

## **Tragischer Unglücksfall in einer HBO Ueberdruckkammer in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, USA**

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Betreff: [divingaccidents] UPDATE: Hyperbaric Chamber Fire in Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Wichtigkeit: Hoch

*[ while chamber explosions are not directly part of diving accidents, they are exceedingly rare, but exposure to the chamber environment is more common and becomes part of the diving experience should one experience an accident. It should make divers aware that the treatment facility of a diver should be as impeccably managed regardless of its place in the world. This message is being released as general information to the readership]*

Ocean Hyperbaric Neurological Center  
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### **Hyperbaric Chamber Fire**

**It has been reported that a mono-place hyperbaric chamber in Fort Lauderdale, FL on May 1, 2009 caught fire and killed a 62 year old Italian grandmother. A 4 year old child was severely burned to more than 90 percent of his body.**

Despite this tragedy, the operation of hyperbaric chambers has been demonstrated to be safe in facilities that adhere to strict maintenance and operational procedures. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has produced a hyperbaric safety standard since 1967 (NFPA 99, Health Care Facilities). In facilities that rigidly follow these standards, there has been no fatality due to hyperbaric chamber fire in North America.

The Undersea & Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMS) has been directly involved in helping establish these standards since the late 1970s and continues to promote the importance of hyperbaric facility safety. Hyperbaric facility safety depends on a number of interrelated issues: proper staffing, appropriate training, development of operational procedures, effective maintenance and rigid adherence to the principals of oxygen safety.

Risk management in healthcare is important. Risk management in a hyperbaric facility is critical. The UHMS chamber accreditation program is designed to help healthcare facilities achieve adequate levels of risk management and overall operational safety. Hyperbaric facilities located in hospitals and freestanding sites that participate in the UHMS' voluntary hyperbaric facility accreditation program have demonstrated by example their compliance with the highest levels of safety standards, treatment of medically appropriate indications, ongoing staff education and implementation of sound patient care policies and procedures. Whereas adherence to these standards cannot absolutely protect against untoward events, it does help reduce the potential for such tragedies to occur. The UHMS recommended standards for the operation of "Clinical Hyperbaric Treatment Facilities" can be found on the UHMS website at [www.uhms.org](http://www.uhms.org).

Although the UHMS does not certify physicians in the practice of HBO Therapy, consistent with the advanced certification offerings of the American Board of Medical Specialties and the National Board of Diving and Hyperbaric Medical Technology, the UHMS does recommend that personnel participating in the delivery of clinical hyperbaric medicine obtain training and certification beyond the minimum attained by attending an introductory, 40-hour

course. Specific UHMS recommendations for "Clinician Attendance of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy" can also be found on the UHMS website.

**The Italian victims of this tragedy visiting the United States from San Felice a Canello, a village northeast of Naples, raised funds to come to Florida for 22 hyperbaric oxygen therapy sessions to treat the child's cerebral palsy, which is generally not an accepted treatment in Italy or the USA.**

Our thoughts and prayers are with this family. The Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society will shortly be setting up a Donation Fund for the family to help them offset the medical and other expenses associated with this accident.

For additional information on the UHMS's continuing role in hyperbaric safety and the Donation Fund, please contact the UHMS at 919-490-5140.