

Electrical fire in engine room

Safety Flash Published on 1 November 2001 Generated on 12 January 2025 IMCA SF 13/01

A member has reported the following incident which occurred onboard one of its vessels.

What happened?

Due to a sudden power fluctuation, evidenced by flickering lights, the chief engineer went to the engine room to investigate and detected smoke, with a foul smell emanating from the step-down transformer.

He panicked and shut off the main power breaker, causing the vessel to go adrift. He used two DCP-type fire extinguishers to douse the smoke. He tried to establish the cause of the incident and, after about five minutes, he bypassed the transformer and resumed the power supply.

The cause of the overheating of the transformer is under investigation. It is suspected that the transfer insulation and cooling fan may be at fault.

Our member took the following action:

The member, in order to prevent reoccurrence of such an incident, has advised its personnel:

- That it is absolutely necessary to stay calm and assess the situation before deciding on the course of action.
- To conduct a periodic check of all overload relays, MCBs and fire/smoke detection systems for correct function.
- To report defects and ensure corrective action is taken.

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