

## Barge Captain and Marine Company Indicted in Fatal 2005 Explosion



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For their roles in the 2005 Chicago Canal explosion, Dennis Michael Egan and Egan Marine Corporation were indicted on federal charges of two counts of maritime negligence, and one count violating the Clean Water Act.

According to the government's allegations, Egan Marine Corp.'s tank barge known as the *EMC-423* was being pushed by the tow boat *Lisa E* on January 19, 2005, and was transporting approximately 600,000 gallons of clarified slurry oil (CSO) on the Chicago Sanitary Canal from the ExxonMobil Oil Corp. refinery in Joilet. At about 4:40pm, having just cleared the Cicero Avenue Bridge and heading northeast, a large explosion erupted on the barge. The *EMC-423* sank, discharging thousands of gallons of CSO into the canal, and crewmember Alexander Oliva, age 29, was killed. At the time of the explosion, Oliva was allegedly using a propane-fueled handheld "rosebud torch" to heat a cargo pump on the barge deck to allow the CSO to be discharged in the cold temperatures. Prosecutors allege that the open flame from the torch caused the explosion, the destruction of the barge, the pollution in the canal, and ultimately Oliva's death.

Dennis Egan was allegedly the captain and pilot of the tow boat *Lisa E*, and of the *EMC-423* barge, which had no crew, self-propulsion, or navigation system of its own. The government further alleged that Egan was negligent and inattentive to his duties on the two vessels by allowing Oliva to use an open flame on the deck of the *EMC-423*. It also alleged that Egan Marine Corp. and its employees acted negligently when they vented the combustible vapors from the cargo hold of the barge to the deck of the vessel, creating the explosion hazard.

According to the government, penalties under the Clean Water for an individual include a year in prison and a \$100,000 fine, and for a company includes a year probation and a \$200,000 fine. In addition, Dennis Egan faces a potential \$250,000 fine and 10 years in prison for maritime negligence, while Egan Marine faces a potential penalty of five years probation and a \$500,000 fine if guilty of maritime negligence.

**[View the Department of Justice Press Release here](#)**

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