

DON'T CURE PREVENT

ISSUE 03

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**FIRE DETECTION
SYSTEM ZONE
ISOLATION**





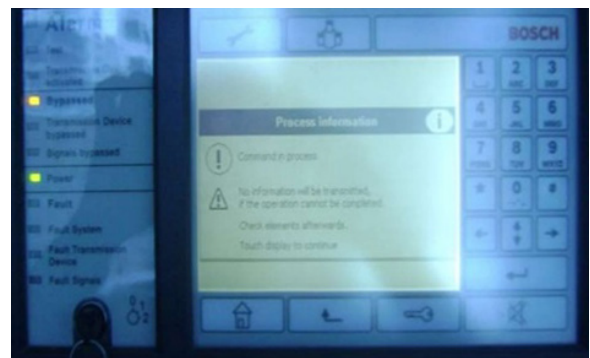
FIRE DETECTION SYSTEM ZONE ISOLATION



CASE

During an onboard H.EL.M.E.T. assessment, the P@S Assessor noticed that a fire detection zone corresponding to the Engine workshop had been isolated. More specifically, the subject zone had been bypassed from the fire detection's system panel without prior notification to the crew members. After investigation, it was identified that the said fire zone had been isolated for hot work purposes. With the aim to raise awareness, the HELMET Assessor emphasized to the seafarers the importance of keeping the fire zones active at all times whilst specific reference was made to regulations. The status of the said zone was reinstated according to Assessor's instructions.

At the next port of call few weeks later, while the engine room was unmanned, the said zone was found again isolated which in turn resulted in the vessel's detention by the PSC Inspector.



REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

AS PER RESOLUTION MSC.311 (88), CHAPTER 9, §2.1

Any required fixed fire detection and fire alarm system with manually operated call points shall be capable of immediate operation at all times. Notwithstanding this, particular spaces may be disconnected, for example, workshops during hot work and ro-ro spaces during on and off-loading. The means for disconnecting the detectors shall be designed to automatically restore the system to normal surveillance after a predetermined time that is appropriate for the operation in question.

AS PER VIQ 7, §5.39

There should be a procedure for whenever a zone of a fire detection system is isolated to ensure that relevant personnel are aware of the isolation and the reason for it and to ensure that the zone is reinstated as soon as possible. The engine room should not be operated unmanned with any zone in the space isolated.



WHAT WENT WRONG?

- The procedures established by the company's SMS did not promote raising of awareness.
- Willful ignorance and negligence by the person-in-charge despite the clear SMS procedures.
- The Crew member underestimated the risks of isolating a fire detection zone without forewarning or informing the relevant personnel.
- The safety precautions in regards to hot work operations were not taken as the relevant work flow was not followed.
- Absence of safe business culture.



OUR SOLUTION

Prevention at Sea suggests the following actions with the aim to avoid occurrence or prevent reoccurrence;

- Implement the relevant hot work permit's work flow.
- Double check that all precautionary measures are in place before commencement of relevant operation.
- Always bear in mind that "the unexpected" could occur.
- Report any defect upon identification.
- Raise awareness of the possible risks.
- Increase risk perception amongst the crew.

Note: Isolated fire zones could be forgotten in bypass mode rendering the space vulnerable.





BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ If isolation is imperative, ensure that the relevant fire detection zone has been isolated by using the timer function for the time needed.
- ✓ Ensure that the parties concerned have been notified prior to commencing the task or isolating the zone.
- ✓ Further training and familiarization to be provided to all crew members.
- ✓ Ensure proper implementation of regulatory requirements and Company's Procedures with regards to hot work.
- ✓ Actively involve the crew members building and maintaining a safe business culture.

REMEMBER: Hot work operations are considered *high risk operations*. A comprehensive understanding of the principles of fire prevention and the risks involved as well as ongoing training to raise awareness and evaluation are essential.



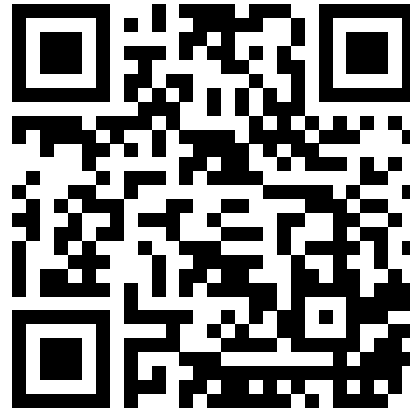
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Q&A



SPOT THE DEFICIENCY



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