

Bulletin 388 - 11/04 - Burn Incident - Hot Oil Cargo

We have been made aware of a recent incident which resulted in two burn casualties onboard a ship discharging refined palm stearin. Palm stearin is an oil cargo carried in heated tanks to prevent it from solidifying. The image below demonstrates the layout of the steam heating coils on the tank top.

The cargo, in this case, was heated to a discharge temperature of 60-70°C and the ship's crew entered the tank when nearing completion of discharge to carry out squeezing and sweeping (stripping) of the tank to avoid ROB as per the charters/owners instructions and as is normal practice onboard ship.

The crew were wearing the correct PPE including wader/sea boots and had the correct equipment on stand-by at the entrance to the tank as was appropriate for the circumstances and cargo. The portable pump was stopped for this operation but was slowly draining cargo back from the discharge line into the tank due to gravity. Three men were within the vicinity of the pump when it started taking air and the returning cargo from the discharge line splashed, causing a spray of the hot oil onto the nearby men.

One of the ordinary seaman panicked and tried to get away fast from the pump but in doing so he slipped. The OS managed to control his fall but only by putting his hands down causing his gloves to fill with the hot oil. The other crew came to his aid, including the pumpman who removed the gloves and assisted him through a lightening hole to the ladder.



The injured man slipped a second time and the pumpman tried to control the seaman's fall but was pulled down with him. Both men suffered serious burns, the pumpman more so as his boots subsequently filled with the hot oil.

Both men were hospitalised requiring two to three weeks medical attention. The pumpman suffered burns covering 20% of his body and the seaman 15%.

Source of information:
Loss Prevention Department
UK P&I Club
Lossprevention.ukclub@thomasmiller.com