



# Technical Circular

No.: 030/2019

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019

## **Subject – USCG Safety alert reg. Use of wrong materials contributed to a deadly fire.**

- Last year in January 2018, a fire broke out in an unmanned space on the small passenger vessel, during a scheduled transit to a casino vessel in the Gulf of Mexico where several persons were injured and one resulted in fatality.
- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) carried out an investigation on the accident and identified a number of casual factors that contributed to ignite and intensify the fire which includes a lack of company guidance regarding engine high-temperature alarms, lack of fire detection in unmanned spaces with exhaust tubing, insufficient preventive maintenance, insufficient crew training and documentation and in appropriate material and design of the fuel tank level-indicator systems.
- Based on investigation results of the accident, the USCG has issued a Marine Safety Alert 08-19 (copy attached) on contribution of use of wrong materials in deadly fire to ensure owners and operators understand federal fuel system requirements.
- As per relevant 46 CFR requirements, Tubular gauge glasses, if fitted to diesel fuel tanks, must be of heat resistant materials, adequately protected from mechanical damage, and provided at the tank connections with devices that will automatically close in the event of rupture of the gauge or gauge lines.
- The vessel's fuel tank level indicator was consisting of a plastic tube connected to graduated stanchion which was used for reading tank volume and the connection of tubing to the fuel tank was fitted with a ball wall instead of automatic closing devices as per relevant CFR requirements. The equipment did not initiate the fire however the use of plastic tubing on fuel tank level indicators and lack of automatic shutoff valves resulted in release of diesel fuel, which contributed to the severity of the fire.
- Based on above, USCG has strongly recommended following:
  1. Owners and operators to verify that their vessel's fuel systems, including tank level indicating equipment are constructed with appropriate heat resistant materials and automatic shutoff devices in accordance with all applicable regulations.
  2. Investigation and inspection personnel to maintain an acute awareness to these issues and initiate corrective actions as needed.



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- Owners/operators and masters are requested to take note of above and be guided by attached safety alert.

**Enclosure:**

1. USCG Marine Safety Alert 08-19

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