



**ASSESSMENT OF THE RESPONSE FROM THE LAURENTIAN PILOTAGE
AUTHORITY, THE DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS, AND
TRANSPORT CANADA
TO MARINE SAFETY RECOMMENDATION M03-03**

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Background

On 09 November 1999, the loaded bulk carrier *Alcor* was upbound in the St. Lawrence River to Trois-Rivières, Quebec, under the conduct of a pilot. While undertaking a course alteration, the vessel ran aground. Immediately after the grounding, the master contacted the owners of the vessel to consult about tugs. One tug was ordered one and a half hours after the grounding, and it arrived on scene about three and a half hours later. By that time, after high tide, one tug was found to be insufficient. The pilot decided to remain on board and assist.

Some 28 hours after the grounding, a salvage effort was made with four tugs. The vessel was moved 2.8 cables from its grounded position but grounded a second time on the falling tide. Some 31 hours after the initial grounding, the pilot requested a relief. In the early hours of the following day, the hull of the vessel failed.

A second salvage company was selected and extensive temporary repairs were made to the hull for a second refloating attempt. On 05 December 1999, the vessel was refloated. However, the vessel narrowly averted a third grounding as the salvage/navigation team did not fully appreciate the effect of the current on the vessel and the progress of the vessel was not closely monitored.

While refloating attempts were under way on board the *Alcor*, an upbound vessel was contacted by Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and informed that VTS would likely ask the vessel to slow down and to not enter the section of the river to be temporarily closed. The pilot of the upbound vessel contacted the pilots of the *Alcor* for more information and was told that the *Alcor* would be in the channel in about an hour's time. The pilot of the upbound vessel then informed VTS that he would be continuing at full speed in order to pass the *Alcor* before its entry into the channel. Transport Canada (TC) and Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) officials on board the *Alcor* later became aware that the upbound vessel had been allowed to transit and requested that the channel be closed. VTS closed the channel to navigation and the upbound vessel was stopped and anchored.

As the escorted *Alcor* later cleared the area of the channel closed to navigation, the tanker *Eternity* was already under way. The navigation teams of each vessel at anchor made a decision to depart in isolation and commenced weighing anchor. During this time, a near-collision occurred between the tanker *Eternity*, under way, and the container ship *Canmar Pride*, weighing anchor.



Board Recommendation M03-03

Emergency response management structures and risk-based decision-making models are used in response to specific marine emergency situations that do not include response to navigation-related emergencies. Further, noting the complementary mandates of TC and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)/CCG to foster the safety of vessels and to protect the marine environment, and acknowledging the important role of pilotage authorities in providing valuable information on the operation of ships in pilotage waters, the Board believed that a planned and coordinated approach is necessary to deal with navigation-related emergencies in Canadian waters while supporting the vessel owners' efforts to deal with an occurrence. The Board, therefore, recommended that:

The Department of Transport, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Canadian pilotage authorities, in consultation with marine interests, develop, implement, and exercise contingency plans to ensure that risks associated with navigation-related emergencies are adequately addressed.

M03-03

Response to M03-03

In its 04 February 2004 letter, the Laurentian Pilotage Authority (LPA) provided the following comments:

- The LPA has already taken the necessary arrangements to avoid such incidents and takes note of the report's recommendation.
- The LPA intends to participate with the other stakeholders through a working group to address the recommendations.

In its 16 April 2004 letter, TC provided the following comments:

- TC Marine Safety regional offices are working with the four Canadian pilotage authorities and CCG regional offices to review the TSB report. TC has requested each region, through a working group, to develop an action plan that meets the intent of the recommendation. The working group, consisting of all stakeholders, will examine how to improve the coordination, communication and emergency response as suggested in the TSB recommendation.
- TC and the CCG Quebec regional offices have developed a process by which initial response teams can be quickly identified to address navigation-related emergencies such as groundings. Similar arrangements could be implemented nationwide if not already in place in other regions.
- TC is monitoring the regional pilotage risk assessments conducted by the pilotage authorities with a view to potentially modifying the pilotage regulations in areas where significant changes to pilotage practices or regulations are required to provide safe and efficient pilotage services.

In its 28 April 2004 letter, the DFO provided the following comments:

- In early 2002, shortly after the initial TSB findings had been released to the DFO, an interdepartmental committee—the Transport Canada Marine Safety (TCMS)—Department of Fisheries and Oceans/Canadian Coast Guard (DFO/CCG) task force on improving emergency response management—was formed. The main areas for improvement identified at that time were coordination among the players, review of the Alerting and Warning Network, and development of a common risk analysis method.
- A progress report on the Alerting and Warning Network was submitted to the committee in early February 2004. Protocols are being established and the appropriate agencies consulted for the needs review.
- The CCG is developing a common risk analysis methodology and is working with TC to prepare its risk analysis methods. Once TC has completed its work, the departments will work together to develop a common approach.
- The LPA and the corporation of pilots will be invited to join the task force once the Alerting and Warning Network review and the development of a risk analysis method have advanced to the point where they can participate in them.
- Exercises involving players such as the LPA are part of the action plans for 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. Meetings between the CCG and the LPA are being planned for this spring, and the LPA will be brought up to date with the work being done within the CCG.

Board Assessment of Response to M03-03

Follow-up information received from TC and DFO/CCG indicates that, other than what is ongoing in DFO/CCG's Laurentian Region, there is no other regional coordinated effort among the parties to address the recommendation. TC indicated that its regions have been requested to review the local contingency plan and to prepare an action plan to meet the intent of Recommendation M03-03; however, there is no information to suggest that this review is being coordinated with other stakeholders. The CCG has indicated that it has taken action only in the Laurentian Region. With respect to this recommendation, it is being handled by that DFO/CCG region, and DFO/CCG Headquarters staff will wait for and share that region's "lessons learned" with the other regions for their use as required. However, information being gathered as a result of ongoing investigations into the grounding of the bulk carrier *Yong Kang* (M03L0148), near Québec, Quebec, and the grounding of container vessel *Horizon* (M04L0092), near Sorel, Quebec, suggests that there may continue to be inadequacies in the preparedness and the coordination of the responses by TC and DFO/CCG.

Follow-up information from DFO/CCG Laurentian Region indicates that the ongoing work has so far only involved the TCMS regional branch. It is intended to expand participation and there has been discussion with the LPA to explain the ongoing work. It is also planned to invite them to participate later on. Procedures have been implemented to promote cooperation between TC and DFO/CCG.

A meeting of the Laurentian Region TC–DFO/CCG committee is planned, and subcommittees on risk assessment and on the updating of the warning system will present their respective recommendations for the next steps of the project. This is the stage at which it is expected that the LPA and the Port of Montréal, which has already expressed an interest in participating in an exercise that involves issues similar to the ones in the grounding of the *Alcor*, may be asked to participate.

With respect to the identification of substandard vessels, vessels coming to Canada are required to report to VTS in advance of their arrival in Canadian waters. Information, including deficiencies, reported by those vessels to VTS is entered into the Information System on Marine Navigation (INNAV). Any vessel flagged by INNAV as a ship of particular interest (or where there is a notation that an authority be contacted) is reported by VTS to the appropriate authority. Furthermore, TC is transferring its Port State Control (PSC) database to a web-based application. Such a change will allow “read access” only to other federal departments (for example, the Canadian Coast Guard). Presently, the Canadian data of the PSC database are available on the Internet. Vessel queries can be made and the results of the PSC inspections can be viewed.

TC and DFO/CCG are taking measures in the Laurentian Region to identify improvements relating to alerting of the various players, including the pilotage authority, and exercises are being proposed for testing the coordination and management of responses to navigation-related incidents. However, other than the development of a web-based application to permit access to TC’s PSC database, which will allow marine traffic regulators to readily identify vessels with known deficiencies, there is no indication of a coordinated approach being taken in other parts of the country to address the recommendation. Therefore, the responses of TC, DFO/CCG, and the LPA are considered to be, in the aggregate, **Satisfactory in Part**.

Next TSB Action: M03-03

TSB staff will monitor the progress of measures taken to improve coordination and management of responses to navigation-related occurrences and will advise of any significant change accordingly. This deficiency file is assigned an **Active** status.