

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

ENGINE ROOM FIRE ABOARD THE
STATEN ISLAND FERRY *SANDY GROUND*
NEAR STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK
ON DECEMBER 22, 2022

Accident No.: DCA23FM010

* * * * *

Interview of: KIRRILLS SAMOILENKO, Marine Oiler
Staten Island Ferry

St. George Ferry Terminal
Staten Island, New York

Thursday,
January 26, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BRIAN YOUNG, Senior Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CWO [REDACTED] Accident Investigator
United States Coast Guard

BARRY TORREY, Director of Ferry Operations
Staten Island Ferry

ROBERT BANDEN, Warranty Engineer
Eastern Shipbuilding Group (ESG)

DANIEL J. FITZGERALD, Attorney
Freehill Hogan & Mahar, LLP
(On behalf of Staten Island Ferry and New York City
Department of Transportation)

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Kirrills Samoilenko:

By CWO [REDACTED]

5

By Mr. Young

14

I N T E R V I E W

(1:19 p.m.)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CWO ██████████ Good afternoon. This is Chief Warrant Officer

██████████ That's spelled ██████████.

Today's date is January 26. Time on deck is 1319.

And before we begin, do you agree that we record this interview?

MR. SAMOILENKO: Yes, of course.

CWO ██████████ All right. We will begin with introductions.

MR. FITZGERALD: Good afternoon. Dan Fitzgerald here with Freehill Hogan & Mahar on behalf of the party in interest New York City DOT, Staten Island Ferry. My last name is spelled F-i-t-z-g-e-r-a-l-d.

MR. BANDEN: Robert Banden, Eastern Shipbuilding, warranty engineer. Banden, B-a-n-d-e-n.

MR. SAMOILENKO: Kirrills Samoilenko. Last name is S-a-m-o-i-l-e-n-k-o. I'm an oiler for DOT.

CWO ██████████ And could you spell your first name for us?

MR. SAMOILENKO: Oh. It's K-i-r-r-i-l-l-s. Kirrills Samoilenko.

CWO ██████████ Thank you.

MR. TORREY: And I'm Barry Torrey, T-o-r-r-e-y, director of ferry operations for Staten Island Ferry.

MR. YOUNG: And good afternoon. This is Brian Young. I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board. Y-o-u-n-g.

1 CWO [REDACTED] All right. Thank you, everyone.

2 So we would like to go ahead and begin with the first
3 question.

4 INTERVIEW OF KIRRILLS SAMOILENKO

5 BY CWO [REDACTED]

6 Q. Could you describe your maritime background and experience?

7 A. So I went to Kingsborough Community College for just a
8 general introduction, for associate's degree from '08 -- actually
9 that's graduated -- from '06 to '08. Afterwards, I worked on --
10 in the city for East 23rd Street Skyport Marina as a deckhand,
11 general maintenance, crowd control and stuff, over there.
12 Afterwards, I worked on the party boats out of World's Fair Marina
13 and out of East 23rd Street, as well, for the Empire Cruises, and
14 afterwards for the Marco Polo Cruises. And over there, we had --
15 we did everything basically: start up the engines, checking oil,
16 general maintenance, as well as bartending, bar backing,
17 everything, and, of course, assisting the captain. And that's --
18 everything that's needed to be done, we did it basically.

19 Afterwards, I did three seasons on the Buchanan Marine tugs.
20 We were moving stone in New York Harbor from Greenville out to
21 Glenpointe upstate, and I also did Long Island Sound as well for
22 the gravel -- gravel, sand, we moved the barges back and forth.

23 I started working here in December 25th, 2019. So 3 years.
24 Been oiler ever since, so --

25 Q. Okay. And then just to verify, so you were hired as a marine

1 oiler?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Okay. What type of training have you received prior to
4 working on board the *Sandy Ground* or the *Ollis*?

5 A. Well, they did -- we had to sign the forms for every class of
6 the boat, where they went over each system in detail. We also had
7 to be present for a startup and shutdown for each class of the
8 boat and fueling as well. So general watchkeeping, I guess, for
9 each class while underway, while starting up, while shutting down.
10 And I think it was 2 weeks.

11 Q. So 2 weeks long of training --

12 A. For each class.

13 Q. For each class.

14 A. I think so. It's been 3 years. I don't recall. I'm sorry.
15 But I think it's 2 weeks for each class.

16 Q. Okay. And did that include underway trips as well?

17 A. Yes, sir. It was -- we did a couple of trips -- a couple of
18 days underway as well just alongside the crew.

19 Q. Okay. And have you worked on all the class vessels here, all
20 the class ferries?

21 A. Yes, sir. On some classes I haven't been -- I haven't worked
22 as often, such as night boat, I only worked twice since I've been
23 hired here.

24 Q. Between the *Sandy Ground* and the *Michael Ollis*, which vessel
25 would you say you have more time spent or experience on?

1 A. I want to say *Sandy Ground* because we -- our crew has been on
2 *Sandy Ground* longer than *Ollis*.

3 Q. Okay. In your training, did that include how to monitor and
4 level fuel?

5 A. Yes, sir. They went over it.

6 Q. Okay. And was there any training documents given to you or
7 provided to you?

8 A. Yes, they did. They had a general overview of different
9 equipment, starting up and shutting down, and they provided us
10 with a booklet, I guess, about 40 pages or so, just going over
11 different stuff.

12 Q. And this was your own copy, your own personal copy?

13 A. Yes. They provided it to everyone.

14 Q. I see. Upon completion of the training for the *Ollis Class*
15 did you feel that the training was adequate and you felt confident
16 to perform your duties as a marine oiler on board?

17 A. Honestly, for myself, I -- for myself, I need on different
18 classes, whatever boat I start on, it takes me about 2 months to
19 be comfortable, 2 to 3 months comfortable. But I see -- for
20 general information, I would I say, yes, it was adequate for
21 myself but it was some time before I became comfortable generally
22 with different systems and stuff.

23 Q. And how about now? Do you feel confident in your ability to
24 perform your duties as a marine oiler?

25 A. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

1 Q. All right. Could you please describe your duties and
2 responsibilities as a marine oiler, such as a typical day what you
3 do?

4 A. So, okay, I'm just going to walk you through. I come in, I
5 change. I check the bilge, the slop. I check -- walk around,
6 check the oil levels in the engines to make sure they're between
7 high and low -- better high. So make sure there's adequate
8 lubrication, adequate cooling liquid in the expansion tanks. Make
9 sure all the air compressors are on and air bottles are topped up
10 for the starting, for the starting and for the ship's air. Make
11 sure the generator has enough cooling liquid and oil. Make sure
12 all the valves that need to be open are open, say, sea chests for
13 the main suction and for the auxiliary suction sea chest as well.
14 Let's see. Check the void levels, lube oil, and make sure void
15 levels are getting adequate cooling as well. What else? Making
16 sure there is nothing leaking and making sure there is adequate
17 insulation as well.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So I just walk around and make sure nothing smells funny or
20 anything leaking. So --

21 Q. You mentioned checking valves. Does that include fuel --

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. -- transfer valves as well?

24 A. Fuel and seawater.

25 Q. Okay. What are you looking for with the fuel valves?

1 A. Fuel valves. So on this system the purifier is on the Staten
2 Island end and all the fuel from the purifier, it's going to that
3 tank. So you have to balance it out, and because all the returns
4 from the main engines as well, they go to the Staten Island end.
5 So on Staten Island end we usually throttle down, otherwise it's
6 going to be uneven. Staten Island will fill up faster than New
7 York end.

8 And so you check for supply from the day tank -- from the
9 service -- from the storage tanks to the purifier, make sure
10 that's open. You check the supplies from the service tanks to the
11 main fuel feeding for the equipment are open all the way, and you
12 check the returns. Returns New York end is usually wide open,
13 Staten Island end is usually halfway closed. And you check the
14 crossovers from the supplies and from the returns ones as well.

15 Q. Okay. And just to verify, when you're talking about the
16 return valves, are these valves -- are these ball valves?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. You mentioned returns go back to the Staten Island
19 end?

20 A. Most of them do. Most of them do. So I would think because
21 it's closer to the generators and closer to the boilers, return
22 tend to favor the Staten Island end.

23 Q. I see. As far as the flow?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. The flow --

1 A. Yes, sir, as far as the flow.

2 Q. Of the return. Okay.

3 A. You can isolate each side, again, with the crossover, but we
4 usually keep it open. Crossover is usually in the middle between
5 the engines and the generators right here.

6 Q. Well, would that be like a -- would that be like cross-
7 connect valves, you mean, that would --

8 A. It's a valve basically that splits it in two.

9 Q. I see.

10 A. Splits the main pipe, the main return pipe in two.

11 Q. Okay. You mentioned Staten Island end halfway closed. Do
12 you mean the return valve?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay. And then the New York end, that would be --

15 A. It's fully open.

16 Q. Fully open. Okay. And was that part of your training in
17 regards to the -- those valves?

18 A. It was different. They changed the procedure. Because when
19 we first got the boat, when they started training us, they didn't
20 have the return valves on the pipes so basically return valves
21 were open all the way. So I think what we did was the supplies
22 from the service tanks were open but the fill tanks from the --
23 the fill on the Staten Island side from the purifier, it was
24 halfway closed to the service tank, from the purifier to the
25 service tank. And from the -- on the New York side from the

1 supply from the service tank to the main fuel manifold, it was
2 barely open. So what you did was you were taking from Staten
3 Island side into the main manifold and it can take just a, say,
4 one-fifth of the service tank from the New York side into the
5 manifold, so -- to the keep the balance. But once they put the
6 valves in, they changed the procedure so we were just adjusting
7 the return valves and that's it.

8 Q. I see. Are the engine supply valves adjusted at all?

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. No. So just the return?

11 A. Just the return.

12 Q. I see. In regards to the operation of, you know, the whole
13 fuel monitoring and leveling process there, is it just one marine
14 oiler or two marine oilers that do the --

15 A. Usually one, but I let my partner know just -- if I adjust
16 something. So if he's in the control room, he can actually glance
17 at it, because the chief likes to keep the tank levels on the
18 screen. So you can actually see the levels they are right now.

19 Q. And that's how you're monitoring the levels?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. Is there any other means to monitor?

22 A. There is a sight glass with a magnetic bulb.

23 Q. I see.

24 A. But it's not marked. So you see there is something in there,
25 it's just not marked.

1 Q. I see. Well, would you say that the means that you have to
2 monitor levels are accurate?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Okay. How about any day tank alarms, like high or low fuel?

5 A. They are present, high and low. Yeah.

6 Q. Have you experienced or seen any of those alarms?

7 A. In the beginning, honestly, in the beginning when we first
8 got the boat, we had plenty of alarms. Some of them are false.
9 Because obviously a boat needs time to work properly, obviously.
10 But over time, they went away. And we -- we're pretty decent at
11 gauging what kind of -- what amount is it in the tanks.

12 Q. Would you say the process or the procedure for the fuel
13 monitoring leveling is the same as other vessels that you've
14 worked on or is it different on the *Sandy Ground* or the *Ollis*?

15 A. The *Sandy Ground* and *Ollis* are pretty much the same. Yeah,
16 they're pretty much the same. On Molinari Class we also adjust
17 the returns, just to keep the tanks level because they are on one
18 side and if you leave them out of whack, basically the boat's
19 going to list. So it's not like *Ollis* where the tanks are on
20 opposite sides. So --

21 Q. Okay. Have you had any issues with the labeling of the
22 tanks? As you mentioned, they're on both -- they're on one on
23 each side.

24 A. There are -- it's my personal opinion, but it's -- over here
25 on the ferry we like to do Staten Island side, New York side. On

1 the computer it's port and starboard.

2 Q. Okay. And are you confused at all with that?

3 A. No. It's just -- it's -- it would save some time, I guess.

4 But that's just a personal preference.

5 Q. So no issues with your orientation and what you know on
6 board, you think that --

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. And do you feel that in general the engine room is
9 adequate as far as lighting and the space for you to operate the
10 fuel manifold and --

11 A. Of course. It's big. It's really big. It's like a freaking
12 ballroom.

13 Q. Okay. Do you know what would happen to the engines that are
14 running if both fuel oil day tank supply valves were closed?

15 A. Well, whatever left in the line would actually run out pretty
16 fast because they're big engines, and they would just stall.
17 That's it. Run out of fuel. And the generator as well because
18 it's drawing from the same line. Generator, boiler, everything.

19 Q. How about if it was the fuel oil day tank return valves were
20 closed?

21 A. Well, I would guess the gaskets would go. They would build
22 up pressure and the weakest point -- whatever's weaker it would --
23 either the weld in the pipe or gaskets. But I would think the
24 rubber gaskets would go in the spin-on filters first.

25 Q. I see. Do you know what may have caused the fire on the

1 *Sandy Ground*?

2 A. Honestly, I don't. It could be anything. You never know.

3 CWO [REDACTED] All right. At this time I'd like to open up
4 questions to the room.

5 BY MR. YOUNG:

6 Q. Good afternoon. Thank you for your time today. I appreciate
7 answering our questions. Just to go back. Prior to the *Sandy*
8 *Ground* and the *Ollis* having return ball valves installed, how were
9 you controlling the fuel level in the tanks?

10 A. So prior to that, we adjusted the amount of fuel taking from
11 the tanks. And basically each service tank has a supply and a
12 return valve on the service tank itself. So the return valves
13 were side open because no return valves, obviously. So we
14 adjusted it by regulating the supply from the service tank into
15 the main fuel manifold. That was the procedure before. So, say,
16 you have Staten Island side wide open and you have the New York
17 side barely open, that way Staten Island side, like I said, it
18 fills up faster and the New York side would drop slower so it
19 would sort of keep on balance. That would be the main thing.

20 Q. Understood. Sounds good. And on the *Sandy Ground* or the
21 *Ollis*, what is the goal? Like what level are you trying to keep
22 in the day tanks?

23 A. So we usually go -- we try to roughly go about 2,000 gallons
24 in each tank. So it could be like 1900 or 2,100. So we keep the,
25 like 2,000 gallons. That's for us and it's for the morning guys

1 as well because they got to clean the purifier in the morning and
2 when they start the engine -- I don't know when they do it, when
3 they start the engines or if they don't start the engines, if they
4 do it beforehand. So basically the goal is to have enough fuel
5 for operation. And I think we can run a couple of days on the day
6 tank alone, like on those 2,000 if needed be. But -- yeah.

7 Q. And how about, what sort of a difference do you start getting
8 concerned about? How many gallons difference do you start to get
9 concerned?

10 A. Well, I want to say maybe 300, 350. That's -- again, over
11 here on this class, it doesn't really matter because the boat --
12 the tanks are from different sides. On the Molinari Class it was
13 like on the same side and you -- it was sort of like a ballast
14 tank. On the Molinari Class if the gallons -- the difference was
15 like 3-, 400 gallons between the day tanks, you can actually feel
16 the list a bit. And -- yeah.

17 Q. What would happen if the day tanks got too high, you're
18 returning too much fuel into the day tank and it continued to
19 rise? Would there be a problem if it went too high?

20 A. It's overflowing into the storage tank so it wouldn't
21 really -- it would just sound a high level alarm. It would sound
22 high alarm and it would just return to the tank. In that case, we
23 just shut off the purifier and just let it drain a bit. That's --
24 that would be it.

25 Q. Okay. And you said typically because of the way it's set up

1 with the piping arrangement or the proximity to the engines and
2 the generators that the Staten Island end seems to have to be
3 closed in a little on the return valve to kind of keep level.

4 Have you ever had to close in on the return on the New York side?

5 A. Sometimes that happens as well. Sometimes. But again, you
6 just eyeball it based on the screen itself. But very rarely. I
7 would -- I don't even know what happens, why that happens, but
8 sometimes it does. So --

9 Q. Just if you saw a situation where the level --

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. -- requires it, but it's rare?

12 A. It's rare.

13 Q. But have you have done it. And prior -- well, I guess at any
14 time, do you ever have to close the supply valve completely to try
15 to draw all the fuel from one tank as opposed to the other?

16 A. No. They stopped doing that. They stopped asking us to
17 close the supplies because of the returns. So we just play with
18 the returns a bit. We can -- I would say if that happens, we just
19 off the return most of the way. We don't -- I don't ever close it
20 all the way. I just make sure there is something going through.

21 Q. Understood. Thank you very much for your time today.

22 A. (Indiscernible), thanks.

23 CWO [REDACTED] All right. Is there any questions, anyone
24 else?

25 So I just wanted to ask one final thing, if I had any follow-

1 up questions, do you agree that I can contact you at a later time?

2 MR. SAMOILENKO: Yes, sir. Of course.

3 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. And do you have any final remarks or
4 anything you would like to add to the interview?

5 MR. SAMOILENKO: Nothing comes to mind. Sorry.

6 CWO [REDACTED] All right. Well, this concludes our
7 interview. Time on deck is 1339.

8 (Whereupon, at 1:39 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: ENGINE ROOM FIRE ABOARD THE
 STATEN ISLAND FERRY *SANDY GROUND* NEAR
 STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK
 ON DECEMBER 22, 2022
 Interview of Kirrills Samoilenko

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM010

PLACE: Staten Island, New York

DATE: January 26, 2023

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

Kay M 
Transcriber

Interview Errata
 Sandy Ground DCA23FM010
 Interview of: Kirills Samoilenko
 Position: Masine Oiler

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
5	21	Gleapointe	Clinton point
14	13	side	wide
16	19	— off	closed off

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEED. _____
Initials

Kirills Samoilenko
Printed Name of Person providing the above information

Signature of Person providing the above information

5/5/23
Date