



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

M-3161A

Date: March 21, 1990

In reply refer to: M-90-23 and -24

Captain James Tachie-Menson
Port Captain/Terminal Manager
Crown Cruise Line
153 East Port Road
Riviera Beach, Florida 33404

On February 15, 1989, the 421-foot-long Panamanian passenger vessel M/V VIKING PRINCESS rammed the 135-foot-long U.S. Navy vessel YFU-97 which was moored at berth No. 7 at the Port of Palm Beach, Florida. The VIKING PRINCESS, with 613 passengers on board, had returned from sea after a 10-hour cruise. No one on either vessel was injured.¹

As the VIKING PRINCESS entered the Lake Worth Entrance Channel, the crew experienced some difficulty with the remote controls for setting the pitch of the port and starboard propellers. As the vessel approached beacon No. 10, the vessel was not slowing as the master expected and he reduced the pitch on the center propeller from ahead 7 to ahead 3 or 4 to decrease the vessel's speed. Shortly thereafter, the master was notified by the chief engineer that the port and starboard engines (propeller pitch settings) could only be controlled manually from the engineroom and not remotely from the bridge. About this time, the master placed the pitch of the center propeller at full astern, with the VIKING PRINCESS about 2,000 feet from the U. S. Naval Vessel YFU-97. After a short time interval, the master telephoned the chief engineer, who was at the engineroom console, and ordered him to place the pitch of the port and starboard propellers to full astern. The manual pitch controls were located at the engine local control stations, remotely from the engineroom console, and there was no means of direct communication with the bridge. The engineers went to the local control stations and put the pitch for the port and starboard propellers to full astern. About the same time, the VIKING PRINCESS struck the YFU-97.

Based on postaccident tests, about 25 seconds elapsed from the time that the chief engineer received the full astern order until he and the first engineer arrived at their respective local port and starboard propeller pitch controls. They then took 5 to 7 seconds to put full astern pitch on the port and starboard propellers. Therefore, both propellers should have gone full

¹For more detailed information, read Marine Accident Report--"Ramming of the U.S. Navy YFU-97 by the Panamanian Passenger Vessel VIKING PRINCESS, Port of Palm Beach, Florida, February 15, 1989" (NTSB/MAR-90/03).

astern 30 to 32 seconds after the chief engineer received the full astern order. Had the control stations been manned when the full astern order on the center propeller was given, most of the 25-second delay would have been avoided. Therefore, the Safety Board believes that Crown Cruise Line should establish a procedure that ensures that the propeller pitch local control stations are manned and operated expeditiously whenever the propeller pitch is to be controlled locally.

After the chief engineer notified the master that the port and starboard propellers had to be controlled locally, rapid and accurate communication between the bridge and the local control stations became vital. If a telephone or a radio had been provided at the local control station, and the control station had been manned, orders from the bridge could have been given directly to the local control station operator faster and with less chance for error than providing the order through a third person stationed at the engineroom console. Therefore, the Safety Board believes that a direct means of communication between the VIKING PRINCESS' bridge and the local control station should be provided for use when the propellers are operated locally.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Crown Cruise Line:

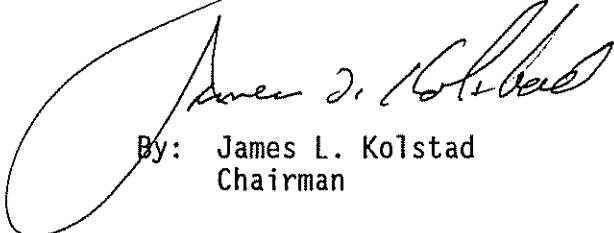
Develop written procedures to expeditiously man and operate the propeller local pitch control stations whenever a vessel is being controlled in the local control mode. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-90-23)

Provide a direct means of communication between the bridge and local control stations. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-90-24)

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with the statutory responsibility "... to promote transportation safety by conducting independent accident investigations and by formulating safety improvement recommendations" (Public Law 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any action taken as a result of its safety recommendations. Therefore, it would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendations in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendations M-90-23 and -24 in your reply.

Also, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendation M-90-22 to the U.S. Coast Guard.

KOLSTAD, Chairman, COUGHLIN, Acting Vice Chairman, and LAUBER and BURNETT, Members, concurred in these recommendations.


By: James L. Kolstad
Chairman