



Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 08/31

Issued: 15 September 2008

Subject: Hotwork Near Miss

Upon completion of demobilisation from one project and mobilisation to another, the Chief Officer inspected the deck of the vessel and noticed that some project equipment, which had not been included on the approved deck layout plan, had been secured to the deck by pad-eyes that had been welded into position. One of which was welded to the deck above a fuel tank.

The persons carrying out the welding had obtained a permit to work but insufficient supervision, communication and management of change procedures resulted in the pad eye being welded above the fuel tank.

Although the deck above the fuel tank had been marked as a “no weld zone” these markings had become faded but not totally obscured, due to project equipment being stored on top of the fuel tank. Available ships information was not consulted prior to the welding operation commencing.

Recommendations

Effective communication between contractors working on behalf of the charterer and the ships crew should be established to ensure that hazardous activities are suitably controlled to mitigate risk.

Any changes to deck layout plans should be relayed for approval to the Master or Chief Officer.

Permit to work should be meticulously completed and cover the intended operation.

Any change to approved mobilisation / demobilisation plans should be reassessed by thorough management of change procedures.

Fire watches should be properly conducted and the fire watchman should be informed and satisfy themselves as to when and where hotwork is taking place.

The last line of defence, i.e. the deck markings, had become faint over time and should therefore be regularly checked and re-marked as necessary. If in any doubt ships Officers should be consulted concerning safe areas on deck for hotwork prior to operations commencing.