

## WELDING IGNITES FIRE

### The Story

The total loss of a towboat resulted from a combination of housekeeping practice, vessel arrangement and underestimating the effect of moving, hot particles produced by welding.

While repairing the push knees of a towboat, the welder and fire watch did not notice that the hot metallic and slag particles from the welding were crossing three feet of open deck into the galley. A small gap between the bulkhead and the deck allowed the particles to fall into the oily bilges, where a fire was ignited. Despite efforts to use the available carbon dioxide portable extinguisher, the fire went out of control and the vessel was lost.

### Lesson Learned

*This casualty demonstrates the importance of anticipating hazards on board a vessel and taking preventive measures. Doors to adjacent spaces, ventilation systems, and structural conditions should be evaluated in order to eliminate hot work as a source of ignition to nearby combustible materials. A fire watch is not enough.*

Prevention Through People



[Section Index](#)

[Main Index](#)

[Next Lesson Learned](#)

---

Marine Safety and Environmental Protection

USCG Homepage

Webmaster

Disclaimer

Created 5/16/98

*Updated*