

## Near-miss: Hot work in no-weld zone

Safety Flash Published on 2 June 2015 Generated on 17 January 2025 IMCA SF 08/15

A member has reported an incident in which crew were found conducting welding operations in an area of a vessel where hot work was forbidden.

### What happened?

The incident occurred when arrangements were being made for the installation of steel shelves in a storage cage on the upper tween deck. This area 'upper tween deck' is below the main deck, amidships.

A permit to work was raised for this operation and was signed by the rigging supervisor as Area Authority. The welder set up the required equipment at the worksite and was in the initial stages of the task when the Chief Engineer walked by on a 'routine' inspection and stopped the job. The Chief Engineer explained to the welder that he was about to weld onto a fuel tank which is located on the other side of the deck, and called an all stop.

### Our member summarises a series of failures which brought about this event:

- Inadequate task plan
- Inadequate communication of task plan
- Lack of awareness/perception of risk
- Inadequate attention to detail
- Unclear/conflicting lines of responsibility
- Insufficient warning signage
- Following usual task
- Poor housekeeping

### The following actions were taken:

- Reviewed this incident and communicated it to all appropriate personnel.
- Identified all no weld areas on vessels and ensured they were suitably marked/highlighted and 'No Welding' signage was clear from all directions.
- Ensured that vessel GA (General Arrangement drawings) were used to show location of open permits and to assist in de-conflicting permits and hot work, had all the no weld zones/areas clearly marked to assist in the approval of Hot Work permits and to prevent approval being given for hot work on 'no weld areas'.
- Ensure that persons responsible for issuing Permits to Work were suitably

trained and fully understand their roles and responsibilities.

- Ensure that those who were 'Area Authorities' fully understand the hazards and restrictions associated with those areas.

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