touching other foods. Improper washing, such as with a damp cloth will not remove bacteria. To prevent cross contamination from a cutting board, use a smooth, non-porous one and wash with a suitable cleaner after each use.



- **Next to Godly** — Wash your hands in warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, especially raw meat, poultry or fish. If you have a cut or infected hand, wear rubber or plastic gloves to handle food, and wash or discard the gloves afterward. Keep towels and dishcloths clean because when wet they can become bacteria incubators.
- **Down the Drain** — Sinks, drains and connecting pipes are often overlooked as sources of contamination. But food particles trapped in a drain combine with the moisture there to create an ideal environment for bacterial growth. Periodically sanitize sinks and drains with a solution of chlorine bleach and water or a commercial cleaning solution.
- **Hot Enough for You?** — Nutritionists say many people overlook the importance of appropriate temperatures when cooking meat or fish that isn't fresh, or when reheating any food that's been stored for some time.

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