



National Transportation Safety Board
Marine Safety

Medical Issues

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Medical Information Reviewed

- Assistant Captain's medical records:
 - Pre-accident (primary care, specialists, dentists, pharmacy)
 - Post-accident (hospitalization)
 - Coast Guard (certification)
 - NYC DOT (sick leave, return-to-work)

Medical Information Reviewed

- Coast Guard medical oversight
 - Review of applicable guidance
 - Interview with staff at USCG National Maritime Center
 - Interview of physician performing most recent exam 8/14/00 (also personal physician of assistant captain)

Medical Conditions/Medications

- Medical conditions previously known:
 - High blood pressure - 1989
 - High cholesterol - 1999
 - Back pain: treated with tramadol - 2/00
 - Insomnia: treated with zolpidem - 5/00
- Discovered post-accident
 - Coronary artery disease
 - Congenital heart abnormalities

Possible Medical Causes

- Upright but unresponsive – 2 minutes
- Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA, “mini-stroke”)
 - Likelihood increased by congenital anomalies
 - Not highly likely, no evidence or recurrence
- Seizure
 - Likelihood increased by tramadol
 - Not highly likely, no evidence/recurrence
- Other – cardiac, psychological, fatigue

Coast Guard Medical Oversight

- Assistant captain's conditions and medications raised certification questions
- Assistant captain and physician did not provide information on meds/conditions
- CG could not evaluate meds/conditions

Coast Guard Medical Oversight

- Existing elements:
 - Comprehensive evaluation form
 - Authority over certification
 - Limited retention of submitted data:
 - Hardcopies of submitted paperwork
 - Data storage system to record denials, etc.

Coast Guard Medical Oversight

- Notable deficiencies
 - Limited guidance on annual examinations
 - All exams not tracked
 - Potential inconsistencies in performance, evaluation
 - No requirements for reporting between exams
 - Limited ability to perform independent occupational evaluations



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