



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of Marine Safety

Interview Summary

Accident: Fire aboard Dive Vessel *Conception* (NTSB No. DCA19MM047)

Date: September 2, 2019 at 0314 PDT

Location: Platts Harbor, Pacific Ocean near Santa Cruz Island, California, 34°02.99' N, 119°44.10' W

Person Interviewed: Mr. S. Hamilton, former first galleyman on dive boat *Truth*

Interview Conducted By: Mr. A. Ehlers, NTSB
Mr. R. Jones, NTSB

Summary Provided By: Mr. A. Ehlers, NTSB

OVERVIEW

Mr. Hamilton was interviewed via telephone on September 6, 2019, in conjunction with the investigation into the September 2 accident involving the dive boat *Conception*, which caught fire and eventually sank while it was anchored in Platts Harbor off Santa Cruz Island, California. Unless specifically delineated by quotes, the text that follows is not a verbatim record of the conversation. It has been developed from a recording of the interview.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Mr. Hamilton provided an overview of his background and experience. He has a hotel/restaurant degree and background, working for large hospitality companies. He is familiar with restaurant training and procedures.

Mr. Hamilton worked on the dive vessel *Truth* in the June timeframe. He made two trips on the vessel, both overnight.

He applied for the position and was invited to conduct a ride-along on the vessel. He worked during the ride-along but was not paid – the purpose of the ride-along was to see if he liked the job. He paid for his own drug test as part of hiring process. He was hired by “Inga,” who was the marketing manager—there was no manager for employees.

No safety training was conducted when he was hired and placed on a vessel. He stated that “they kinda just throw you in there.” He “really liked the owner,” but the training could be better for the whole organization, even if it wasn’t improper. There were no food safety practices, and the vessel was not inspected by health inspector.

The vessel had electric ovens.

Mr. Hamilton described the spaces on the vessel as “confined.” He stated that he did not know where the exits were and was not shown what to do in case of fire, flooding, etc.

Passengers and crew signed in on a log when boarding the vessel. He did not know if the personnel log was transferred ashore when the vessel got underway.

On the first trip, he berthed near the ladder in the bunk room; on the second trip, he slept near the middle.

He stated that the owner was open to suggestions from crew.

He remembered that lithium batteries for underwater cameras, lights, and cell phones were being charged in the galley eating area. When asked, he did not remember any power strips.

END SUMMARY



A. Ehlers
Marine Accident Investigator