

## Manager of M/V Chem Faros to Plead Guilty to MARPOL Violations

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Cooperative Success Maritime S.A., the manager of the Marshall Islands-flagged *M/T Chem Faros*, has decided to plead guilty to charges stemming from the discovery of a “magic pipe” onboard the vessel. Vaja Sikharulidze, the chief engineer of the vessel, has also been indicted for violations relating to the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships (APPS), and providing false statements.

According to court documents filed with the U.S. District Court for the District of North Carolina, engineers on the vessel pumped oil-contaminated waste directly overboard through the use of a “magic pipe,” beginning in September 2009, and continuing up to March 2010. The criminal indictment charges that Sikharulidze made false entries in the oil record book concerning the discharges, and failed to record the improper overboard discharge of oil-contaminated waste. Those allegedly false entries were discovered by Coast Guard inspectors at the Port of Morehead City, North Carolina.

Large marine vessels like the *M/T Chem Faros* generate large quantities of oil contaminated waste that mixes with water in the bilges. This waste water is then supposed to pass through an oil-water separator, which is a required pollution control device that is designed to treat waste water before it is discharged into the oceans.

As chief engineer, Sikharulidze was responsible for overseeing the operations of the Engine Department, including supervision of the daily operations, the Engine Room crew members, and verification that all systems are functioning. He also was responsible for the maintenance of the oil record book, in which he was required to accurately record every discharge made by the vessel.

Notably, the government’s investigation into the matter is continuing, despite the prompt plea agreement with Cooperative Success Maritime. That suggests that Sikharulidze may be planning to contest his charges, or that further charges related to the vessel may be coming.

1 Min Read

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