



Department of Justice

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Shipping Company Pleads Guilty to Vessel Pollution

Korean Vessel Used Hoses to Bypass Pollution Prevention Equipment

WASHINGTON – The Sun Ace Shipping Company, based in Seoul, South Korea, has pleaded guilty to a one-count information for violating the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships, in relation to the operation of a bulk carrier vessel the M/V Sun New, the Justice Department announced today.

Specifically, the defendant, which was the operator and manager of a fleet of five ships, is charged with knowingly failing to maintain an accurate Oil Record Book that fully recorded the disposal of oil residue and bilge into the ocean and then falsifying records to conceal illegal discharges. A joint factual statement filed in District Court in New Jersey stated that, on the night of Jan. 3, 2006, U.S. Coast Guard inspectors boarded the Sun New and discovered that members of the engine room crew has used bypass hoses to discharge oily wastes overboard into the ocean without using the vessel's oil-water separator. Upon further investigation, inspectors discovered that the crew of the Sun New had disposed of oil waste into the ocean at least twice during the voyage from South Korea to New Jersey.

Engine room operations on board large oceangoing vessels such as the Sun New generate large amounts of waste oil. International and U.S. law prohibit the discharge of waste oil without treatment by an Oily Water Separator. The law also requires that all overboard discharges be recorded in an Oil Record Book, a required log which is regularly inspected by the Coast Guard.

Per the terms of the plea agreement, the Sun Ace Shipping Company will pay a \$400,000 penalty and a \$100,000 community service payment to the National Fish and Wildlife Program, Delaware Estuary Grants Program, which will be used to protect and restore the natural resources of the Delaware Estuary and its watershed. The Sun Ace Shipping Company will also be subject to a three year term of probation, during which its vessels will be banned from U.S. ports and waters.

Earlier this month, a grand jury in Newark, N.J., returned a three-count indictment charging the Chief Engineer and the Second Engineer of M/V Sun New with conspiracy, obstruction of justice, and a violation of the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships in connection with the use of two bypass hoses used to discharge sludge and oil contaminated bilge waste overboard into the ocean.

Today's case was investigated by marine inspectors from Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay, and special agents from the Coast Guard Investigative Service and the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney David Kehoe in the Environmental Crimes Section in the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

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