

ADOPTED: 3/13/90



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

M-361

Date: March 21, 1990

In reply refer to: M-90-22

Admiral Paul A. Yost, Jr.
Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Washington, D.C. 20593

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.

The International Convention for the SOLAS '74, Regulation 32 specified that ships shall be fitted with two means of communicating orders from the bridge to the engineroom. The 1981 amendments to SOLAS '74 which entered into force on September 1, 1984, contained Regulation 37 which expanded on this requirement and stated that "Appropriate means of communication shall be

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).

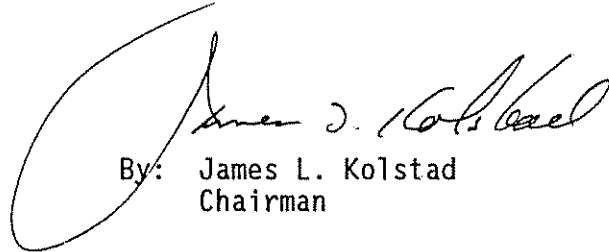
provided to any other positions from which the engines may be controlled." Since the VIKING PRINCESS was built before these amendments came into force, this requirement is not binding on it or any vessels built before September 1, 1984. The Safety Board believes the need for communication between the bridge and the local control stations is vital for passenger safety and that such means of communication should be required on all oceangoing passenger vessels.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the U.S. Coast Guard:

Propose to the International Maritime Organization, to require that vessels equipped with a local propeller pitch control station be equipped with a direct means of communication between the bridge and the local control station. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-90-22)

Also, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations M-90-23 and -24 to the Crown Cruise Line.

KOLSTAD, Chairman, COUGHLIN, Acting Vice Chairman, and LAUBER and BURNETT, Members, concurred in this recommendation.



By: James L. Kolstad
Chairman