



U.S. COAST GUARD WITNESS STATEMENT FORM

(Please Print Clearly)

Witness Name: LT [redacted] Employer Name: United States Coast Guard
Street Address: [redacted] Employer Address: [redacted]
City/State/Zip: [redacted] City/State/Zip: [redacted]
Phone No: [redacted] Phone No: [redacted]
Position: Investigation Officer License/Doc. #: N/A.

I, the undersigned, make the following statement voluntarily, without threat, duress or promise of reward:

I conducted a telephone interview with Scott F. Vieages (M. M. C. Reference #2020525). Mr. Vieages is the Chief Engineer (C/E) on the passenger vessel NATCHEZ (U. S. flag, O. N. #563612). In addition to being the C/E on the NATCHEZ, he also assisted in the shipyard with building the vessel when the keel was laid down.

Mr. Vieages was asked who conducted electrical work on the generator compartment. His reply was that it was Bluewater Electric, and that Bluewater was responsible for removing the switchboard [switchgear] in the generator compartment. He stated that "Robbie" specifically was responsible for removing the switchboard.

Mr. Vieages stated that he did not get involved with the Dixie Marine was contracted to conduct on the vessel.

Mr. Vieages stated that on 03 MAY he had spent time on the dock assisting with the fabrication of a canopy top for the NATCHEZ.

Mr. Vieages was asked when did the hot work begin in the generator compartment. Mr. Vieages recalled that it began approximately on 02 MAY 2022.

Mr. Vieages was acknowledged to having transited past the generator compartment as the hot work was going on, but did not want get involved with the workers conducting the hot work.

Mr. Vieages did observe a worker using a torch in the overhead of the compartment and observed sparks falling from the hot work operation. Mr. Vieages stated he was concerned about those sparks landing on the "old Cummins generator." Mr. Vieages stated he had yelled at the worker using the torch, and instructed on of his fellow employees [not Dixie Marine] to place a section of metal/wooden panel against the generator to shield it from falling sparks.

Mr. Vieages stated he saw two Dixie Marine workers conducting hot work. One worker was using the torch, while the other worker was standing there. Mr. Vieages was not sure which worker was designated for the fire watch.

Mr. Vieages did recall that there was a "charged garden hose" available for the Dixie Marine employees, as well, as an unspecified number of dry chemical fire extinguishers near the entry-way between the engine room and the generator room.

Mr. Vieages was asked to describe the combustible products in the generator room. Mr. Vieages described that there were cardboard boxes stowed near the port forward and port aft corners of the

generator room. In addition, there were new generator filters as well. The items stowed on approximately three to four wooden shelves.

I have read my statement as documented above (and, if applicable, on continuation pages), and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true and correct.

Mr. Vieages described that before this current lay-up period, the NATCHEZ was moored at Toulouse Street. He stated that dock "Dock Board" property. Mr. Vieages recalled that "small" hot work projects were conducted at that dock, but by NATCHEZ personnel. Mr. Vieages recalled that he was told that before conducting hot work he had to contact the Harbor Police so that a hot work permit could be issued for the hot work that was to be conducted.

Mr. Vieages was asked, when would the NATCHEZ allow Dixie Marine to do the vessel's hot work projects. Mr. Vieages stated when it was a "large" project.

Mr. Vieages was asked, why the NATCHEZ does not conduct their own large hot work projects, and he acknowledged that the lay-up period would extend out beyond what would be deemed acceptable.

Mr. Vieages was asked if he was aware if Dixie Marine had received a hot work permit from the Harbor Police. Mr. Vieages was not aware if Dixie Marine had received a hot work permit, or had not received a hot work permit.

Mr. Vieages was asked to recall if he had observed anything unusual during the electrical phase of the generator compartment work. Mr. Vieages replied that he had not, and that Bluewater Electric had "done pretty good work for a while."

//S//LT [REDACTED], U.S.C.G.
SIGNATURE

03 OCT 2022
DATE