

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: June 29, 1981

Forwarded to:

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SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

M-81-36

About 2044 c.s.t. on July 22, 1980, the upbound Panamanian bulk carrier M/V SEADANIEL, with a Crescent River Port Pilot's Association (CRPPA) pilot aboard, collided with the downbound German containership M/V TESTBANK, also with a CRPPA pilot on board, while meeting in the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) near Shell Beach, Louisiana. The SEADANIEL took an unexpected turn to the left due to an erroneous left rudder response to the pilot's right rudder order and struck the TESTBANK raking down the port side. The damage to the SEADANIEL was light and the damage to the TESTBANK was moderate. There were no deaths or injuries caused by the accident; however, the inhabitants of Shell Beach were temporarily evacuated and the waterway closed for about 3 weeks due to the environmental pollution. ^{1/}

As a result of the impact, one of six containers of the pesticide pentachlorophenol (PCP) entered the water. In addition, a small undetermined quantity of ethyl mercaptan and a hydrobromic acid were released. Due to the hazardous pollution of the water by the PCP, the U.S. Coast Guard closed the MRGO to waterborne traffic until August 14, 1980, and mounted a major cleanup and recovery effort including, among others, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), and numerous State of Louisiana agencies and local authorities. The State of Louisiana Health Department established a "Health and Environmental Zone." Seventy-five inhabitants of the Shell Beach area were temporarily evacuated due to the fumes.

At the time of the accident, PCP was not regulated as a hazardous material for marine shipment; however, recommendations of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) did apply. In the Federal Register of Thursday, May 22, 1980, Vol. 45, No. 101, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) published a final rule effective November 20, 1980, which brought PCP under U.S. jurisdiction as a hazardous material that affects the environment (ORM-E). The new regulations are not significantly different from the IMCO standards. However, while

^{1/} For more detailed information, read Marine Accident Report--"Collision of Panamanian Bulk Carrier M/V SEADANIEL with the German Containership M/V TESTBANK, Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, Near Shell Beach, Louisiana, July 22, 1980" (NTSB-MAR-81-8).

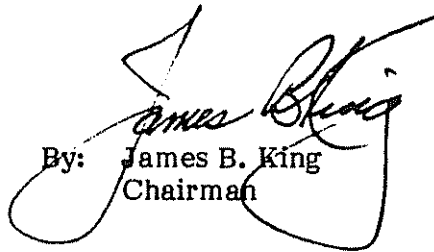
both permit either "on-deck" or "under-deck" stowage, the DOT regulations recommend, but do not require, that when both "on-deck" and "under-deck" stowage is authorized, "under-deck" should be used if available. The PCP stowage on the TESTBANK was all above deck.

One aspect of the shipping regulations warrants attention. Most of the hazardous material containers on the TESTBANK were located in an exposed location either outboard or forward, and all but one of the other hazardous material containers on deck were stowed next to an exposed container. The stowage of containers holding hazardous materials in these exposed locations should be reexamined because of their susceptibility to damage in even a minor collision. The stowage of such containers near the centerline of a vessel may prevent minor collisions such as this accident from becoming major environmental events; containers that were located three positions inboard on the TESTBANK were not damaged.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends to the owners of the TESTBANK that:

Whenever possible, considering the various requirements for vessel safety and ports of call, require that containers with dangerous cargo carried on your vessels be stowed as near the centerline as possible, if "on-deck" stowage is utilized. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-81-36)

DRIVER, Vice Chairman, and BURSLEY, Member, concurred in this recommendation. McADAMS, Member, dissented. KING, Chairman, and GOLDMAN, Member, did not participate.


By: James B. King
Chairman