

M-160 B

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: July 14, 1981

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Forwarded to:

Captain S. F. Sammis  
President  
National Cargo Bureau, Inc.  
One World Trade Center  
Suite 2757  
New York, New York 10048  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

M-81-70  
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At some time on October 25 or 26, 1980, the 523-foot-long U. S. freighter SS POET disappeared in the North Atlantic Ocean about 500 nautical miles east of Delaware Bay. No distress signal was heard from the POET, and no trace of the ship or its 34-person crew has been found. The estimated loss for the ship and its cargo was \$4,250,000. <sup>1/</sup>

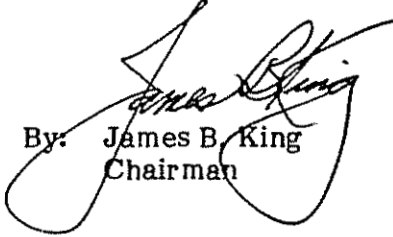
When the National Cargo Bureau (NCB) surveyor arrived on board the POET at 1500 on October 23, the loading of lower hold No. 1 and lower hold No. 2 and 'tween deck were completed. Loading was continuing in hold No. 3 with the trimming machine in use. Since the NCB surveyor did not observe the completion of loading of lower hold No. 1 and 'tween deck No. 2, he may not have been able to detect significant voids if they existed. Although the stevedores were well experienced in the stowage of grain in this type of vessel, the Safety Board believes that it is important that NCB surveyors observe the trimming of each under-deck on a 'tween-deck-type ship. The NCB surveyor watched the completion of loading of hold No. 3 and thus had personal knowledge that the grain there was trimmed properly. Because of its design, a 'tween-deck-type vessel requires more supervision during grain loading both by the stevedores and the NCB than a selftrimming bulk carrier. Since the POET was loaded at a stowage factor of 49.3, which was close to the expected value of 49, the Safety Board does not believe there were any significant voids on the POET when it left Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. However, the Safety Board believes that the NCB should pay particular attention to the loading of 'tween-deck vessels and that NCB surveyors should observe the completion of loading each under-deck area.

<sup>1/</sup> For more detailed information, read Marine Accident Report--"Disappearance of U.S. Freighter SS POET in North Atlantic Ocean about October 25, 1980" (NTSB-MAR-81-6).

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the National Cargo Bureau:

Direct its field surveyors to observe the completion of loading each under-deck area on 'tween-deck-type ships to insure that the grain is trimmed properly and that no significant voids exist before issuing a Certificate of Loading. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-81-70)

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

  
By: James B. King  
Chairman