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Containership Hits Baltimore Bridge, Causing Collapse





Baltimore's main road bridge collapsed after a containership with one of the pillars (Harford Co., MD Fire & EMS)

PUBLISHED MAR 26, 2024 7:52 AM BY [THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE](https://www.maritime-executive.com/author/marex) ([HTTPS://WWW.MARITIME-EXECUTIVE.COM/AUTHOR/MAREX](https://www.maritime-executive.com/author/marex))

In the early hours of Tuesday morning, a containership outbound from the Port of Baltimore collided with one of the pillars of one of the city's primary roadway bridges, causing the bridge to collapse. City, state, and federal authorities are calling it a possible mass casualty event.

In a morning briefing, the Baltimore Fire Department reported that two people were found in the water and one was taken to a local hospital in critical condition. A road crew was working on the bridge deck, and six people from the crew are missing and presumed dead.

Rescue operations were hampered by cold water and a strong current. Reports are that the water is at 47 degrees Fahrenheit (8 degrees Celsius). Teams from the local emergency responders as well as U.S. Coast Guard vessels and helicopters are on scene. Divers reported dangerous conditions in the water, including low visibility, frigid temperatures and tangled debris from the downed bridge.

The U.S. Coast Guard called off the search on Tuesday night, saying that too much time had elapsed to hope for rescuing any further survivors. "Based on the length of time that we've gone in the search, the extensive search efforts that we put into it, the water temperature . . . we do not believe that we're going to find any of these individuals still alive," Rear Adm. Shannon Gilreath said at a press conference.

Maryland Governor Wes Moore reported that the containership radioed that it had lost power and was in danger of hitting the bridge. The Governor said the warning had permitted them to limit traffic on the bridge. He also emphasized that there are no indications of anything but a mechanical failure although there will be further investigations.

SkyTeam 11 video shows Baltimore bridge collapse



The vessel, the 984-foot-long *Dali* (116,581 dwt) owned by Grace Ocean and managed by Synergy Marine, departed the Baltimore container terminal shortly after midnight local time and had two pilots aboard as it was navigating the harbor exit. Reports are the vessel was moving at up to 9 knots. A large amount of smoke can be seen coming from the funnel as the vessel neared the bridge at approximately 1:30 AM local time, and it was to one side out of the main channel. The onboard lights appear to flicker several times as well. Videos show the massive bridge collapsing onto the ship and into the water.

The Associated Press is quoting the pilots' association reporting that after the vessel lost power the pilot attempted to drop anchor and steered the ship in an effort to reduce the dangers. They also contacted the dispatch office to get the bridge closed. The pilot was attempting to slow the vessel but never regained propulsion.

Watch on X

The containership has a capacity of 10,000 TEU. Synergy reports the vessel had 4,679 TEU loaded and that the 22 crew, all Indian nationals, have been accounted for and are uninjured.

The Baltimore Fire Department said there is cargo hanging from the remaining structure of the bridge, possibly from the *Dali*. The situation remains critical with the remaining sections of the bridge considered dangerous and unstable. The bridge was built in 1977 crossing the Patapsco River near the entrance to the harbor.

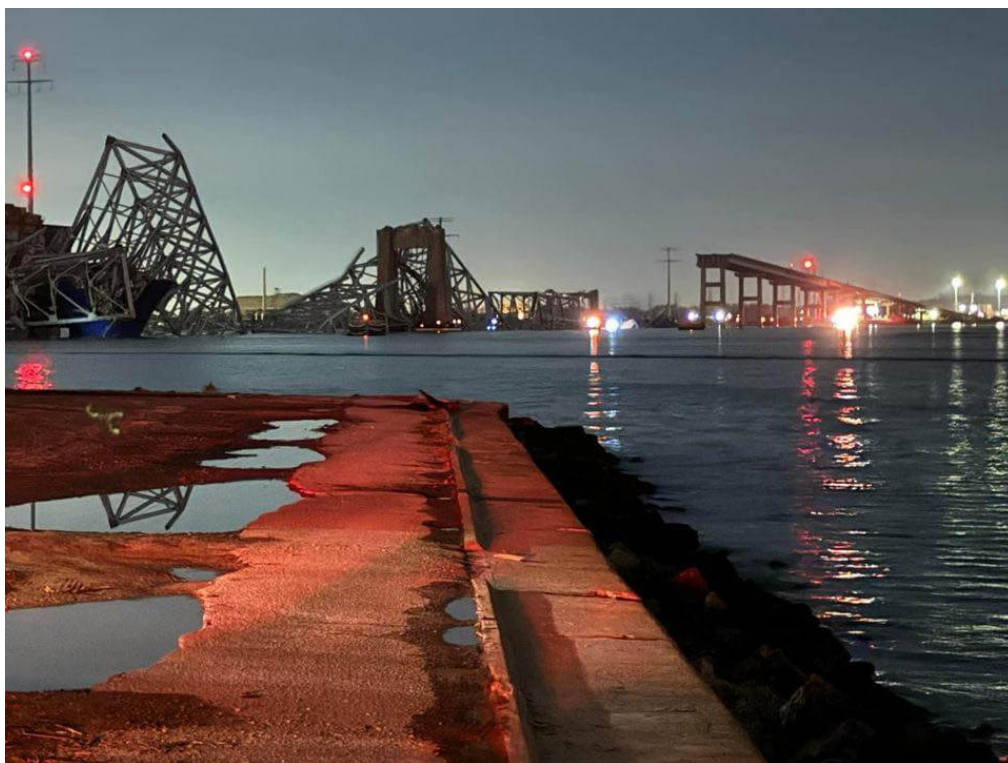
Built in 2015, the vessel is registered in Singapore. It is currently operating under charter to Maersk and was outbound for Colombo, Sri Lanka. Maersk issued a statement reporting it was closely following developments saying the company was "horrified." It said that no Maersk personnel were aboard the vessel.

Baltimore is the ninth-largest port in the U.S. and one of the major East Coast destinations for containers and autos. In 2023, Baltimore handled more than 52 million tons of cargo including one million TEU. According to an analysis by Bloomberg, Baltimore handles only about three percent of the East Coast container traffic, but it handles the nation's largest volume of automobiles, as well as bulk cargoes such as coal, gypsum and lumber.

Traffic into and out of the port is suspended at this time. MarineTraffic calculates that there are at least eight bulkers and a car carrier outside the harbor at anchor and several vessels appear stuck inside the port. However, no containerships were reported at the terminals. Both Maersk and MSC announced that they would immediately begin rerouting traffic while both companies have customers' shipments aboard the *Dali*. MSC wrote to customers on the recovery in Baltimore, "We expect this to take several months and all MSC customer cargo will be rerouted and discharged at alternative ports in the meantime."

"The immediate focus is the rescue operation, but there will clearly be a highly-complex recovery phase and investigation to follow," said Emily Stausbøll, Market Analyst at Xeneta. "The question is how quickly ocean freight carriers can put diversions in place, particularly for vessels already en route to Baltimore or containers at the port waiting to be exported."

Bill Doyle, CEO and Executive Director of The Dredging Contractors of America (DCA), tells The Maritime Executive that Manson Construction, Dutra Group, Kokosing Contractors, and Sterling Marine are nearby onsite awaiting orders. He said there are other U.S. flag operators with tugs, barges, and other marine emergency equipment that authorities can get to assist. He also mentioned that marine traffic in the area will be stopped until further orders by the U.S. Coast Guard. Doyle recently served nearly three years as the Executive Director of the Port of Baltimore.



Full 7 minute video of Collision of Container Ship "DALI" with Baltimore...



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AA **Arvind Ahuja**
a year ago



Our prayers are with those who grieve the loss of their loved ones Baltimore Bridge Collapse.

As P&I and H&M surveyors and investigators, only after reviewing the available evidences viz. VDR, documentation, past history, PMS, procurement, condition and repair records, work that may have been in progress on board, Master's SoF, interviewing the staff on board, can we arrive at facts.

The visuals from this video of the container vessel Dali, only provides a basis for hypothesis for some of the possible causes and equipment failures, to be proven or disproven, by proper investigation.

This video only shows that:

The lights went off at 1.20 mins, possibly a blackout, battery powered lights can be seen in the accommodation, (Can you see navigation lights? I can't), a stand-by DG or emergency DG started at 1.55 mins (plume of smoke) and deck and navigation lights came on at 2.20 mins (1 full minute later), continuous black smoke visible from funnel from 2.30 minutes; vessel moves hard stbd at 3.07 minutes (possibly to turn 180 degrees away from the bridge), blackout again (2nd time) at 3.27 mins; lights on again at 4.00 mins, hard port helm movement visible immediately (possibly to avoid collision with the pillar), 5.31 mins collision with pillar, 5.39 again blackout (3rd time), 5.42 the bridge falls on the deck of the ship.

see more

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W **willard miller**
a year ago edited



Anyone know the likely headway speed of a ship like DALI?

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G **GPC**
a year ago



Looking at the 7 minute video suggests a fuel related problem could have been the cause of this accident . A vessel on standby would have at least two diesel generators running any one of which could take the full electrical load so the failure of one generator should not result in a blackout . However if there was a fuel related problem e.g (excessive wax or sludge blocking the fuel filters) that could stop both generators and cause a blackout . Following the initial blackout after approx two minutes the lights go back on possibly another diesel generator being brought on line this runs for a couple of minutes and then the lights go off again possibly when the fuel filters on that engine become blocked . Shortly before the collision the lights go on again suggesting the remaining diesel generator has been brought on line but then go out just before the collision suggesting that generator has also failed . We will see what the enquiry reveals . At present thoughts are with the loved ones of those who perished

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Why wasn't the vessel escorted out of the harbor past the bridge by the harbor tug boats?

o o Share >

My guess it that the use of a tug escort was not compulsory and tugs are expensive
I would expect that in the future the use of tugs for vessels over a certain size using Baltimore
will be compulsory

o o Share >



Vincent T. Marshall Sr

a year ago

Been there, loss of power plant etc aboard Navy Oiler, container ships, oil tanker, loss of steering, radars. Always happens in the worst places. Was involved with maintenance & repairs. I did lot's of praying to the Good Lord Jesus to protect my ships, Captains, CHENGs, all Deck and Engine Officers, Ch Stwds/Cooks/SAs, Electricians, Wipers, Oilers, QMEDs and super cargo personnel and riders.

Praise The Good Lord Of my soul! His name is Jesus Yeshua/Father Yahweh/Holy Spirit Comforter!

Vince Marshall Sr,

Marine Radio/Electronics Officer, Electronics Engineer, R.E.O., E.O.

U.S. Merchant Marine (Ret)

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