



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594  
Office of Marine Safety

## Interview Summary – DCA15FM035

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**Interview of:** ██████████, Master of Carnival Liberty

**Date/Time:** September 11, 2015 from 1547 to 1630

**Location:** On board Carnival Liberty, San Juan, PR

**Interviewed by:** ██████████ - USCG, ██████████ — Fowler Rodriguez, ██████████

██████████ - USCG, ██████████ – NTSB IIC

**Case:** Carnival Liberty engine room fire, September 7, 2015

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- Has been with CCL from August 1999 to 2008 - he then worked land based until 2010 – he returned to sea and sailed with another cruise operator until he returned to CCL in 2013 as a staff captain – sailed on Carnival Liberty, Splendor and Magic as staff captain
- He worked as a staff captain and also shore side at CCL working on the ERP (7 to 8 months in 2014)
- He was promoted to master May 2015 and has sailed as master on Carnival Liberty and Sunshine
- He signed on Carnival Liberty on August 20, 2015 for a 6 day overlap before taking over as master on August 26
- A shore based captain sailed with him an additional 4 days for mentoring and oversight

Master was asked to recall the accident events:

- Master was walking with the staff captain to deck 0 to the officers mess for lunch
- On the way, he heard the Alpha 1<sup>st</sup> stage response code announcement over the PA system – aft engine room
- He heard an announcement after that stating that all WTDs would be closed
- He ran up the stairs from deck 0 to deck 8 which is where the bridge was
- He estimated it took 4 to 5 minutes to get to the bridge
- When he arrived on the bridge he got a situation report that there was a fire in the engine room – he went to the HF panel and saw the pressure was 40 bar and questioned why so low
- He was told that the pressure must be 50 bar for the machinery spaces
- Was not confident that 50 bar was the required pressure
- He noticed that all the HF systems were activated – local and total flooding
- There was a lot going on that he had to orient himself with
- The staff captain took over his part (emergency duties) and the captain took over control of the emergency
- He realized the entire engine casing was in (fire) alarm
- When he got to the bridge, the SMCS was frozen – grey – no indication
- Autronica system (fire detection) was working but the big SMCS display was grey

- The staff captain told the master they had to reboot the SMCS 3 times to get it back to normal
- They managed to determine the fire extent because of the Autronica fire detection system and they had alarms up to deck 14 in the engine casing
- The cameras were not available because SMCS was down
- An officer went to another station to monitor the CCTV and he reported he could see the HF was running
- Initially the fire went down but came up again – he estimated this took place over a 40 minute duration
- The master called the chief engineer on the phone a few times asking about the pressure of the HF
- Looking at the CCTV, he saw there was something wrong with the HF spray – not like what he has seen in training videos before –he felt something was not working properly
- Master asked CE about fuel pumps, isolations and QCV's
- He also recalled the CE calling him to confirm the valves were closed for fuel
- He called the CE and asked for the roll call
- CE then called the master and roll call was done – was safe to release CO2 – fire was still there – up and down – HF pressure still low
- As soon as he understood, the fire was in the engine space – he gave the order to sound the crew alert to go to their stations
- After that, he sounded the general emergency alarm and he made an announcement to the passengers to evacuate the vessel from deck 0 where the gangway ashore was located – they were to walk out to the pier from there – ship evacuation
- The cruise director came on the bridge (late) and helped with the announcements
- His concern at the time was the smoke from the fire since the engine casing was filled with smoke
- He had communications with the on scene commander (safety officer) on deck 0 and the muster control who is the HD – made inquiries about smoke with them
- He was assured by the on scene commander and the HD who had people in crew (zone commanders) in position throughout the ship that there was no smoke
- He gave the order to discharge the CO2 – CE confirmed the discharge was successful – everything seemed to work fine
- After the CO2 discharge, the CE asked about stopping the HF in the forward engine room since the total flooding was activated – he gave permission but this was after the CO2 had been discharged
- Fire teams monitored the temperatures what was reported back was nothing in excess of 40 to 50 C
- The HF continued to run
- The master estimated after about 2 hours the first fire squad entered the aft engine room from the incinerator room – the squad checked the areas near DG 5 and 6 and the non A60 bulkhead between DG5 and DG4 – all clear
- The second squad went down to inspect around DG4 (on the other side of the bulkhead) from the same entrance into the aft engine room
- The squad reported to the safety officer that it was all clear – no fire

- Back at the staging area, during the debrief, one of the fire squad crew said there was a little smoke at the corner of the engine
- They then sent another squad down for further inspection – everything was fine – no fire
- The area was then ventilated and the staff captain, CE, staff chief, went to inspect the area

Follow up questions:

- Re-entry into the aft engine room – about 1600 or 1630 when the space was re-entered after ventilation
- Passengers evacuated to pier – the operation went well but there was no precise means to keep track of people – many passengers went to the gangway without their A pass card
- All section leaders reported back that all public spaces were clear and all cabins were clear
- It was also reported that all crew cabins were clear – but there was no 0 count on A pass
- Passengers were mustered on the pier and the started to account for them with a hard copy list but even then it was challenging – there was some mismatching
- By that time there was no smoke and the fire was contained – fire was out
- Eventually they gave up with the accountability process around 1600 or 1630 – they did not manage to get a 0 count with the A pass
- A pass information - the master can see this on the bridge – he had an officer monitoring this giving updates
- When asked about passengers mustered on the pier – not properly aligned – scattered around, at least initially. The master sent one deck officer to help organize
- Passengers were scattered, team members (crew) were confused – he went to the bridge wing a few times to look down and at least initially it looked disorganized
- After some time, things got more organized
- There was not a lot of people – he estimated about 600 to 700 people on board at the time of the fire – did not know this at the time of the emergency though – it was only after when he looked at the total persons who were on board at the time
- General alarm is seven short and one long
- There were 2 gangways – the chief security officer was instructed to let everybody out since the ship was in emergency mode
- When asked about shore based communications – it was challenging – he had the 1<sup>st</sup> officer call the manager on duty and told her there was a fire in the engine room and they were considering discharging CO2
- He expected a call back straight away because the manager on duty normally activates the emergency response center shore side
- After he gave the instruction to contact the another person ashore and he also contacted captain Di' Angelos who was ashore (he is the director of stability)
- By that time, he had made the decision to discharge CO2
- When asked about the pressure of the HF – he saw 40 bar but saw on the CCTV the pressure was going up and down
- The HF control panel on the bridge is just for indication – no control

- Was asked about in port evacuation and abandonment – there is an SMS procedure – this was followed - team members activated the procedures – in port manning procedures implemented
- The A Pass system can provide information regarding exactly how many persons are on and off the ship at any time
- There is no electronic process for accountability of passengers – the company is moving in that direction but nothing implemented on the Carnival Liberty
- The A pass system was partially used during the evacuation of people ashore – partially meaning that persons with a cruise card (scanned in A pass) were punched out but ones without a card just left the ship
- They had to use a manual list to account for guests and crew on the pier
- The persons on the pier were eventually gathered as if they were at their muster stations – this took place after they sent the muster station leaders to the pier
- Time from fire announced to deployment of CO2 was about 15 minutes
- After the CO2 deployment – CE requested to turn off the forward engine room water mist total flooding – captain gave permission after a while when he was 100% sure the fire was out and no risk of re ignition
- Company policy is to keep running HF to keep cooling – no policy for CE to ask permission to make changes to HF
- Captain would expected a request for permission to reset HF – would never allow reset if he knew the fire was still going
- He knew the pressure was low with the HF
- Captain eventually gave permission to stop total flooding in the forward engine room eventually – did not monitor any change in pressure because the fire was well extinguished by about an hour
- When asked about the SMCS freezing – after the fact, he thinks the system froze because of too many alarms – it is an essential system but the main fire detection system is Autronica which worked fine – they were able to work with the other systems they have
- All fire alarms were still coming from Autronica – overwhelming amount of alarms – all HF indications are in Autronica
- Fire doors are indicated on SMCS – there is a mimic panel as well
- There was no information missing even though the SMCS was frozen
- Master stated his concern was not the spread of the fire around the ship, it was the spread of smoke that was his concern

### **Glossary:**

AC – air conditioning  
 CCTV – closed circuit television  
 CE – chief engineer  
 CO2 – carbon dioxide  
 DG – diesel generator  
 ECR – engine control room  
 EOW – engineer of the watch  
 ERP – Emergency response plan

HD – hotel director  
HF – hi fog  
LO – lube oil  
PA – public announcement  
QCV – quick closing valve  
QRT – quick response team  
SMCS – safety management control system  
WTD – water tight door