



United States Coast Guard

Marine Safety Alert

Assistant Commandant for Prevention

Department of Homeland Security

September 19, 2007
Washington, DC

Alert 3-07

SECURING OF WATERTIGHT DOORS WHILE UNDERWAY

This safety alert reiterates the need for vessel operators to ensure that watertight doors are always closed while underway, except when being used for access. This alert is the direct result of a collision between a 534' cargo ship and a 166' offshore supply vessel. The incident occurred on the Mississippi River, in a restricted visibility situation. As a result of the collision, the offshore supply vessel capsized and sank – the crew of five was lost.

During the ensuing investigation of this incident, evidence was uncovered that indicated the offshore supply vessel was operating with its watertight doors in the open position. This is a violation of 46 CFR 174.210(e), which states that the master must ensure that a watertight door is always closed, except when being used for access. Watertight doors are a critical part of a vessel's subdivision, and consequently a critical part of damage stability considerations, so the importance of keeping these closed is very obvious. This becomes even more critical on smaller ships, which may only have one or two watertight doors to prevent flooding the entire length of the ship.

Please, keep these doors closed!

The Office of Design and Engineering Standards, Naval Architecture Division (CG-3PSE-2) developed this alert. Questions pertaining to this safety alert may be addressed to LCDR Tracy Phillips at (202) 372-1373 or Tracy.Phillips@uscg.mil.

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