

Gas-cutting accident onboard M.V. "Philippine Star" on 11 April 2005 causing one fatality

1. The incident

1.1 On 11 April 2005, the container vessel "Philippine Star" was anchoring at North Lamma Anchorage, Hong Kong for cargo operation. At about 1815, a Fitter was reported to have been seriously burnt while he was working on the main deck to cut steel stiffeners of the hatch coaming of the No. 4 cargo hold with a set of gas-cutting torch.

1.2 The Fitter was sent ashore to the hospital after the accident. However, he died three days later in the hospital. The cause of the death was severe burns over the body.

2. Findings

2.1 The oxygen and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) were used for the gas cutting process. The gas bottles for the gas-cutting work were secured at the starboard guardrail of the Vessel. (fig. 1)

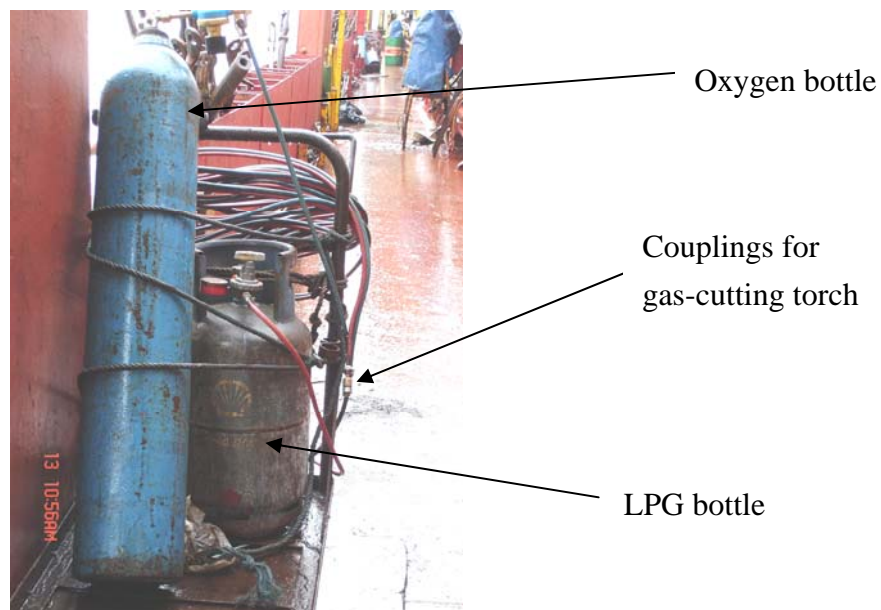


Fig. 1: Oxygen and LPG bottles for the gas-cutting work

- 2.1 The hoses for the gas-cutting torch had been used by the crew for a considerable period of time. Some minor mechanical abrasions were observed along the length of the hoses. The deck structures of the vessel had a number of sharp edges. It is believed that the rubber hoses might have been subject to mechanical abrasions and cuts while being tensioned over the sharp edges.
- 2.2 Although a crew was assigned to keep a fire watch for the gas-cutting process. However, he was collecting the scrapped metal at a distance away from the deceased. As such he would not be able to keep a lookout on the safety of environment and alert the Fitter of the situation.

3. Lessons

- 3.1 Fire watch should be maintained throughout the hot work process.
- 3.2 Appropriate arrangements should be made to prevent rubber hoses from contacting with any hot objects during the work.
- 3.3 Rubber gas hoses and equipment should be maintained properly and the hoses should avoid passing sharp edges of the vessel's structures during the work. The gas-cutting equipment should be inspected before use to ensure that it is in a safe condition.