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Community



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CREW THWARTS FERRY FIRE

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A fire on board a roll-on, roll-off ferry, loaded with passengers, was thwarted by the quick actions of the crew.

The ferry was being readied to leave port when the fire detection system reported smoke in the engine room. The officers on the bridge and in the engine control room were alerted by the alarms and responded immediately.

The engineer headed to the engine room to assess the problem and saw flames licking around a pump connected to the ship's oil heating system.

The system heats oil to about 170°C and then circulates it around the vessel using two pumps. A seal on one of the pumps had failed and oil was leaking, feeding the flame.

Realising the potential danger, the engineer first informed the bridge and then shut down the leaking pump. He and other crew members then put out the fire using the engine room's portable extinguishers. Once the flames were extinguished, the team managed to close the pump's valves, and stop the leak.

Meanwhile, the bridge team had put the ship's emergency plan into operation. The ship's alarms summoned the crew to their emergency stations, but due to the quick actions of the engineer and his team, the fire had been extinguished by the time they arrived.

The engine room's fire extinguishers were replaced and, following a check by a Maritime New Zealand safety inspector, the vessel continued its voyage – just a few minutes later than scheduled.

Lookout! Points

1. The engineer was very familiar with the vessel's systems and was able to quickly assess the fire and take the right steps to prevent it escalating.
2. The crew knew where the extinguishers in the engine room were located and how to use them. Training and familiarity with the vessel cannot be underestimated.



RMP Goal: Safe & secure shipping, cleaner seas, improved social and economic well-being of seafaring communities within the Pacific islands region.