



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

## Safety Recommendation

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**Date:** November 1, 2012

**In reply refer to:** M-12-6 and M-12-7

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr.  
Commandant of the Coast Guard  
U.S. Coast Guard (CG-00)  
2100 Second Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20593-0001

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On September 25, 2012, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) adopted its report concerning the October 29, 2011, collision of the tankship *Elka Apollon* with the containership *MSC Nederland*.<sup>1</sup> We are providing the following information to urge the U.S. Coast Guard to take action on the safety recommendations in this letter. Additional information about this accident and the resulting recommendations may be found in the report on the investigation, which can be accessed at our website, <http://www.nts.gov>.

As a result of this investigation, the NTSB issued two new recommendations to the Coast Guard:

### M-12-6

Develop and implement a policy to ensure adequate separation between vessels operating in the Bayport Channel and Bolivar Roads Precautionary Areas and any other similarly configured precautionary areas in the Houston Ship Channel.

### M-12-7

Graphically delineate precautionary areas on appropriate Houston Ship Channel nautical charts so they are readily identifiable to mariners.

These recommendations are derived from the NTSB's investigation and are consistent with the evidence we found and the analysis we performed. Chairman HERSMAN,

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<sup>1</sup> *Collision of the Tankship Elka Apollon and the Containership MSC Nederland, Houston Ship Channel, Upper Galveston Bay, Texas, October 29, 2011* (Washington: National Transportation Safety Board, 2012).

Vice Chairman HART, and Members SUMWALT, ROSEKIND, and WEENER concurred in these recommendations.

The NTSB is vitally interested in these recommendations because they are designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate receiving a response from you within 90 days detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement these recommendations. When responding, please refer to the safety recommendations by their recommendation number. We encourage you to submit updates electronically to [correspondence@ntsb.gov](mailto:correspondence@ntsb.gov). If your response includes attachments that exceed 10 megabytes, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions. To avoid confusion, please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.

Sincerely,

*[Original Signed]*

Deborah A.P. Hersman  
Chairman