

Danish Maritime Authority
Division for Investigation of Maritime Accidents

"On 20 April 2007 a fire broke out on the Faroe Islands flagged factory trawler HERCULES during fishing in Southern Pacific Ocean. 11 crewmembers lost their lives, and a greater part of the ship was destroyed.

The fire broke out in a cargo hold where corrugated pasteboard cartons etc. for frozen fish were stored.

At the same time it was observed in HERCULES' sister ship the POSEIDON that some of the ship's newly installed fixtures for fluorescent lamps had been superheated due to electric arcs in the sockets of the fixtures at the risk of ignition of fire.

A few months earlier new fixtures of the same type were installed in the same cargo hold of both ships.

The Division for Investigation of Maritime Accidents has ascertained – together with the Danish Police and The Danish Institute of Fire and Security Technology – that electric arcs can occur due to poor electric contact in the sockets of fixtures of the manufacture:

ADVANCE model Centium 1CN-2P32-SC, Instart – start Electronic Ballast

The fixtures are assembled in Mexico and purchased in Panama.

The risk of electric arcing is increased by vibrations. The electric arcs are able to heat plastic components in the fixtures and thereby cause a fire".

