



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Sector San Francisco

June 12, 2025
San Francisco, CA

Findings of Concern 006 -25

INCREASED AWARENESS OF OVERHEAD HAZARDS WHILE OPERATING CRANES

Purpose. The U.S. Coast Guard issues findings of concern to disseminate information related to unsafe conditions that were identified as causal factors in a casualty and could contribute to future incidents. Findings of concern are intended to educate the public, state, or local agencies about the conditions discovered so they may address the findings with an appropriate voluntary action or highlight existing applicable company policies or state/local regulations.

The Incident. On November 23, 2024, a dredge barge and towing vessel were conducting crane operations at night on the Stockton, CA Deepwater Ship Channel. The crane operator inadvertently struck an unlit, overhead electrical powerline that crossed over the waterway. The impact parted the energized line, causing it to fall into the waterway. There were no injuries reported.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. Three key factors which contributed to the incident are: 1) Lack of communication between the towing vessel master and the crane operator on the dredge barge while operating close to an overhead hazard; 2) Failure to utilize an updated navigation chart; and 3) Failure to utilize a lookout or spotter while operating in the vicinity of an overhead hazard.



Findings of Concern. Coast Guard investigators have identified the following measures for vessel owners/operators and crew that may mitigate risk posed by these contributing factors:



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- Prior to operations, all crewmembers should review current safety protocols with an increased focus on job-site specific hazards, including at night or in restricted visibility. Ensure that all crewmembers know their roles and responsibilities related to the identified hazards.
- Increase focus on communications between credentialed merchant mariners and crane operators when there is more than one vessel involved in an operation. Credentialed mariners should always monitor their navigation chart systems and inform crane operators when a charted hazard is close to the area of operation. Mariners involved in multi-vessel operations should err on the side of caution and remain in frequent radio and voice communications when operating in the vicinity of a hazard to prevent these types of accidents.
- Dredge and towing vessel operators should designate a lookout or spotter and should ensure that the spotter is actively participating when operating in the vicinity of a known hazard. The use of spotlights can be a prudent tool to assist in identifying and locating unlit hazards.
- All crewmembers involved in dredge or construction projects are encouraged to participate in the navigation assessment when required by Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations Part 140.635. In particular, those crewmembers who may be responsible for adjusting vessel positions or working with crane equipment, regardless of whether they are assigned to a navigational watch.

Closing. These findings of concern are provided for informational purpose only and do not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. For any questions or comments please contact Sector San Francisco Investigations Division by phone at (510) 813-9636 or by email at SFINV@uscg.mil.