

Investigation Report 202/04

1. March 2005

Serious Marine Casualty:

Explosion on board FC HARMONIE on 2 August 2004 off Baltrum

1 Summary of the marine casualty

A fire broke out in the engine room and wheelhouse of FC HARMONIE north of Baltrum at about 01:00 h CEST¹ on 2 August 2004, as a result of which the wheelhouse installations were badly damaged.

The Master sustained very serious burns and jumped overboard in order to extinguish the flames on his body.

Thanks to the swift action by the deck hand no major damage was sustained by the vessel and it was possible to rescue the Master.

2 Safety Recommendations

The elimination of minor damage, for instance at the pipes, is part of work at sea. Investigation into the cause of pressure loss and oil loss in pressurised systems can generally only be carried out when the engine is running. The actual work on these systems is often also carried out during operation of the main engine. The German Marine Safety Organisation (See-BG) issues very clear implementing instructions for such work in its Accident Prevention Regulations (UVV See). In particular according to UVV See, § 151 - maintenance of engine facilities - the following is to be noted:

§ 151 Maintenance of engine facilities

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(6) Before undertaking maintenance work at pressurized systems, the respective plant parts shall be safely separated safely from systems remaining under pressure.

(7) Pressure vessels and units operating under pressure may be carefully opened only after it has been ensured by two independent measures that no pressure exists or can built up.

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This Regulation must be observed during all work on pressurised systems by engine fitters and masters. During work on main or auxiliary engines these are to be stopped so that in particular the lubricating oil and fuel lines are not under pressure.

¹ Time data without special suffix are always local time in the following.