

The ELCI Update

Written by Ed Sherman
Monday, 09 January 2012 17:21 -

Its hard to believe it but it has been two years since I first introduced a device known as an ELCI to you in a post linked here: <http://www.edsboattips.com/maintenance-a-diy/21-introducing-the-elci>

Well, it's time for an update on this life saving device, especially since in a couple of weeks I'll be in attendance at the ABYC's annual "Standards Week" an the ELCI will most assuredly will be one of the many topics of conversation during the week.

First the bad news. The ABYC technical committee has had to allow yet another year of exemption for these units to be a required part of all new boat builds, most especially those attempting to get certified under the NMMA's program, which I have also discussed here several times.

The problem is that some boat builders have experienced unexplainable nuisance tripping of the ELCI device when keying a VHF radio and under certain inverter related circumstances, specifically switching from shore power to inverter AC power. To date, we cannot duplicate the problem at any kind of a 100% level, so there are many questions unanswered about this phenomena. So, the status is, if you have an inverter installed, you may wish to wait before jumping on board the ELCI band wagon, and as for the VHF, my gut feeling is that as long as the ELCI device is located at least six feet away from any part of your boat's VHF antenna or the coaxial cable that runs from the base of the antenna to your radio, you are not likely to experience nuisance trips.

Now the good news. One of my sponsors, Blue Sea Systems has been working on a kit that I hope will enable you or the electrician at your marina to easily retrofit your older boat to provide ELCI protection. They have also created a really nice brochure that explains in detail the why you need it and how to install it of ELCI's. The new box is shown here:



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I'm encouraging everyone to contact Blue Sea using the hot button over in the upper left column here on the Eds Boat Tips website to get your brochure and look over the information provided within it. Upgrading your boat with ELCI protection for your shore power system is going to go a long way toward saving lives if you keep your boat in a marina and plugged into shore power all the time. Check it out.