



FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Sector Ohio Valley

November 30, 2022
Louisville, KY

Findings of Concern 017-22

CHOOSE THE BEST PFD FOR THE JOB

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. A U.S. flagged towing vessel pushing two red flag barges had a crewman fall overboard off the front of the tow while underway on the Ohio River during high water conditions. After exiting a lock and clearing the lock long wall headed upriver, two crewmembers were assigned to remove the depth sounder pole from the bow of the tow. Amid retrieval, a large floating piece of debris struck the sounder pole. Deckhand 1, wearing a Type V approved work vest, was holding the sounder pole and thrown forward into the water. Deckhand 2 notified the Master and commenced man overboard procedures. A work vest was seen floating aft of the vessel during the crew's visual search.

An extensive search was conducted along the shoreline above and below the lock and dam by the vessel crew, company representatives, local, state, and federal officials. Approximately eight and half hours after Deckhand 1 entered the water, the local fire department Incident Command classified the search as a recovery mission. Multiple assets remained on scene continuing the search. Deckhand 1 was not found and presumed dead.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. The contributing factors were: 1) Unfavorable environmental conditions, 2) Lack of established procedures in the towing vessel safety management system, 3) Loss of situational awareness by the Master and Deckhand 1, and 4) Inadequate lifesaving equipment.

Findings of Concern. Coast Guard Investigators have identified the following measures implemented by owner(s) /operator(s) of similar vessels in similar service to mitigate the risks associated with the above-identified contributing factors:

- Periodically review and update company policies with crewmembers including deck procedures while the vessel is near other objects to include a lock & dam, additional hazards and considerations in high and low water level conditions, and procedures for equipment deployment and recovery.
- Reiterate the availability of Type 1 PFDs and the differences between Type 1 thru Type 5 PFDs. Additional information can be found at <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/CG-ENG-4/PFDSel/>



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

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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 Ohio Valley, Investigations Division by phone at (502) 779-5339 or by email at STL-SMB-SectorOhioValley-Louisville-2692@uscg.mil.