

SP-20



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

## Safety Recommendation

Date: July 24, 1986

In reply refer to: M-86-67

Mr. Richard Scutter  
Hyannis Harbor Tours, Inc.  
36 Ocean Street  
Hyannis, Massachusetts 02601

Log M-319A  
7/29/86

At 1620 on July 28, 1985, the M/V PILGRIM BELLE, a U.S. registered, 192-foot, 96-gross ton, passenger vessel, ran aground on the Sow and Pigs Reef, Vineyard Sound, Massachusetts. After being informed that the vessel was taking on water, the master immediately ordered passengers and crew to abandon ship. He then broadcast a distress message to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). The 84 passengers and 16 crew members were taken to a nearby fishing vessel, the FARE LADY, and to Cuttyhunk Island by recreation boats and the PILGRIM BELLE II, the vessel's launch. They were later transferred to USCG Station, Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The remaining eight members of the crew and one shipyard/builder representative stayed with the vessel. There were no serious injuries on grounding or leaving the vessel. The PILGRIM BELLE did not sink. Damage and repair costs were \$357,000, and the vessel was returned to service on August 31, 1985. 1/

Upon grounding, the vessel listed 5 to 7° to port. The master requested and received reports from the chief engineer about the vessel's condition and learned that the vessel was flooding in the crew quarters, storeroom, and lazarette. The master sounded the abandon ship signal on the general alarm bell.

The shipyard representative advised the master that the storeroom needed to be kept dry to prevent capsizing and sinking. The owners were able to contact the designer by telephone quickly and obtain information on the survivability of the PILGRIM BELLE with the reported damage and flooding. The master was informed via USCG Woods Hole that the designer advised them to keep the storeroom dry and also to pump out the lazarette. The master then ordered the engineers to pump out the storeroom using the vessel's bilge pump and portable pumps.

The USCG regulations (46 CFR 74.20 and 46 CFR 74.25, relocated to 46 CFR 170.110 and 46 CFR 170.120) applicable to the PILGRIM BELLE state:

The master of the vessels shall be informed of the conditions under which the damage stability calculations have been made and advised to what extent the vessel can safely withstand damage under these assumed conditions.

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1/ For more detailed information, read Marine Accident Report--"Grounding of the U.S. Passenger Vessel PILGRIM BELLE, Sow and Pigs Reef, Vineyard Sound, Massachusetts, July 28, 1985" (NTSB/MAR-86/08).

Each vessel subject to the requirements of this part shall have posted under glass in the pilothouse a stability letter issued by U.S. Coast Guard before the vessel is placed in service operation. This letter shall indicate, either by specific instructions embodied in the letter or by reference to separate instructions available to the master, the condition of operation under which the vessel will have satisfactory stability.

The only information available to the master regarding the stability of the PILGRIM BELLE was a stability letter posted in the pilothouse, which was issued by the USCG on March 20, 1985. The stability letter contained no information on the conditions under which the damage stability calculations were made, or the extent the PILGRIM BELLE could safely withstand damage under these assumed conditions. Furthermore, the master on the PILGRIM BELLE testified that he did not know if the PILGRIM BELLE was designed to withstand damage to its hull; the PILGRIM BELLE was, in fact, designed to withstand damage to one main underwater compartment. Calculations after the grounding showed that the PILGRIM BELLE probably would have capsized and sunk if the storeroom had flooded together with the crew's quarters.


Stability information regarding the PILGRIM BELLE's ability to survive damage should have been provided to the master of the vessel so that he could make informed decisions on whether to evacuate passengers and what damage control measures to take.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the owner/operator of Hyannis Harbor Tours, Inc.:

Provide your masters with information written in clear and precise language that can be readily understood by the master regarding the extent to which each vessel can safely withstand damage under the assumed loading conditions to which it was designed. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-86-67)

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 actions taken as a result of its safety recommendations and would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendation in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendation M-86-67 in your reply.

GOLDMAN, Acting Chairman, and BURNETT, LAUBER, and NALL, Members, concurred in this recommendation.

  
By: Patricia A. Goldman  
Acting Chairman