



FINDINGS OF CONCERN

First Coast Guard District

December 8, 2025
Boston, MA

Findings of Concern 016-25

SHIPBOARD EMERGENCY TRAINING FOR SHORESIDE PERSONNEL

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. In July 2023, a JEEP Wrangler, used by longshoremen as a “pusher vehicle” to load non-running cargo vehicles onto a foreign flagged Ro-Ro/Container vessel moored at Port Newark, New Jersey, caught fire while inside one of the vessel’s vehicle decks. Firefighting efforts by the vessel’s crew and land-based firefighters were ineffective at suppressing the fire. Tragically, during the response, two land-based firefighters lost their lives, and several others were injured.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. After the fire erupted onboard the vessel, the longshoremen self-evacuated and gathered on the pier. There was no formal method in place by the stevedoring company or the longshoring company to attain accountability for all shoreside workers on the vessel during an emergency. Further, neither company conducted emergency drills nor provided formal shipboard emergency response training for their personnel prior to the incident.

In this incident, there were vessel crewmembers working near the fire’s origin point who were able to immediately respond to the fire. The crewmembers were also able to evacuate personnel quickly and safely after recognizing their initial response efforts were insufficient. However, had vessel crewmembers not been in the immediate vicinity, the lack of formalized training in response and accountability for the shoreside workers could have proved fatal.

Findings of Concern. Coast Guard investigators identified the following measures to mitigate the risks associated with the contributing factors identified above:

- Stevedoring and longshoring companies should require their personnel working onboard vessels at marine terminals to attend general emergency training, to include vessel familiarization, initial response actions, emergency evacuation procedures, and accountability.
- Stevedoring and longshoring companies should develop emergency procedures and protocols for their personnel working onboard vessels at marine terminals.



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

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- Stevedoring and longshoring companies should implement an emergency drill schedule and require personnel that may work onboard vessels to complete these drills before their employees engage in shipboard cargo operations.

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 First Coast Guard District, Inspections and Investigations Branch, by email at D01-DG-D1-CCPrevention@uscg.mil.