



Technical Circular

No.: 035/2019

Date: 18th October 2019

Subject: Risk of Fire Caused by Cargo Hold Lighting.

The Transport Accident Investigation Commission of New Zealand has published an Investigation Report (copy attached) on fire in the cargo hold of a Multipurpose/ Container vessel loaded with packaged Timber cargo in the hold and containers loaded on top.

During the investigation, it was found that fire was caused by heat radiating from an incandescent reflector lamp that set fire to packs of timber that had been stowed close to the lamp. The cargo hold lights had not been switched off on completion of loading.

Based on above findings, ship designers, owners and operators have been advised to consider when selecting the means of lighting in their ships cargo holds. Another measure that can be taken to mitigate the risk of similar fires is having procedures in place for ensuring that cargo hold lighting systems are turned off (and, if necessary, isolated) at an appropriate time before a loading operation creates the hazard.

Following are the key lessons arising from the investigation:

- Safety procedures such as switching off cargo hold lights should be documented and include systems for checking that they have been carried out.
- Some lamp types generate a substantial amount of heat that can be a fire hazard. Ship owners and operators should consider using other types of lamp that do not generate high heat in locations where the risk of fire is present.
- The required firefighting systems on board ships are unique to the special design and construction of the ships. When possible, they should be fully utilised in accordance with the operating instructions.

Ship Owners, Operators, Surveyors and Masters are advised to be guided by the attached Investigation Report.

Enclosure:

1. TAIC report, MO-2017-205.



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