

Emails - Marina owner answers to NTSB IIC questions - 2

From: Tom Allen [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, August 12, 2024 5:08 PM
To: Michael Karr <michael.karr@ntsb.gov>
Cc: Noah Barrett [REDACTED] >
Subject: Re: Another NTSB Question

Michael:

No – I do not know exact since everything was destroyed and we did not think of getting an exact measurement, but I’m judging from photos in your report and others I’ve seen customers post of the remains of the fire, and I am fairly certain that the five foot mark is very close to accurate.

All new dispensers are 10 feet from edge of dock/water. And the top of the deck walking surface is 28 inches off the water, so I don’t know of any type of boat that would have a “duck-bill” or a stern overhang that is tall enough or long enough to hit a dispenser, unless the boat climbs up the dock or goes airborne.

Tom Allen | VP/GM | Sunset Marina & Resort

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From: Michael Karr <michael.karr@ntsb.gov>
Date: Monday, August 12, 2024 at 3:37 PM
To: Tom Allen <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Noah Barrett <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Another NTSB Question

Tom:

1. In the attached email, it reads: The set back on the dispensers in front of the marina store was approximately 5 feet away from the edge of the deck/water.
 - a. Do you know exactly how far it was from the edge of the deck to the front of the dispenser (or dispenser platform)?

Mike

Michael Karr

Senior Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
202-314-6148 o
202-302-3486 c

From: Tom Allen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, August 10, 2024 12:27 PM
To: Michael Karr <michael.karr@ntsb.gov>

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Cc: Noah Barrett <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Re: NTSB - More questions.

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Answers in RED below.

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From: Michael Karr <michael.karr@ntsb.gov>

Date: Friday, August 9, 2024 at 7:04 AM

To: Tom Allen <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Noah Barrett <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: NTSB - More questions.

Tom:

1. Follow up questions:

- a. From what you saw or heard from other people who saw the fire start; can you pinpoint the origin of the fire? If so, where was that in relation to the knocked down gas dispenser?

Was there a particular area/point the 50 feet of the dock covered with fuel spray where the fire began?

1. Or was there a ball of fire (Within a fraction of a second, the vapors ignited over a large area)?
 - a. Can you describe the size of the ball of fire and its location on the dock that people witnessed?

2. The report now reads, "...a fire began **at** the gas dispenser and spread to the marina store and three pontoon boats moored at the marina." Based on your answer, below, I am going to change "**at**" to "**in the vicinity of**".

I THINK THIS STATEMENT IS FACTUAL – IN SPEAKING WITH BRAD, THE MANAGER ON DUTY, HE FEELS STRONGLY THAT THE HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF FUEL AND VAPORS OCCURRED AT THE DISPENSER. WHEN I ARRIVED IN JUST MINUTES, THE ACTUAL FIRE WAS SMALL IN SIZE AND WAS LIMITED TO THE WOODEN DECK AROUND THE DISPENSER THAT WAS SHEARED OFF. I WAS 1,000 FEET UPLAND FROM THE MARINA AND HEARD THE EXPLOSION AND LOOKED AROUND AND THERE WAS A FIREBALL AND BLACK SMOKE THAT HAD RISEN TO 20-30 FEET ABOVE THE PEAK OF THE ROOF. THE BARE WIRES UNDER THE DISPENSER COULD HAVE BEEN THE IGNITION SOURCE, OR, AGAIN, THE SOURCE COULD HAVE BEEN 50 FEET AWAY, BUT THE HIGH CONCENTRATION OF FUEL AND VAPORS AROUND THE DISPENSER DEFINITELY CAUSED THE EXPLOSION AND FIREBALL AT THE DISPENSER. HAD WE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING OUR WATER PUMP /FIRE FIGHTING APPARATUS STARTED QUICKLY, THE FIRE WOULD HAVE BEEN EXTINGUISHED, BUT WITH A DEAD BATTERY AND TROUBLE PRIMING THE PUMP, THE FIRE QUICKLY SPREAD OUT OF CONTROL WITH THE HIGH WINDS FUELING THE SPREAD.

- a. I may add additional information to the report based on any answers to Questions in paragraph 1.

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3. FYI – I am revising the report based on the answers you provided below. Thanks for the quick response.

Mike

From: Tom Allen [REDACTED] >
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2024 5:33 PM
To: Michael Karr <michael.karr@ntsb.gov>
Cc: Noah Barrett [REDACTED] >
Subject: Re: NTSB - More questions.

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Michael:

Thanks for the update and I have answered your questions below in RED ink.

Tom Allen | VP/GM | Sunset Marina & Resort

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From: Michael Karr <michael.karr@ntsb.gov>
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 at 4:03 PM
To: Tom Allen <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Noah Barrett [REDACTED] >
Subject: NTSB - More questions.

Tom:

1. FYI - The report will be published on our website by 2 PM, Thursday, August 15, 2024. [Investigation Report \(ntsb.gov\)](https://www.ntsb.gov)
2. I need your assistance with two questions that came from our Office Director. He is the person approving the report.
 - a. What do the owners call the vessel? Does it have a name?

Mike Note: If you refer to the houseboat as the *Flagship 604*, we will use that in the report rather than *TN 0174 BD 219*.

We refer to the vessel as Flagship 604

- b. What **wires were still "hot"** to the dispenser or the area of the fuel leak after the manager shutdown the emergency stop to the fuel dispenser?

In the report, it reads: "The marina general manager noticed **exposed electrical wiring** at the dispenser and attempted to close the fuel shutoff valve."

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Comment from Office Director regarding the sentence in 2.b.i.:

1. "So, there are wires other than the ones to the pump out there? If so, lets add a sentence in factual as to the other wires, because report does not make clear how there is power still out there after manager hits the emergency stop.

The wires to the gas dispenser itself were exposed when the vessel sheared off the dispenser, not only ripping the fuel supply lines apart, but also, ripping the electrical conduit off of the lines that provide electric to the dispenser to turn the dispenser on/off. The lines that the Manager saw were directly under the dispenser where he reached to turn off valves that were under the dispenser and saw the conduit ripped apart and bare copper wires exposed. While this could have been an ignition source of the explosion, it could have also been anything within 50 feet of the damaged dispenser as gasoline was sprayed all over the front deck when the dispenser was sheared off. Fuel was sprayed over a live bait tank which contained a circulating pump, and fuel was sprayed onto multiple ICE freezers which contain compressors, so the ignition source is unknown, but our manager definitely saw the exposed copper wires under the damaged dispenser and with gasoline sprayed over him and the entire front deck, he thought the wires could ignite the gasoline, despite the fact that the emergency shut off should have killed power to the pumps.

Mike

Michael Karr

Senior Marine Accident Investigator

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