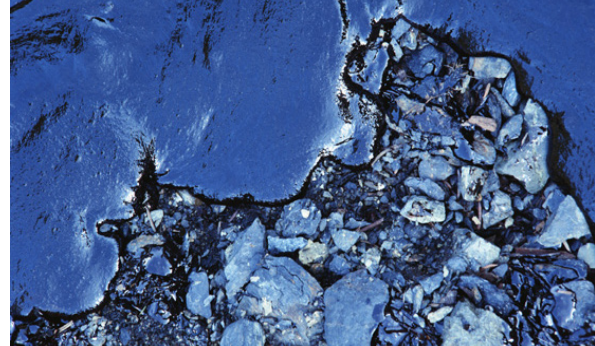


## Pollution

**The vessel was berthed and discharging cargo. A bunker barge came alongside and bunkering commenced around lunch time. Scupper plugs were placed and the checklist was completed. The company's, (SMS), bunker checklist states that communication should be established between the barge and bridge, that no tank should be filled more than 85%, that a risk assessment should be carried out, a tool box meeting held before bunkering commences, and a briefing meeting held with the barge crew to establish procedures for an emergency stop.**

The chief engineer had planned to fill fuel in two bunker tanks to a 94% level. The first tank was filled to the ordered level by the chief engineer and bunkering continued in the second tank. Then he left for lunch and was not relieved by the second engineer as he was supposed to. The chief engineer and second engineer did not get on. The chief engineer only usually spoke to the first engineer to give orders to the rest of the engine crew. The second engineer had misunderstood the chief engineer when he told him an hour before to be in the engine control room when he had lunch. The second engineer spoke very poor English. This meant that the engine control room was unmanned.

The fourth engineer was left in charge alone but without any means of communication with the barge or bridge. He was in charge of both the soundings on deck and of the fuel valves in the engine control room. He panicked while monitoring the loading of fuel into the second tank because he thought there was a risk of the tank overflowing which was not the case. He tried to contact the barge and chief engineer unsuccessfully. He then decided to close the valve at 50% and open the valve slightly to the first tank. The volume in the first tank was at 87% and the second tank was at 71%.



The fourth engineer then tried to contact the barge again to suspend the bunker operation but once again was unsuccessful. As there was no action taken on the barge or on the vessel itself the second tank finally overflowed through the sounding pipe and contaminated the vessel's deck and water in the harbour. At the time of the overflow it was raining heavily, causing the fuel on deck to overflow into the harbour. The pollution was contained in the vessel's vicinity by a mooring rope that was laid on the surface. No oil boom was placed around the vessel prior to bunkering. To stop the overflow the tank valve was closed and a wing tank valve was opened. Shortly afterwards the bunker operation was suspended and the barge left the vessel.

The chief engineer was confused about what had happened and reported to the master that the second tank had overflowed and not the first. The master informed the agent about the oil spill but no other party. The port instead reported the incident to the VTS and authorities.

The vessel was boarded by port state inspectors and because the vessel had not immediately reported the spill to the correct authorities, which is an SOPEP requirement, and other serious failures, the vessel was detained. The inspectors were also very concerned about the second engineer's poor English and that it was evident that he could not communicate with the chief engineer. The company decided to dismiss the chief engineer and second engineer immediately.