



## **FINDINGS OF CONCERN**

### **First Coast Guard District**

December 8, 2025  
Boston, MA

Findings of Concern 019-25

## **MARINE FIREFIGHTING EXPERT NEEDED FOR PORT AUTHORITIES**

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. The investigation identified that most of the initial local land-based fire department personnel did not have the necessary maritime or shipboard firefighting education, training, or experience for a successful response. The local Port Authority had experts and units to deal with aircraft emergencies but was not staffed similarly to assist fire departments with the unique challenges of shipboard firefighting.

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

- Port Authorities are encouraged to establish a Marine Firefighting Expert to immediately advise local fire departments during responses to shipboard or port facility fires. This individual should be embedded in the fire department’s (or joint/unified command, if established) Incident Command Post as an Agency Representative.
  - To be effective, this individual should possess knowledge of port operations, the Incident Command System (ICS), land-based firefighting response, and shipboard firefighting tactics. At a minimum, the Marine Firefighting Expert should possess the following qualifications:
    - National Fire Protection Associations (NFPA) Firefighter I & II<sup>1</sup>.
    - Marine Firefighter Certification meeting NFPA 1005<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> NFPA 1001 – *Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*, Chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup> NFPA 1005 – *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Marine Fire Fighting for Land-Based Fire Fighters*.



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- Completion of a USCG approved Advanced Marine Firefighting course.
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) ICS-100, 200, 300, 400, 700, and 800, or equivalent.

The Marine Firefighting Expert can further serve as a liaison with local fire departments and the Coast Guard Captain of the Port to provide access for vessel familiarity tours, coordinate port-wide marine firefighting drills and exercises, and help develop pre-fire planning.

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 the First Coast Guard District, Inspections and Investigations Branch, by email at [D01-DG-D1-CCPrevention@uscg.mil](mailto:D01-DG-D1-CCPrevention@uscg.mil).