



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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182/20

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Date

9 December 2020

PRESS RELEASE No. 17/20

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) hereby announces the publication of the Summary Investigation Report 182/20 on 9 December 2020. The report deals with the deflagration of pure ethanol on board the DANMARK, a Danish sail training ship, on 30 June 2020, resulting in a cadet sustaining severe burns. The report primarily serves the purpose of summarising the accident events and is available for download at

<https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/News>

This training voyage of the DANMARK was the first to take place after the introduction of "lockdown" in Denmark due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to provide training and sail again, a sanitation plan was prepared, which included widespread spray disinfection with ethanol. The voyage of the 56 cadets had been discontinued in February and was repeated in June under strict hygiene requirements.

At the time of the accident, the DANMARK had almost completed her voyage and was anchored south of the island of Fehmarn to weather a storm. Like every morning, two cadets were tasked with disinfecting much-frequented surfaces in the common room / classroom by means of a cleaning rag sprayed with ethanol. One of the cadets noticed a lighter lying on the floor next to the bin and tested it to determine whether it should be disposed of.

At that time, the other cadet was standing next to him and had just sprayed ethanol onto his cleaning rag. Immediately, the cloud of spray directly in front of his face burst into flames in a short but fierce deflagration. Helped by two further cadets, who happened to be in the room as well, the fire on both the person and the floor was extinguished rapidly.

The injured cadet sustained burns to the face, hands, upper body and legs. After a medical examination by the ship's physician, under consultation of the "Righospitalet" hospital in Copenhagen, the cadet was taken to the closest coastal town, Großenbrode, by a German rescue cruiser, and from there airlifted to the university hospital Schleswig-Holstein in Lübeck by a rescue helicopter. In the course of the following 14 days, two skin grafts were carried out. Afterwards, he was able to continue his convalescence at home.

On the day of the accident, the DANMARK weighed anchor and completed her training voyage in Frederikshavn/Denmark two days later.

All investigation reports, safety recommendations and other information published by the BSU are available at

<https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications>.

Ulf Kaspera
Director