National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594
Office of Marine Safety

Interview Summary

Accident: Release of Oil from Pipeline 00547 (NTSB No. DCA22FM001)

Date: October 1, 2021, about 1600 PDT

Location: San Pedro Bay, near Long Beach, California, 33°38.97' N, 118°6.65' W

Person Interviewed: Captain Davide Langella, Master, Containership *MSC Danit*

Interview Conducted By: LCDR [redacted], US Coast Guard
LT [redacted], US Coast Guard
Mr. A. Ehlers, NTSB

Summary Provided By: Mr. A. Ehlers, NTSB

OVERVIEW

Captain Langella was interviewed on board the containership *MSC Danit* on October 16, 2021, while the vessel was at anchor in San Pedro Bay, near Long Beach, California. The interview was conducted in conjunction with the investigation into the October 1, 2021, accident involving the release of oil from a submerged 16-inch crude oil pipeline, designated pipeline 00547, in San Pedro Bay. Unless specifically delineated by quotes, the text that follows is not a verbatim record of the conversation. It has been developed from notes of the interview.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Captain Langella has worked as a mariner since 1996 and has been a master since 2006. He has worked as a master for the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) since 2017. His current contract began on March 23, 2021, when he relieved Captain Homen as master of the *MSC Danit*. He stated that Captain Homen had likely been aboard for 6 months when he turned over. Captain Langella's contract was for 6 months; however, due to COVID restrictions preventing him disembarking in ports other than Los Angeles/Long Beach, his contract has been extended. He is due to disembark when the vessel goes to a berth during this port call. When masters turnover command of a vessel, the off-going master will fill out a company form and may also provide other notes about the vessel and its operations to the on-coming master.

The *MSC Danit* currently has 4 officers on board. The chief mate stands the 0400-0800 and 1600-1900 watches, the 2nd mate stands the 1200-1600 and 0000-0400 watches, and the 3rd mate stands the 0800-1200 and 1900-2400 watches. The captain does not stand watch unless there is no 3rd mate aboard. If there is no 3rd mate, the captain stands the 0800-1200 and 1900-2400 watches. The captain was required to send reports to the company 3 times per day, at 0800, 1200, and 2000.

Captain Langella was asked to describe a typical anchoring evolution on the vessel. When the ship is in bound to the port, the vessel traffic service (VTS) provides a latitude and longitude for the anchoring position. Captain Langella stated that his preference is a location at least 1 mile from other ships at anchor; however, in San Pedro Bay the anchorages are closer, about 0.5 to 0.6 miles.

On approach to the anchoring position, the master decides what anchor to use, port or starboard, and how many shackles to pay out. Captain Langella stated that he preferred the port anchor, because the *MSC Danit* is a single screw vessel that experiences stern walk. When using the port anchor, the stern walk moves the bow away from the anchor drop location. Prior to dropping the anchor, the anchor is walked out

to near the waterline. Once at the anchorage location, the anchor is dropped freefall by releasing the brake, and the ship operates astern propulsion.

Once 2-3 shackles of chain are payed out, the brake is engaged to set the anchor. The anchor is then veered to 5-6 shackles and the crew checks whether the anchor is holding. Once they confirm that the anchor is holding, they may pay out more chain, up to 8 shackles in San Pedro Bay, depending on the depth and conditions.

The anchor in use and the number of shackles are logged in the bell book, as well as the anchor log book. Night orders are written in the deck log, which each officer must read and sign. Log books are replaced when all pages have been used, and they are kept on board for 2-3 years.

When anchored in other ports, the main engine is usually shut down (finished with engine [FWE]), but because of the close ranges between ships anchored in San Pedro Bay, the engine is kept in standby in this anchorage. This is not a company policy; it is the master's decision based on experience. With the engine in standby, it can be started within 5 minutes.

On the bridge, the crew keeps two radars on line, with one set to a range of 0.5 to 0.75 miles (the *MSC Danit* has 3 radars, two on the deckhouse and one on the bow; the radar mounted on the bow is normally off while at anchor). The master does not have ECDIS or ARPA displays in his cabin.

The mate on watch checks ECDIS often to ensure that the anchor is not dragging. An anchor drag circle—usually 0.3 miles in radius centered on the anchor drop point—is programmed into ECDIS by the mate, with the master's oversight. If the vessel moves outside the circle, an audible alarm will sound. If the mate notices that the anchor is dragging, he is to call the master and notify the engineering control room. The master then calls the bosun if the mate has not already done so. Captain Langella stated that if the anchor is dragging, he will immediately get under way. If the vessel needs to get under way, the windlass can heave in the anchor at a rate of 5 minutes per shackle.

Operational procedures are kept on the bridge and also contained in the safety management system (SMS).

Captain Langella was asked to describe the ways in which weather information is provided to the ship. Weather information is received via NAVTEX, Inmarsat-C, and via the internet-based ship performance optimization system (SPOS). SPOS also generates email weather reports. The frequency of SPOS reports can be selected by the master, and Captain Langella usually selects two per day. Mates have access to SPOS information on the bridge. Printouts from NAVTEX and Inmarsat-C may be retained on board or discarded after a period of time. When in port, information on weather or strong tides may also be provided by the agent by email or phone call. The vessel has one anemometer for measuring windspeed, which is a cup-type mounted on the mast.

Captain Langella was asked how the vessel prepares for predicted heavy weather when at an anchorage. He stated that the crew checks the lashings on the containers, and the vessel may pay out additional anchor chain, out to 8 or 9 shackles. He would not drop a second anchor. Depending on the severity of the weather, he may request permission from the company and VTS to leave the anchorage and drift in a safe location (he noted that in Chinese ports the vessel may drift as far as 40-50 miles out to sea to avoid congestion from fishing vessels). When asked, Captain Langella stated that he doesn't have specific high wind speeds or weather conditions for which a mate on watch must call him, but he expects to be called for worsening conditions.

Due to port congestion as a consequence of the COVID pandemic, the ship has had to anchor for 2 weeks in Los Angeles/Long Beach and 3 days in Ningbo and Shanghai, China, awaiting a berth in the port during each visit.

Captain Langella was asked if he was required to report an anchor dragging. He stated that, if there was an accident, near miss, or other concern, he would submit an "incident action form" to the company's main

office in Sorrento, Italy; the company's "crew department;" and the company's "technical department." He said that if an anchor dragging occurred, he would likely submit a report, but if the event occurred without incident and without concern, then no report was required. The incident action form is retained in both electronic and paper form. Reports are sent from the "radio computer" on the bridge (Captain Langella stated that there is a computer in his cabin, but he does not use it because it is "very old;" he only uses the radio computer).

In the event of an accident, the master would first call the designated person ashore (DPA), Captain Aniello Russo. He would then call the technical department and the crew department.

Captain Langella stated that the *MSC Danit*'s anchors were "good holding," and he never experienced an anchor dragging event while on the vessel.

Captain Langella was asked to describe the personal computers on board. In addition to the radio computer and the computer in his cabin, there were two computers for officers' use, and an AMOS computer used for maintenance planning, requisitions, and provisions.

Captain Langella was asked to describe training for cadets. Cadets usually come from sailing universities in Genoa or Trieste, Italy (previously they had come directly from the "nautical institute") and then conduct cadet voyages. A cadet voyage on a ship such as the *MSC Danit* is 6 months. Usually, the cadet stands watch with the chief mate, but if there is no 3rd mate on board and the captain is standing watch, the cadet will stand watch with the captain. The cadet may also spend time standing watch with the 3rd mate, if aboard, since this will be the cadet's next rank.

END SUMMARY

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A. Ehlers
Marine Accident Investigator