



# Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation

Federal Higher Authority subordinated to the Ministry of  
Transport and Digital Infrastructure

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455/15 and 58/16

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## PRESS RELEASE 02/18

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) published the summarized investigation report pertaining to the marine casualties 455/15 and 58/16 on 28 May 2018. The report deals with the fires of charcoal cargos in containers. This report – as well as all previous reports – is available on the website [www.bsu-bund.de](http://www.bsu-bund.de) for download.

Short version:

### Fire of charcoal cargos on board the container vessels MSC KATRINA and LUDWIGSHAFEN EXPRESS

Containers with charcoal cargos caught fire on board the MSC KATRINA on 20 November 2015 and on board the LUDWIGSHAFEN EXPRESS on 21 February 2016. The fires were caused by self-ignition of the charcoal. The container stowed in a cargo hold on board the MSC KATRINA could be discharged with the

assistance of fire fighters taken on board. The crew on board the LUDWIGSHAFEN EXPRESS was able to discharge the containers carried on deck unassisted. The containers affected by the fire originated from the same consignor in Indonesia and were destined for a consignee in France. Due to the similarity of both cases,

the investigation of the two cases was summarized.

The investigation report was published on 28 May 2018 by the Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation and can be downloaded at [www.bsu-bund.de](http://www.bsu-bund.de).

Long version:

## **Fire of charcoal cargos on board the container vessels MSC KATRINA and LUDWIGSHAFEN EXPRESS**

Fires broke out in containers on board the Panamanian-flagged MSC KATRINA on 20 November 2015 and on board the German-flagged LUDWIGSHAFEN EXPRESS on 21 February 2016. Both fires were caused by self-ignition of charcoal loaded as bulk in these containers. In both cases, the cargo originated from the island of Borneo in Indonesia. Both cargos were destined for the same consignee in France.

MSC KATRINA was in the Elbe estuary, when the smoke detection system detected the fire, rendering the deployment of specially trained fire fighters by the Central Command for Maritime Emergencies possible. The fire could be extinguished without causing damage to the vessel and with only minor damage to the cargo. The container affected by the fire was situated within a free-standing stack in the cargo hold. This facilitated the fire fighting.

The LUDWIGSHAFEN EXPRESS was sailing in the Red Sea when the outbreak of fire was noticed during an inspection. Therefore, only the crew was responsible for the fire fighting. The container affected was directly stowed on a hatch cover so that the fire could rapidly be extinguished with the means available on board. No damage was caused to the vessel.

Due to the similarity of the cause of the fire, the investigation of the two cases was summarised in one investigation report.

In order to henceforth prevent similar accidents, the BSU published the following safety recommendations:

- The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure call on the committees of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to amend the regulations of the IMDG-Code in order to prevent a self-ignition of charcoal which is not classified as class 4.2 dangerous good, during the sea voyage
- The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure call on the committees of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to consider stowage requirements that ensure that any type of self-heating substance is always transported on deck with sufficient accessibility.
- The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the Mediterranean Shipping Company state in its procedural instructions and guidelines pertaining to cargo that self-heating substances carried in containers should always be transported on deck with sufficient accessibility
- The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the Orient Overseas Container Line forward information on cargo to partners within the slot charter agreement even if it does not constitute dangerous goods but poses a heightened risk, such as that of self-heating.

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