

Burn injury from incinerator flashback

On one of our vessels, the fourth engineer suffered burn injuries while operating the incinerator. When burning sludge along with garbage, he noticed that the flame visible through the sight glass was not good enough and felt that he should add some engine room waste, comprising oily jute and rags, to increase the flame. While the incinerator was still in operation, he opened the door to admit more waste for burning. A flashback from the combustion space caused burns on face, hair, hands and legs.

Even though the vessel was at sea, he was fortunate, since the burns were of second degree and restricted to small areas of his body. With the help of radio medical advice and treatment on board, he made a fast recovery although his injuries have left permanent scars on the face and affected limbs.

Lessons learnt

All engineers who operate incinerators and boilers must be fully aware of the venting requirements before and after firing the burner, and the possibility of flashback from the furnace space when opening the door.

Mariners' Alerting and Reporting Scheme

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