



## ***FINDINGS OF CONCERN***

### **Sector Jacksonville**

March 22, 2022  
Jacksonville, FL

Findings of Concern 001-22

## **SHIPBOARD FIREFIGHTING COORDINATION BETWEEN SHIPPERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS**

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 deep-draft Roll-on/Roll-off (RORO) car carrier vessel was conducting cargo operations and loading used vehicles. At the conclusion of cargo operations, the vessel's Port Captain and crew conducted a check of each loaded deck. Approximately 15 minutes after cargo operations ended, the vessel's Chief Officer was transiting to the aft weather deck in order to address an issue with the stern ramp when he observed smoke coming from vents on deck 7 and 8. The vessel's fire alarm was sounded and the Chief Engineer observed a fire on deck 8. The crew mustered to fight the fire and subsequently abandoned ship onto the pier after their initial attempt to enter the space failed. The Chief Officer and Chief Engineer then re-boarded the ship and attempted to discharge the fixed carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) system to decks 7 and 8 from the fire station on the weather deck. Shore side firefighters subsequently arrived on scene and began fighting the fire. As part of their effort to battle the fire, the shore side fire fighters opened ventilation ducts for decks 9, 10, and 11. Shortly thereafter, a series of explosions occurred and the fire burned on the vessel for approximately a week.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. The following have been identified as contributing factors:

1. Lack of shipboard firefighting training for local first responders.
2. Language barriers between local first responders and the vessel's crew.

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

- The Coast Guard recommends that shippers conduct outreach and coordination with local first responders in ports where they operate. This outreach should help to mitigate the effect of any time delay between an incident occurring on a shipper's vessel and the arrival of the shipper's contracted emergency response personnel.
- Outreach efforts from shippers should include providing local first responders with training and familiarization with vessels that frequently call on the port in order to ensure an appropriate emergency response. In particular, shippers should seek to educate local



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first responders on the differences between vessel types such as ROROs, containerships, bulk ships, and to emphasize the unique hazards posed by each.

- Large vessel fires require more firefighting resources and different technical skills than most shore based firefighting departments possess. Additionally, large foreign flag vessels contain international crew. As part of their contracted emergency response services, shippers should seek to ensure that they provide immediate access to an appropriate translator for local first responders. This will help to decrease language barriers and increase the effectiveness of first responders.

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 Jacksonville Investigations Division by phone at (904) 714-7500 or by email at [jaxinvestigations@uscg.mil](mailto:jaxinvestigations@uscg.mil).