

Safety Alert

Number: 16-26

Published: 31/10/2016

Subject: Fire in Engine Room

What Happened / Narrative

Whilst returning to port from offshore one of our member's vessels suffered a fire in her engine room.

The crew were alerted when 3 sensors on the fire detection system activated setting off the fire alarm and the vessels flexifog fixed firefighting system.

The Chief engineer, who had been close to the engine room, confirmed that smoke was present. The quick closing fuel valves were activated and ventilation to the space shut down whilst the crew mustered and readied the Breathing Apparatus (BA) team. Due to the vessels proximity to land and other traffic, an anchoring party was sent forward and appropriate lights displayed.

The BA team then entered the engine room with a charged fire hose, the fire was subsequently confirmed as being out, having been extinguished by the flexifog system.

Whilst the vessel was without propulsion for a short time, no crew members were injured and damage was minimal.

Why Did It Happen / Cause

The actions of the crew minimised the risk to their own safety and damage to the vessel. All equipment operated as required and the fire was dealt with promptly and professionally. The result of effective fire and safety drills and proper maintenance regimes are clear.

The fire started as a result of the failure of a low pressure fuel hose on one of the Main Engine / generators, this allowed fuel to leak onto the exhaust manifold heat shield, the fuel pooled and ran off the heat shield causing contact with the exhaust subsequently igniting the fuel.

Corrective Actions Taken / Recommendations

All vessels are requested to thoroughly inspect all fuel hoses on generators and main engines.

Fuel hoses were replaced on all similar engine types.

Planned maintenance system updated to increase the frequency of checks on fuel hoses.

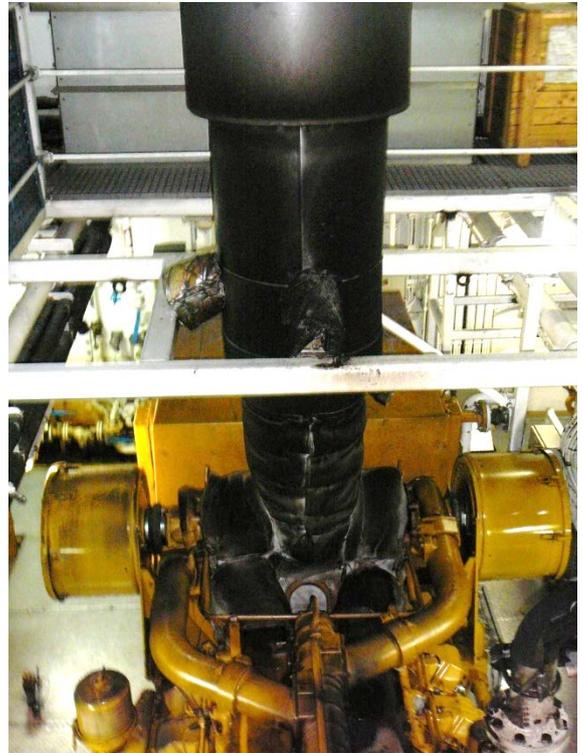
Fuel hoses of this type to be replaced on an annual basis regardless of condition.

When discussing this incident all vessel are requested to review the operation of their fixed firefighting systems and the initial actions in the event of a fire and ensure that all crew members are fully conversant with both. As noted above, the proper activation of the fixed firefighting system and prompt action of the crew prevented a potentially life threatening scenario.

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Photographs / Supporting Information



Below is a list of previous MSF Safety Alerts which are very similar in nature and worth reviewing;

- 09.24 – Fire in Engine Room – 15th July 2009
- 11.32 – Fire in Engine Room of Offshore Support Vessel – 23rd August 2011
- 14.25 – Fire in Engine Room – PSV – 15th May 2014
- 14.28 – Engine Room Fire – 10th June 2014
- 15.10 – Fire in Engine Room – 12th February 2015 ***Almost identical to this incident***

Discussion points:

- Could this type of event occur on your vessel?
- What barriers do you have in place to prevent such an incident?
- Are you sure they are robust enough?

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