

LP BULLETIN

Friday 28 September 2007

Bulletin 545 - 09/07 - Crewmember severely burned by steam - Worldwide

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) has published an investigation report into an incident where a crewmember suffered serious burns. The report identifies issues that are likely to be common to many ships and it is recommended that lessons be learned by reading the full report.

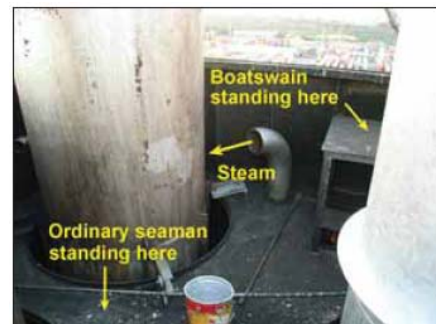
The incident occurred in an environment where deck crew and engineering crew were working independently of each other and without knowledge of the other party's work schedule for the day. If both departments had discussed together their planned work schedule then the accident may have been foreseen and prevented.

This accident also highlights the need for risk assessments to be conducted at the work site in order to take into consideration hazards that may not have been of concern, or overlooked, in a risk assessment performed for previous routine work.

The incident

The ship's boatswain and an ordinary seaman spent all morning painting the main engine exhaust pipes. The ordinary seaman was severely burned by steam which unexpectedly exhausted from the nearby boiler safety valve vent pipe.

The steam was released during a scheduled boiler survey when the surveyor asked for the operation of the safety valves to be tested - when the boiler pressure reached 11 bar the safety valves operated.



The ATSB has issued one safety recommendation and two safety advisory notices with the aim of preventing similar incidents:

Safety recommendation MS20070027 - The senior deck and engineering officers did not discuss their work programs frequently enough to ensure that each department was always aware of the others activities. The ATSB recommends that the ship owner/operator takes action to address this safety issue.

Safety advisory notice MS20070009 - The placement of the steam vent pipe, and the direction in which it exhausted, meant that any personnel on the funnel casing top platform were vulnerable when a boiler safety valve operated. The ATSB advises the owners, operators and masters of ships to consider the implications of this safety issue and take action where it is considered appropriate.

Safety advisory notice MS20070010 - The surveyor did not check that the ship's crew had implemented strategies that would effectively control the risks associated with operating the boiler safety valves. The ATSB advises surveyors to consider the implications of this safety issue and take action where it is considered appropriate.

The full report can be found on the ATSB website at the following address:

http://www.atsb.gov.au/publications/investigation_reports/2007/MAIR/mair239.aspx

Source of information: Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB)
www.atsb.gov.au