

MARINE OCCURRENCE REPORT

GROUNDING

**OF THE BULK CARRIER "ALGOLAKE"
IN THE TRAVERSE DU NORD
ST. LAWRENCE RIVER, QUEBEC
23 SEPTEMBER 1994**

REPORT NUMBER M94L0032

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) investigated this occurrence for the purpose of advancing transportation safety. It is not the function of the Board to assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability.

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SUMMARY

At about 0220 EDT on 23 September 1994, the self-unloading bulk carrier "ALGOLAKE" was transiting the St. Lawrence River bound for Detroit, USA, with a load of iron ore. The vessel was making approximately 8.5 knots over the ground. A few seconds after passing at a distance of approximately 23 metres from buoy K108, the vessel vibrated for a few minutes and then ran aground approximately one half-mile upstream from buoy K108. The "ALGOLAKE" sustained damage to the hull, but there were no injuries or pollution reported as a result of this occurrence.

Ce rapport est également disponible en français.

FACTUAL INFORMATION**Particulars of the Vessel**

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| Name | "ALGOLAKE" |
| Port of Registry | Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario |
| Flag | Canadian |
| Official Number | 318430 |
| Type | Self-unloading bulk carrier |
| Gross Tonnage | 22,852 tons |
| Length | 222 m |
| Draught | Forward: 7.62 m Aft: 7.97 m |
| Built | Steel |
| Propulsion | One Pielstick engine, 6,620 kW, driving a single controllable-pitch propeller |
| Owners | Algoma Central Corporation Algoma Central Marine Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario |

At about 0155¹ on 23 September 1994, the pilot of the "ALGOLAKE" came to an agreement with the pilot of the vessel "GREAT LAKER", also bound for the St. Lawrence Seaway, to arrange for a safe overtaking situation. The agreement was to let the "GREAT LAKER" pass in the south part of the channel while the "ALGOLAKE" would follow the northern limit of the channel.

The overtaking proceeded without incident at about 0220. At the time, the "ALGOLAKE" was abreast of buoy K108, at a reported distance of approximately 23 m. The pilot then ordered a course of 210°(G), and a few seconds later he ordered a course of 213°(G). At that point, the vessel began vibrating abnormally. The course ordered did not change even when the quartermaster put the wheel 20° to starboard and then hard-a-starboard. The engine was stopped, and a few minutes later the vessel struck the northern limit of the channel, sheered some 3° to port, and then came to a standstill. Subsequent soundings indicated that the vessel was in contact with the bottom on the starboard side forward of the accommodation.

Various notices had been broadcast since 20 July 1994 to the effect that some buoys, including buoy K108, had been temporarily displaced 45 m outside the channel for dredging operations. Written notices had been sent to the Laurentian Pilotage Authority.

¹ All times are EDT (Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) minus four hours) unless otherwise stated.

Hydrographic soundings taken on the day of the occurrence recorded a depth of water greater than 12.9 m in the channel in the area of the grounding. The soundings also indicated that the depth of water was less than the vessel's draught, given the state of the tide at the time of the occurrence, some 20 m north of the channel.

ANALYSIS

The information on the displacement of buoys in the Traverse du Nord was available to the pilot and to the navigation personnel. The statements and comments of the navigation personnel indicate that, at the time of the occurrence, they were not aware, or had forgotten, that buoy K108 was displaced.

The navigation personnel and the pilot stated that the vessel had passed some 23 m from buoy K108, but the buoy was displaced 45 m outside the charted channel. The vessel was, therefore, completely outside the charted channel. As the underkeel clearance was decreasing as the "ALGOLAKE" moved forward, the vessel soon ran aground.

FINDINGS

1. The navigation personnel of the "ALGOLAKE" planned to keep close to the northern limit of the channel.
2. The ordered course remained unchanged until the vessel came to a standstill.
3. Buoy K108 was displaced 45 m outside the channel since 20 July 1994.
4. The vessel's personnel was unaware that buoy K108 was displaced.
5. The vessel's pilot was unaware, or had forgotten, that buoy K108 was displaced.
6. The vessel passed some 23 m from buoy K108.
7. The vessel ran aground outside the channel.

CAUSES

The "ALGOLAKE" ran aground north of the Traverse du Nord channel because the pilot and the crew were unaware, or had forgotten, that buoy K108 had been displaced 45 m outside the channel for dredging operations.

This report concludes the Transportation Safety Board's investigation into this occurrence. Consequently, the Board, consisting of Chairperson, John W. Stants, and members Zita Brunet and Maurice Harquail, authorized the release of this report on 24 November 1995.