

Log M-192
AI-4

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: March 17, 1982

Forwarded to:
Mr. Perciles G. Callimanopoulos
General Manager
HELLENIC Lines, Ltd.
39 Broadway
New York, New York 10006

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)
M-82-19


About 0702 on May 6, 1981, the 820-foot-long U.S. barge carrier SS LASH ATLANTICO and the 470-foot-long Greek freighter M/V HELLENIC CARRIER collided in the Atlantic Ocean about 13 nautical miles northeast of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. There were no injuries or deaths. The LASH ATLANTICO experienced damage estimated at \$2,920,000. The HELLENIC CARRIER was a total constructive loss, with estimated repair cost of \$5 million. The North Carolina Outer Banks beaches from Kitty Hawk southward for 50 miles to Avon required cleanup from fuel oil spilled in the accident. The estimated cost of cleanup was more than \$500,000. 1/

The HELLENIC CARRIER was equipped with a VHF-FM radiotelephone; however, it was not on prior to the collision. The HELLENIC CARRIER master's practice of not guarding channel 16 2/ on the ship's VHF-FM radiotelephone, particularly in coastal waters where there is other ship traffic, disregarded an important safety device although he was not required to guard channel 16 by any international agreement. Under the existing near-zero visibility conditions, it would have been prudent for the chief mate of the HELLENIC CARRIER to have attempted to contact the LASH ATLANTICO and establish a passing agreement. The Safety Board believes that this accident might have been avoided if the two ships had contacted each other using their VHF-FM radiotelephones and established a passing agreement.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that HELLENIC Lines, Ltd.:

In company instructions to masters, encourage the use of VHF radiotelephones by the bridge watch to establish passing agreements on waters not covered by the U.S. Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-82-19)

BURNETT, Acting Chairman, and McADAMS and GOLDMAN, Members, concurred in this recommendation. BURSLEY, Member, did not concur.


By: Jim Burnett
Acting Chairman

1/ For more detailed information, read Marine Accident Report—"Collision of U.S. Barge Carrier SS LASH ATLANTICO and Greek Freighter M/V HELLENIC CARRIER about 13 Nautical Miles Northeast of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, May 6, 1981" (NTSB-MAR-82-3).

2/ Channel 16 is an international distress and safety channel. 3455