



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 at 1000 (CST) on 09 SEP 2022 with Mr. Craig Morvant of Southern Diesel. Mr. Morvant can be reached at [redacted], or at [redacted]. In addition, I also had Mr. David Flaherty, the NTSB Investigator assigned to the NATCHEZ Generator Compartment fire on the telephone as well.

Mr. Morvant has been working around diesel engines since the 1970s. He had worked with Cummins approximately from 1974-1975, and eventually went into business for himself as a diesel mechanic. Mr. Morvant does not hold any specific professional certifications as a diesel mechanic, but has developed his professional competence through on the job training.

Mr. Morvant has worked on the NATCHEZ. He helped install the old Cummins generators in the vessel in 1999.

On 03 MAY, Mr. Morvant was working in the generator compartment. He was mounting brackets, fitting fuel lines, oil lines and water lines for the new Caterpillar generator (located along the starboard side of the generator compartment). He arrived at approximately 1000 on 03 MAY.

Mr. Morvant was going in/out of the generator compartment to the aft end of the engine room. A drill press, refrigerator and chair were located in the after section of the engine room. The drill press and refrigerator shared one extension cord, which could be plugged either into the drill press or into the refrigerator. The power came from a "spider box."

On 03 MAY, Mr. Morvant recalled the hot work stopping at approximately 1600. He recalled "Shorty" remained behind to stand fire watch in the generator compartment.

Mr. Morvant could not recall when "Shorty" departed for the day.

Mr. Morvant recalled observing "Shorty" sitting in the chair in the after section of the engine room after the hot work was completed. He recalled "Shorty" laughing and watching a video on his telephone. Mr. Morvant could not recall how long "Shorty" was in the after section of the engine room.

Mr. Morvant could not recall the type of fire prevention equipment that was available for the hot work/fire watch. Mr. Morvant assumed that the fire watch had had a water hose. However, he did recall observing the CO2 cylinder [the CO2 system was not operable].

When he was working in the generator compartment, Mr. Morvant was working near the forward bulkhead near the starboard side of the compartment [this is where the new generator was being installed].

Mr. Morvant did not recall observing any post hot work unusual environmental conditions, or smoke in the generator compartment after the hot work was completed. He did state that the “smell” of hot work was in the generator compartment throughout 03 MAY.

Mr. Morvant did recalled seeing suspended lights in the overhead, but did not recall seeing any additional lights in the generator compartment.

Mr. Morvant stated historically that filters for the generators were stored along the shelving in the port aft corner of the generator compartment. He also acknowledged that filters must have been also been stored in the forward port corner of the compartment as well. Mr. Morvant based this information on observing the remnants of filters and the shelves in the forward starboard corner of the compartment after the 03 MAY fire.

Mr. Morvant recalled departing the generator compartment at approximately 1800 after picking up his tools. He then went to the forward compartment on the ship [where the Security Watchstander was based] to make sure “Jeff” was still on the vessel. He did this, because Mr. Morvant did not recall seeing Jeff came back by the generator compartment. Mr. Morvant told Jeff he was leaving, and Jeff offered Mr. Morvant a bottle of water. Mr. Morvant recalled that Jeff had told him, he had observed Mr. Morvant working in the generator compartment he [Mr. Morvant] had not seen him.

Mr. Morvant recalled departing the NATCHEZ and the Port of New Orleans party at 1830. He specifically recalled the time, because he had placed a telephone call on his cellular telephone.

Mr. Morvant stated he did not smoke.

Mr. Morvant was not aware of a city/port hot work policy requirements.

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.

//S//LT [REDACTED], USCG
SIGNATURE

09 SEP 2022
DATE