

Tanker Master’s Fatigue Cited in \$73 Million Marine Accident

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A tanker operating company’s decision to change masters without a handover period led to a \$72.9 million marine accident off the coast of Louisiana, according to a National Transportation Safety Board Marine Accident Brief issued Tuesday.

[Marine Accident Brief 21/24](#) details the NTSB’s [investigation](#) of the October 17, 2020 accident, in which the tanker Atina struck the oil and gas production platform SP-57B near Pilottown, Louisiana.

The Atina, with a crew of 21, was attempting to anchor in the Southwest Pass Fairway Anchorage in the Gulf of Mexico when it struck platform SP-57B. The platform’s four crewmembers and one technician evacuated to a nearby platform by helicopter after activating the emergency shutdown device to shut in wells to the SP-57B platform.



No pollution or injuries were reported. Estimated damages to the platform (\$72.3 million) and ship (\$598,400) totaled \$72.9 million.



The Atina is pictured postaccident on the left and the SP-57B platform is pictured preaccident on the right. Sources: The U.S. Coast Guard (left) and Cox Operating (right). Credit: NTSB

In its report, the NTSB says the company did not comply with its own safety management system (SMS) in the lead up to the accident.

Atina's master at the time of the accident boarded the underway vessel outbound to the anchorage, only seeing the departing master on the tanker's deck. The company placed the accident master into critical vessel evolutions, such as navigating downriver and anchoring at night, without any overlap with the departing master. The company's SMS required a minimum one-day turnover between senior personnel aboard a company vessel if the oncoming senior person worked for the company, and seven days if the senior person was new to the company.

According to the report, the accident master told investigators he wanted to anchor the ship as soon as possible because he was tired. The accident master traveled from Turkey to join the vessel and told investigators he had no sleep for over 50 hours while traveling. The location he chose did not follow the passage plan anchoring location. According to Atina's passage plan, the tanker's intended anchorage was about 3.2 miles northeast of SP-57B. The actual anchoring location was about .7 miles from platform SP-57B.


attempted nighttime anchoring evolution.

“Vessel operating companies should ensure that joining crewmembers/personnel are given the opportunity to obtain a sufficient handover period and adequate rest before taking over critical shipboard duties, such as navigation, that could impact the safety of crew, property, and the environment,” the report said. In this case, “an overlap would have allowed for the incoming master to rest and receive his counterpart’s handover information.”

[Marine Accident Brief 21/24](https://go.usa.gov/xenm8) is available online at <https://go.usa.gov/xenm8>.

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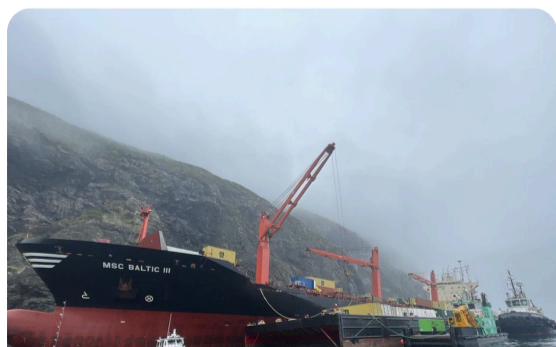


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