

MEMBER ALERT



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GOOD CATCH UPDATE: *BAD ELECTRICAL WORK*

Ensuring a safety culture where repairs are expected to be done correctly and with the knowledge of the port engineer should be every company's goal. It is not in any company's best interest to allow or encourage temporary or "work-around" repairs.

In this context, your Managers are pleased to present the latest instalment of the Club's *Good Catch* initiative:

- *Bad Electrical Work* available in [English](#), [new](#) and [traditional](#) Mandarin

GOOD CATCH from **The American Club**

Bad Electrical Work

Description The engineer on a towing vessel was making a routine round in the engine room. He checked the level of fuel in the day tank and saw that he needed to transfer fuel from a storage tank into the day tank. He regularly did this approximately every 2 days depending on the vessel's speed and the number of barges in the tow.

He checked the day tank level and lined up the valves to transfer the fuel. As he flipped the switch to turn on the fuel transfer pump, he received an electrical shock to his hand. The fuel transfer pump did not start.

A close inspection of the wiring found a faulty splice. The electrical tape around the splice had come loose exposing the bare wires. When the engineer reached for the switch, he inadvertently bumped the splice. He was shocked by the bare wires and when that happened, the circuit breaker tripped.

The engineer informed the Captain about what had happened and then called the port engineer. Although the fuel transfer pump was inoperative, the towing vessel had enough fuel in the day tank to continue its voyage.

The port engineer and an electrician met the towing vessel later that day to evaluate the situation and make repairs. The port engineer was surprised to find that a household switch had been installed and the wiring had been spliced into the circuit in a very amateur way. The vessel's engineer had been on the that vessel for only 10 days and reported that the switch had been like that when he came onboard. The engineer he relieved had not said anything about installing that switch, but it had worked properly during the time he was onboard until he was shocked.

The household switch was removed along with the wiring. An appropriate switch was installed and properly wired into the circuit. The original switch was also located. Its malfunction appeared to be the reason the household switch had been installed. The fuel transfer pump was subsequently checked and found to be working properly.

Actual Injury and Damage The engineer was surprised by the electrical shock and his hand was numb for a few minutes, but he did not need medical treatment and there were no lasting effects. The fuel transfer pump was not damaged nor was the circuit breaker. The cost for the electrician and supplies was approximately \$300.

THE AMERICAN CLUB **GOOD CATCH** Bad Electrical Work September 2022

Potential Injury and Damage The engineer could have been seriously shocked if had made more substantial contact with the poor wiring splice. He could have fallen or been knocked over by the jolt and been injured. Additionally, a poor wiring connection and improper switch could easily have started a fire. On a towing vessel with an unmanned engine room, a fire could have gone undetected for some period of time before the fire detection system sounded an alarm. Fires in engine rooms on towing vessels can quickly become very serious and towing vessels have sustained such extensive damage from engine room fires they had to be scrapped.

Prevention

- ★ Electrical repairs on a vessel should only be done by someone appropriately qualified and trained in marine electrical work.
- ★ The failure of the original fuel transfer pump switch should have been reported, documented and then properly repaired. It should not have been temporarily repaired by an unqualified crewmember.
- ★ Companies should work to ensure a culture where repairs are expected to be done correctly and with the knowledge of the port engineer. Furthermore, it is not in the company's best interest for temporary or "work-around" repairs to be done.

When you identify a hazard before something goes wrong... **it's a Good Catch.**

When you stop an operation before something bad happens... **it's a Good Catch.**

When an improper electrical repair is identified and fixed before someone gets hurt or before a fire starts... **that's a Good Catch, too!**

THE AMERICAN CLUB

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As a reminder, all *Good Catch* alerts and animations are posted at the Club's website at:

https://www.american-club.com/page/good_catch

Your Managers recommend that Members take note of this information and be guided accordingly.