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Press Contact: press@mtaig.org

MTA Inspector General Uncovers Destruction of ‘Perfect Storm’

Crew Jumped Overboard, 25-foot Boat Destroyed by Rough Surf

OIG Finds Untrained, Inexperienced Transit Workers Abandoned an MTA Boat Resulting in the Total Loss of the Watercraft

Boat Crew Collected Overtime, Claimed They Were Needed for Search and Rescue, Despite No Training, Experience Piloting Watercraft, and Limited Ability to Swim

General Purpose of the Boat Remains a Mystery

MTA Inspector General Carolyn Pokorny today released the result of an investigation that found 2 untrained and inexperienced New York City Transit (NYC Transit) employees literally jumped ship when they were forced to abandon an MTA boat, a 25-foot Steiger Craft named Perfect Storm (the Boat), on a rocky shore near Coney Island. Once abandoned, the derelict vessel was then bashed against the shore and destroyed.

Alarming, Office of the MTA Inspector General (OIG) found the employees operating the Boat were untrained, inexperienced boaters who abandoned ship believing their lives were in danger. Overnight, the Boat crashed into the rocky shoreline and capsized. The incident raises serious questions about the responsibility and care of the Boat, and, more importantly, the safety of its crew. Investigators found there was not even consensus among MTA officials interviewed as to the general purpose of the Boat or even whether it was needed to begin with.

“Thank goodness no one was hurt in this accident,” **said Inspector General Carolyn Pokorny.** “But I cannot fathom how MTA management would allow these unqualified employees to set sail in the first place and sometimes even collect overtime while underway. Clearly this lack of oversight is ultimately responsible for turning the Perfect Storm into a total wreck.”

OIG found that on the day of the accident, the Boat captain believed his assignment was to observe fellow MTA employees who were replacing anodes near a bridge around Roosevelt Island and to perform search and rescue if needed — despite having virtually no training or experience in piloting a boat or water rescue. His sole crewmate onboard lacked any boating or rescue experience or training — and was a poor swimmer. Despite the crew’s lack of qualifications, they were allowed to take on the assignment and on occasion, earn overtime.

OIG's investigation determined that NYC Transit lacked:

- Policies and guidelines as to what type of regular maintenance should have been performed on the Boat;
- Standards as to which employees were qualified to pilot or otherwise staff the Boat;
- Procedures for staff to follow once on board;
- Standards for appropriate uses of the Boat;
- and training for the staff who were on board. Rather, the employees who supervised the Boat were at times unclear as to its purpose, and left to manage the care and usage of the Boat completely on their own.

Following the OIG's investigation, the MTA has determined not to replace the boat, calling into question whether it was even needed to begin with.

The review was conducted by Senior Investigative Attorney Kristin Abreu, Senior Principal Investigator TJ Eugene, and Senior Principal Investigator Lawrence McGugins, and other members of the OIG's Investigative Unit.

The OIG's report, including photos, findings, and recommendations, is here:

<https://mtaig.state.ny.us/Reports/21-30.pdf>

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