



**UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

**MARINE SAFETY ALERT**

***Inspections and Compliance Directorate***

June 3, 1996 (reformatted 2014)  
Washington, DC

Safety Alert 02-96

**HEATING TAPE CONCERNS**

To: All District Fishing Vessel Safety Coordinators

Subj: USE OF HEATING TAPE ON COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSELS

Ref: (a) 46 CFR Part 28

1. Last year, a commercial fishing vessel fire resulted in one fatality and the total constructive loss of the vessel. The fire started in a refrigerated hold which was insulated with combustible insulation. A subsequent investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) revealed that the fire was caused by an improper separation of heating tape from combustible insulation.

2. Fires involving combustible insulations covering interior surfaces can spread rapidly and be very difficult to extinguish. Reference (a) permits the use of combustible insulation in cargo spaces and refrigerated compartments. However, reference (a) (46 CFR 28.380(b)) also requires that "an internal combustion engine exhaust, galley uptake, or similar source of ignition must be kept clear of ... combustible material."

3. Heating tape can be used to prevent freezing in pipes which contain water and are in an area subject to freezing. Heating tape, which generates heat by electric resistance, is considered a "similar source of ignition" under 46 CFR 28.380(b), and should be kept clear of combustible insulation.

4. Please use all reasonable means of communication available to bring this information about the hazards of combustible insulation to the attention of members of the commercial fishing vessel fleet.

Original signed on Dec. 20, 1995

by G. F. WRIGHT By direction

Copy: G-MCO-2, G-MAO-1, NTSB

This safety alert is provided for informational purpose only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational or material requirement. Developed by the Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis. For questions or concerns please email [hqs-pf-flidr-cg-inv@uscg.mil](mailto:hqs-pf-flidr-cg-inv@uscg.mil).