

Fire caused by hot work

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A Member has reported an incident in which a small fire was caused by hot work taking place on the deck above.

What happened?

The incident occurred when a repair was being performed by a sub-contractor on a steel plate in the forecastle area. The job involved using an oxy-acetylene torch to remove an old corroded plate.

During this activity, the oxy-acetylene cutting of the plate caused heat transfer from the forecastle deck area to the store-man's office area (located directly below the place where the hot work was being carried out). As a result, glowing slag fell on the store-man's chair, which caught fire.

There was no-one in the storeman's office at the time. The fire detection equipment in the office caused the alarm to go off. There were no injuries.



Our Member's investigation revealed that:

- **Immediate causes:**
 - Fire watch location was not well planned by supervision.
 - Melt slag fell on top of the store-man's chair.

- **Root Causes:**

- Failure to control and conduct safe work (permit to work planning failed).
- Failed check of the workplace.
- Inadequate risk assessment (warning about the smell of smoke in the storeman's office was not investigated by the fire watcher).

Actions

Our member took the following preventative and corrective measures:

- Held discussion with all parties involved to ensure all understand their responsibilities.
- Ensured that any spaces identified as at risk of heat transfer from hot work are identified in the appropriate section of the job risk analysis beforehand.
- Raised awareness of correct identification of adjoining compartments/spaces in regard to hot work and heat transfer through bulkheads, decks, etc.

Recommendations

- Double check (second pair of eyes) to identify any deck penetrations to improve spatial awareness.
- Ensure fire detection system is fully functional during hot work.

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