

TANKER COMPANY HIT WITH \$2 MILLION FINE AND CAPTAIN FACES 6-COUNT INDICTMENT

Interorient Marine Services Limited, which operates vessels throughout the world, pleaded guilty to a felony for falsifying its Oil Record Book. As a result, the company will pay a \$2 million fine. It will also be on probation for four years, during which the company must comply with a rigorous Environmental Compliance Plan (ECP).



Tampering with Discharge Equipment and Records

The company admitted it illegally discharged oil cargo residues and oily bilge water without using required pollution prevention equipment. Senior ship officers flushed the vessel's pollution prevention equipment sensor with fresh water, which tricked the system into detecting a much lower effluent oil content than what was being discharged. These senior officers then falsified the vessel's Oil Record Book, recording that 87,705 gallons of oily wastewater had been discharged properly.

Captain Faces Criminal Charges

While the plea ends the criminal case and initiates the probation for the company, the vessel's captain continues to face a six-count felony indictment in federal court in Louisiana for instructing crew members to circumvent the vessel's pollution control equipment, for instructing them to falsify the Oil Record Book, and for other attempts to obstruct the government's investigation of the vessel's pollution and records. The documents indicate several company employees participated in the alleged illegal conduct; other company employees, who apparently will not be indicted, may testify against the captain in his criminal case.

ECP Requirements

With the plea agreement, the Court approved and adopted a 30-page document containing the standards and requirements of the ECP. All company vessels calling on U.S. ports must comply with it during the probation. The ECP requires the company to pay for a third-party auditor who will conduct audits of all covered vessels. The 30-page document includes four pages of specific audit requirements.

The ECP requires the company to develop an Environmental Management System (EMS) and to pay for a Court appointed monitor in addition to the third-party auditor. The monitor will report to the Court regarding the adequacy of the EMS and the third-party audits.

The ECP also has five pages of engineering requirements, which include equipment modifications and additional record keeping.

For a copy of the US Department of Justice's press release

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/tank-vessel-operator-convicted-and-sentenced-oil-discharge-offense-vessel-captain-indicted>