



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Sector Maryland-National Capital Region

September 12, 2025
Baltimore, MD

Findings of Concern 012-25

WIND RELATED DECISION MAKING: PRIORITIZING SAFETY DURING VESSEL MANEUVERS

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 appropriate voluntary action or highlight existing applicable company policies or state/local regulations.

The Incident. On December 5, 2024, a 577-foot, foreign-flagged, vehicle carrier allided with a facility terminal while attempting to moor during inclement wind conditions. The incident resulted in structural damage to both the facility's infrastructure and the vessel's hull that exceeded \$1,000,000.



Figure 1: Image of a Roll-on Roll-off vehicle carrier illustrating the large hull profile susceptible to beam wind hazards.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. During the investigation, the U.S. Coast Guard determined that two key factors contributed to the incident:

- The vessel's voyage data recorder indicated that actual wind conditions during the approach to its assigned berth significantly exceeded predictions, with sustained winds reaching 25 knots and gusts up to 47 knots from the west-northwest.
- The port administration and pilots' association did not have formal procedures in place regarding weather limitations to help guide decision-making for vessel movements to and from Maryland facilities. During the inbound transit, the vessel's master suggested an alternate berth to address wind concerns, but this proposal was not followed due to port



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authorization issues and communication failures between the vessel's agent and master. Despite having enough time and the option to divert to a nearby anchorage or alternative berth, the decision was made to proceed to its assigned berth under noticeably worsening weather conditions.



Figure 2: Facility terminal layout illustrating the allision and grounding with graphic overlays of the vessel's intended track line and wind data.

Findings of Concern. U.S. Coast Guard Investigators identified the following measures for port authorities that, if implemented, may mitigate the risks associated with the above-mentioned contributing factors:

- Consider establishing formal procedures that grant docking pilots the discretion to change berth assignments in emergent situations when deemed necessary. This flexibility would enable sensible adjustments based on real-time conditions, helping to protect life and property.
- Consider development and implementation of clear guidelines for harbor and docking pilots regarding inclement weather. These guidelines should outline specific conditions under which vessel movements should be restricted or diverted to safe anchorage areas when wind speeds exceed predetermined thresholds.



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- Consider regular training sessions for harbor and docking pilots focused on interpreting and responding to weather conditions. These sessions should include practical exercises and simulations to improve decision-making skills during adverse weather scenarios.
- Consider continuous collaboration with pilot associations to review and update procedures related to vessel movements and weather conditions. Regular meetings and feedback sessions can ensure that all stakeholders remain aligned and prepared to handle adverse weather situations effectively.
- Promote the importance of effective communication between commercial vessel operators and pilots. Encourage open dialogue and mutual respect to overcome potential cultural barriers and ensure collaborative safety decisions are made in a timely manner.

Closing. These findings of concern are provided for informational purposes only and do not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. For any questions or comments please contact Sector Maryland-National Capital Region Investigations Division by phone at (443) 257-2507, or by email at: MDIO@uscg.mil.