

bp Safety Communication

Incident Close out Report



Incident: Customer car started to burn in the car wash and car wash caught fire.

Business Unit: Retail Germany

Location of Incident: Retail Site, Germany, COFO Köln, Frankfurter Str. 390

Date of Incident: 2006-06-13, circa 6.00 pm

Brief Account of Incident:

A customer drove his car into the car wash. After the cleaning process had finished but before the drying process had started, the customer noticed smoke coming from the engine compartment. The customer informed the site staff and site manager about the incident. Site staff and site manager immediately tried to put out the fire with a fire extinguisher. As they could not extinguish the fire themselves, they immediately called the fire brigade and evacuated the retail site. In the meantime the shop filled with smoke. A few minutes later the fire brigade arrived and extinguished the fire. Nobody was injured. The retail site was closed but has been opened. A thorough investigation involving engineering experts was completed and a fault in the electrical system of the customer car proved to be the cause of the fire.

What went well:

- Site manager and site staff followed procedures to extinguish the fire.
- They behaved very well within a very short reaction time and evacuated the site immediately.
- Enough fire extinguishers were on site. They were all maintained and serviceable.



Photo 1: showing burned car and car wash from direction car wash exit

Summary of investigation findings:

Critical Factors:

1. An electrical failure in the customer's car initiated the fire while in the car wash bay

Potential Outcome:

Customer and/ or site staff severely injured

Immediate causes/ System Causes:

Although not frequent, Cars can catch on fire anywhere and obviously also on forecourts and in car wash units.

Lessons learned:

Site staff preparedness to respond to such an incident is highly dependent on their training. The following elements should be emphasized in any Site Induction program:

- Motor vehicles are always potential sources of ignition that can cause fires.
- Usually it's difficult for someone at the retail site to predict such a fault in the customer's car and the fire consequences.
- Ensure Procedures are adequate for fire on retail sites, e.g. alarm plan and emergency stop switch.
- Retail sites staff shall receive regular refresh on fire fighting.

Key Corrective Actions:

Share these lessons learned to the wider Retail community.



Photo 2: car wash

For more information, please contact Retail HSSE, Holger Lamprecht, +049 (0) 234 3040 or Birgit Lattuch +49 (0) 234 315 5808.