

M-179 AE-4

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: August 26, 1981

Forwarded to:

Mr. William N. Johnson
Chairman and President
American Bureau of Shipping
65 Broadway
New York, New York 10006

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

M-81-78

About 1410 e.s.t. on January 19, 1981, the outbound loaded U. S. flag tankship S.S. CONCHO grounded near the middle of the channel while on the range of Constable Hook Reach at the eastern end of Kill Van Kull in Upper New York Harbor. As a result, the portside bottom plating was extensively damaged when the CONCHO grounded and about 100,000 gallons of crude oil entered the water. No one was injured. Estimated cost of repair for the vessel was \$1,300,000, and the estimated cost of the oil spill cleanup to restore the environment was \$280,000. 1/

The vessel's International Load Line Certificate, dated October 1, 1979, as well as its Trim and Stress Loading Instructions issued by the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) contain the following loading restriction:

For all loading conditions with a mean draft exceeding 24 feet, every two adjacent wing tanks shall be loaded to a minimum of seventy-five percent of their combined capacity.

According to the master, the practice of maintaining the Nos. 2 and 4 port and starboard wing tanks empty when carrying cargo was in compliance with U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) requirements for segregated ballast under the owner's verbal direction. He said he knew the practice did not comply with the current stability and loading restrictions located aboard the vessel.

The cargo loading and ballasting procedures, as practiced by the CONCHO, are in conflict with the ABS requirements. By maintaining the Nos. 2 and 4 wing tanks empty, the combined capacity of any two adjacent wing tanks between Nos. 1 and 5 could not exceed 50 percent. While the USCG had required that a

1/ For more detailed information read, "Marine Accident Report - U.S. Tankship S.S. CONCHO Grounding Constable Hook Reach of Kill Van Kull Upper New York Harbor, January 19, 1981" (NTSB-MAR-81-11).

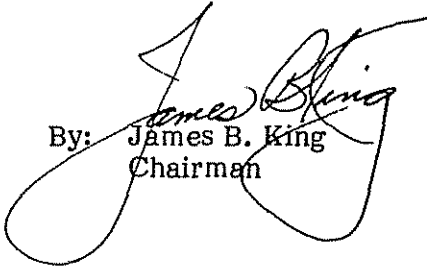
new Trim and Stability Booklet be prepared that would have permitted the procedures practiced aboard the CONCHO, there is no evidence that the requirement had been carried out, or the master had seen the USCG restriction which states that at drafts greater than 26 feet alternative wing cargo and ballast tanks must be at least 86 percent full, and that the operating restriction must be used in the vessel's Trim and Stability Booklet.

The USCG requirement when combined with a similar ABS requirement, as viewed by the vessel's master, was confusing. Since the requirements relate to such an important aspect of vessels' safety --stability-- the Safety Board believes that there should be no apparent conflict and that the USCG and the ABS should act jointly to prevent such confusion on board vessels.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the American Bureau of Shipping:

In conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard, review the CONCHO's Load Line Certificate and Trim and Stress Loading Instructions and, where necessary, make changes so that information will be accurate and consistent with U.S. Coast Guard requirements. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-81-78).

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

By: 
James B. King
Chairman