



FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Activities Far East

March 27, 2020
Yokota AB, Japan

Findings of Concern 002-20

CRUISE SHIP TENDERING OPERATIONS

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 passenger aboard a foreign flagged cruise ship fell between the ship's tender and a pontoon boarding platform during tendering operations, resulting in the passenger's death. This occurred after the passengers in the forward portion of the tender vessel were disembarked with the help of the pontoon and tender crewmembers. As the passenger transfer progressed to the passengers in the rear of the tender, a crewmember onboard the pontoon platform removed a safety line rigged across the aft doorway before the remaining pontoon and tender crewmembers were ready to assist disembarking the aft passengers. The decedent then prematurely attempted to disembark the tender before being directed or waiting for crewmember assistance. While exiting, the tender surged away from the pontoon platform, resulting in a gap. That, coupled with the forward momentum of the passenger, resulted in the passenger falling between the tender and the pontoon platform. The pontoon crewmember reacted and grabbed the decedent but during the process, the tender surged back, crushing the passenger in the pelvic region and ultimately resulting in the passenger's death.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. The investigation identified that, even though there were instructions stating that passengers remain seated unless directed by the crew, the removal of the safety line created the appearance that the doorway was open and available for disembarking. Also, the company policy for adding additional safety measures, such as additional tender crewmembers, in correlation to adverse weather conditions, was not clearly defined. Had additional tender crewmembers been in place under the adverse weather provision, there would have been someone at the doorway of the tender preventing the decedent from disembarking.

Findings of Concern. U. S. Coast Guard investigators have identified the following voluntary action for an owner/operator of similar vessels in similar service to mitigate the risks associated with the above contributing factors:

- Review company policies and procedures to clarify when and what additional safety measures must be implemented during higher risk passenger transfer evolutions. These should take into consideration mooring arrangements and environmental conditions.
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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 Activities Far East Investigations Division by phone at +81-42-507-6545 or by email at feactinv@uscg.mil.