Sjøfartsdirektoratet
Norwegian Maritime Authority

Safety notice 03/2024

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Fire in engine room – operation of quick-closing valves and location of fire dampers

Companies should review the placement and labelling of fuel quick-closing valves and assess the operation of fire dampers.

Background

Following a fire on a Norwegian vessel, quick-closing valves were used to shut off the diesel supply to the auxiliary and main machinery. However, the control handles for the quick-closing valves for the emergency generator were located in the same cabinet, leading to the unintended shut-down of the emergency generator.

On the same vessel, handles for closing fire dampers were located within a partially enclosed area. As a result, crew members tasked with closing the dampers had to enter a smoke-filled area, exposing themselves to smoke and requiring medical attention.

Corrective measures

We recommend that companies assess and improve the location and labelling of quick-closing valves. More specifically, quick-closing valves for the emergency generator should be positioned separately from those controlling the auxiliary and main machinery. Additionally, it is crucial that the crew members are familiar with the location and operation of these systems during inspections and drills.

Alarm instructions should align with the procedures practised during on-board drills.

We advise companies and ship designers to position fire damper controls in a way that minimises the risk of smoke exposure. For existing vessels, we recommend identifying potential risk areas and implementing corrective measures as necessary. During on-board fire drills, particular attention should be given to any areas that may lead to smoke exposure for the crew members.

Relevant legislation

Regulations of 1 January 2005 No. 8 on the working environment, health and safety of persons working on board ship section 2-2

(1) Hazards on board shall be identified. When the hazard has been identified, an assessment of the risk represented by the hazard shall be made. (…)
(3) If a risk to the safety and health of persons working on board is identified, the necessary measures shall be taken to eliminate or reduce the hazards.
(4) If a risk cannot be avoided in any other way, appropriate personal protective equipment shall be made available and shall be used.

ISM Code chapter 8, cf. Regulations of 5 September 2014 No. 1191 on a safety management system for Norwegian ships and mobile offshore units
Regulations of 16 December 2016 No. 1770 on safety management for small cargo ships, passenger ships and fishing vessels, etc section 7

Other relevant regulations

Regulations of 1 July 2014 No. 1099 on fire protection on ships
Regulations of 1 July 2014 No. 1019 on life-saving appliances on ships
Regulations of 28 March 2000 No. 305 on surveys, construction and equipment of passenger ships engaged on domestic voyages
Regulations of 5 January 1998 No. 6 on the construction, equipment and operation of high-speed craft used as passenger craft or cargo craft
Regulations of 13 June 2000 No. 660 on the construction, equipment and operation of fishing vessels of 15 m in length and over
Regulations of 19 December 2014 No. 1853 on the construction and supervision of small cargo ships

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