

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: October 25, 1978

Forwarded to:

Admiral John B. Hayes
Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Washington, D.C. 20590

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

M-78-74 through -78

At 2125 c.s.t. on January 7, 1978, the Liberian tankship M/V STOLT VIKING struck the U.S. crewboat CANDY BAR amidships and cut it into two pieces. The accident occurred at 28°24'N, 93°07'W in the Gulf of Mexico, approximately 110 miles south of Lake Charles, Louisiana. The STOLT VIKING was not damaged. Two crewmen escaped from the CANDY BAR and were rescued 4 hours after the accident. The other two crewmen are missing and are presumed dead. The bow section of the CANDY BAR sank soon after the accident; however, the stern section remained afloat until 0900 on January 8, 1978. 1/

Before the collision, the crew of the CANDY BAR determined their boat was about 2,000 yards south of the safety fairway which the STOLT VIKING was transiting. In fact, the crewboat was just north of the safety fairway or in the safety fairway. Although the CANDY BAR had both a lookout and an operating radar, they were ineffective in that a ship as large as the STOLT VIKING was able to come as close as 40 yards before it was detected.

This accident shows a need for upgrading the qualifications of licensed operators engaged in the offshore oil industry. Accurate navigation and collision avoidance procedures are fundamental to the safety operation of any vessel. Certain vessels may be so limited in their operation that they may not need navigational equipment such as radar, LORAN, and fathometers. However, passenger-carrying vessels such as the CANDY BAR, which operate over 12 hours up to 150 miles offshore among hundreds of drilling structures and across heavily traveled safety fairways, require highly qualified operators and navigational equipment in addition to the compass now required.

1/ For more detailed information read "Marine Accident Report-- Collision of Liberian Tankship M/V STOLT VIKING and U.S. Crewboat CANDY BAR in Gulf of Mexico, January 7, 1978 " (NTSB-MAR-78-9).

There was no person designated in charge of the CANDY BAR to take command in an emergency. By mutual understanding, the operator at the wheel was in charge and the operators would relieve one another whenever requested. There were no set hours for watchstanding and fatigue was only the concern of the man on watch. At the time of the collision, one operator had been at the wheel for almost 10 hours.

Of the four crewmembers of the CANDY BAR, only two survived. No one could get a lifejacket in time. If lifejackets had been readily available to the crew who were in the wheelhouse, all the crew might have been saved. All the lifejackets were stowed in a locker one deck below the wheelhouse.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the U.S. Coast Guard:

Require vessels carrying more than six passengers for hire and engaged in the offshore oil industry to have electronic navigational equipment including radar, LORAN, and a fathometer. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-78-74)

Require that a person applying for an operator's license for vessels carrying more than six passengers for hire and engaged in the offshore oil industry be examined in the use of electronic navigational equipment such as radar, LORAN, and fathometers. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-78-75)

Require that the operator of every radar-equipped vessel carrying more than six passengers for hire and engaged in the offshore oil industry be qualified as a "radar observer." (Class II, Priority Action) (M-78-76)

Require that the operators of vessels carrying more than six passengers for hire and engaged in the offshore oil industry, when operating for more than 12 hours:

- (1) Establish standardized watch schedules to minimize fatigue from prolonged duty hours;
- (2) Appoint one operator to be in charge to establish responsibility of command and to avoid confusion in an emergency.

(Class II, Priority Action) (M-78-77)

Require that an additional number of life preservers be provided for the personnel on watch in the engineroom and pilothouse and at the bow lookout station for all vessels carrying more than six passengers for hire and engaged in the offshore oil industry, and require that these additional life preservers be stowed where they are readily accessible to the personnel on watch. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-78-78)

KING, Chairman, DRIVER, Vice Chairman, McADAMS and HOGUE, Members, concurred in the above recommendations.



By: James B. King
Chairman