

**RECORD OF INTERVIEW WITH
PETER JOHANSEN-SR. DIRECTOR OF MARINE OPERATIONS
NY WATERWAY
DATED NOVEMBER 21, 2000**

4 PAGES TOTAL (INCLUDING COVER)



**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

Record of Interview

Date: November 21, 2000

Place: New York Waterway Maintenance Facility
Port Imperial
Weehawken, New Jersey 07087-7142

Person Interviewed: Mr. Peter Johansen
Senior Director of Marine Operations
New York Waterways

Interview Conducted By: Donald J. Tyrrell,
Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

INTRODUCTION

I interviewed Mr. Johansen in conjunction with the NTSB investigation of the November 17, 2000, fire on board the U.S. Passenger Ferry *Port Imperial Manhattan*. The text that follows is not a verbatim record of my conversation with Mr. Johansen. It has been developed from my handwritten notes of my conversation and is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and recollection.

INTERVIEW

As the Senior Director of Marine Operations Mr. Johansen is responsible for maintaining the New York Waterways' passenger ferry services on all of its various routes. The company operates a fleet of 23 passenger ferries which operate in commuter service to and from the Island of Manhattan. In February 2001, the company expects to receive delivery of its 24th passenger ferry, which is currently under construction by Allan Marine in Sitka, Alaska. All 23 (soon to be 24) vessel are less than 100 gross tons and are regulated under the requirements of 46 CFR Subchapter T. The vessels generally are operated by a master with a 100-ton license and two deckhands. If a vessel carries 300 or more passengers, the vessel must carry one additional deckhand by Coast Guard requirement.

Mr. Johansen said that New York Waterways ferries carry approximately 7 million passengers per year, mainly in commuter service, that the vessels are also used in the tour business during non-commuting hours. In the course of his duties, Mr Johansen is responsible for the maintenance and repair of vessels, the hiring and

training of marine personnel, and for the monitoring of on-time performance of the ferries.

Mr. Johansen stated that in the past, the company has sought job applicants for deckhands through job fairs. He said that the company did not require that newly hired deckhands have any previous sea going experience. Mr. Johansen said that the company sought to hire licensed masters by advertising in local newspapers in the Jersey Shore area, an area known to have an abundance of people with 100-ton licenses. Mr. Johansen said that many of their vessel masters has previous sea-going experience as commercial fishing vessel masters working out of the Jersey Shore area. Recently, Mr. Johansen said, there have been two changes in the way that the company conducts its hiring of marine crews:

- First, the company has entered into a contract with the Seafarers International Union (SIU). As a result, all future hiring will go through the SIU hiring hall.
- Second, the company has instituted a training program for newly hired deckhands. Under an agreement with the SIU, the union will develop a training program at its Piney Point, Maryland training center for newly hired deckhands.

The company as just sent the first contingent of new deckhands to this training. The training is conducted over five days and covers such topics as first aid, CPR, general deck fundamentals, marlinspike seamanship, and diesel fundamentals. One day is devoted to on-board safety and one day to fire fighting. Once the 5-day course is completed at Piney Point, the trainees return to Port Imperial where they undergo another five-day program concentrating on New York Waterways ferry operations. The trainees will learn how to maintain the vessels, how and when to make on board safety checks, how to tie up the vessels and other routine vessel operations functions. The intention is that each new deckhand will receive two weeks of formal training before they are assigned to a vessel to work.

As the program progresses, SIU has agreed to customize the course material to deal specifically with the New York Waterways operation. These courses will focus on the duties and responsibilities of the deckhand, provide training for deckhands who aspire to obtain a license to become a master, and provide training for masters in such areas as radar observation and fire fighting.

Mr. Johansen has three marine managers who work for him. There is one manager on duty at all times between the hours of 0545 and 2100. Mr. Johansen has delegated specific vessel responsibility to specific managers; each manager is responsible for 8 ships. The managers are required to ride on and conduct an inspection of each vessel under his responsibility each week. He is required to ensure that the vessel masters are submitting deficiency reports [known as Captain's Reports] on time as required. They are to observe the performance of the vessel master and to provide mentoring assistance as necessary (each manager has been a senior vessel

master for New York Waterways].

Relative to the *Port Imperial Manhattan*, Mr. Johansen said that New York Waterways has owned the vessel since it was built. He said that it is the only vessel in the fleet that does not have an installed fixed fire fighting system protecting the engine room. He said that the older vessels in the fleet have halon systems, and that the newer ones have CO2 systems. He said that the Manhattan operated on the Lincoln Harbor to 38th Street run, from 0707 in the morning until 2200 at night. [Last run departed Manhattan at 2152 and arrived at Lincoln Harbor at 2200.]

END OF INTERVIEW

Donald J. Tyrrell
Investigator-in-Charge