Six Injured in Boat Explosion at Horsetooth Reservoir

Fort Collins, CO – PFA was dispatched to a boat explosion at 8:45 this morning. The boat exploded in Inlet Bay which is on the west shore of Horsetooth Reservoir and is home to Inlet Bay Marina and several docks. The boat was around 100 feet from the marina when there reportedly was some mechanical issues and the blast occurred. Six people were injured. One individual was transported by LifeLine helicopter, three people were transported by UCHealth ambulances, and two were treated and released at the scene.

The six patients were on board the boat at the time of the explosion. One was thrown from the boat and the other five jumped into the water and began swimming to the dock. The Larimer County Rangers rescued them from the water. Upon arrival, PFA responders’ priority was to provide medical care to all injured patients. The patients were at the end of the dock and because of access, they needed to be transported individually. Responders worked to determine the severity of all injuries and prioritized transport accordingly. One patient suffered respiratory burns and was the individual transported by LifeLine.

When patient care coordination and transport was complete, firefighters with extinguishers and rangers focused on fire suppression. The marina owner used his barge to pull the boat away to the far share away from the marina, to an area where they could stabilize the situation and safely extinguish the fire. The firefighters and rangers traveled by water to the boat and worked to extinguish the fire. The fire was brought under control at 10:22 a.m. The boat was towed to the boat ramp for removal from the reservoir. The fire reignited after the boat was removed because of the intense heat remaining. Firefighters on scene were quickly able to extinguish the fire.

“It was an impressive example of partnerships across agencies. In total, we had five agencies working together to get patients the care they needed. Plus, it was in a more remote location with limited access,” said Battalion Chief and Incident Commander Ross Reinking.

This incident shows the importance of life vests or personal flotation devices anytime you are on water, even in environments that seem stable and safe. You do not have to be in swift moving water, white tipped rapids, or even moving at high speeds for a life vest to suddenly become needed.

The cause of the explosion is under investigation.

Thank you to our partners the Larimer County Rangers, Larimer County Sheriff’s Office and UCHealth for their assistance and expertise.

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