

September 19, 2024

MIR-24-29

## Fire aboard Fishing Vessel *Miss Courtney Kim*

On June 18, 2024, about 0700 local time, the fishing vessel *Miss Courtney Kim* was anchored in Simeon Bay on the southern side of Popof Island, Alaska, when the crew discovered a fire in the engine room (see figure 1 and figure 2).<sup>1</sup> The crew attempted to extinguish the fire but was unsuccessful. The seven crewmembers on board evacuated to a nearby fishing vessel. The *Miss Courtney Kim* continued to burn until it sank about 4 hours later. There were no injuries, and no pollution was reported. The vessel was a total loss estimated at \$2.4 million.



**Figure 1.** *Miss Courtney Kim* on fire on June 18, 2024. (Source: *Miss Courtney Kim* owner)

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<sup>1</sup> (a) In this report, all times are Alaska standard time, and all miles are statute miles. (b) Visit [nts.gov](https://www.nts.gov) to find additional information in the [public docket](#) for this NTSB investigation (case no. DCA24FM042). Use the [CAROL Query](#) to search investigations.

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**Casualty Summary**

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<b>Casualty type</b>	Fire/Explosion
<b>Location</b>	Simeon Bay, southern side of Popof Island, Alaska 55°16.03' N, 160°24.27' W
<b>Date</b>	June 18, 2024
<b>Time</b>	0700 Alaska standard time (coordinated universal time -9 hrs)
<b>Persons on board</b>	7
<b>Injuries</b>	None
<b>Property damage</b>	\$2.4 million est.
<b>Environmental damage</b>	None
<b>Weather</b>	Visibility 5 mi, overcast, winds west 17 mph, air temperature 47°F, water temperature 48°F
<b>Waterway information</b>	Bay, depth 65 ft at casualty site



**Figure 2.** Area where the fire aboard the *Miss Courtney Kim* occurred, as indicated by a circled X. (Background source: Google Maps)

## 1 Factual Information

On June 16, 2024, the 58-foot-long, fiberglass-hulled commercial fishing vessel *Miss Courtney Kim* departed King Cove, Alaska—with seven crewmembers aboard, including a captain, a deck boss, a cook, three deckhands, and a skiff operator—to participate in the Southern District salmon fishery from June 18 to June 24.

On June 17, after encountering heavy weather with high winds and seas, the captain decided to anchor the vessel in Simeon Bay, on the southern side of Popof Island, Alaska, to wait for the fishery to open. The next day, at 0300, the crew anchored the vessel, and, about 0330, they went to sleep. While they were sleeping, one of the vessel's two generators remained operating.

About 0630, the captain woke up and walked around the vessel to perform routine checks of the engine room, wheelhouse, and back deck. He did not notice anything unusual and went back inside the vessel.

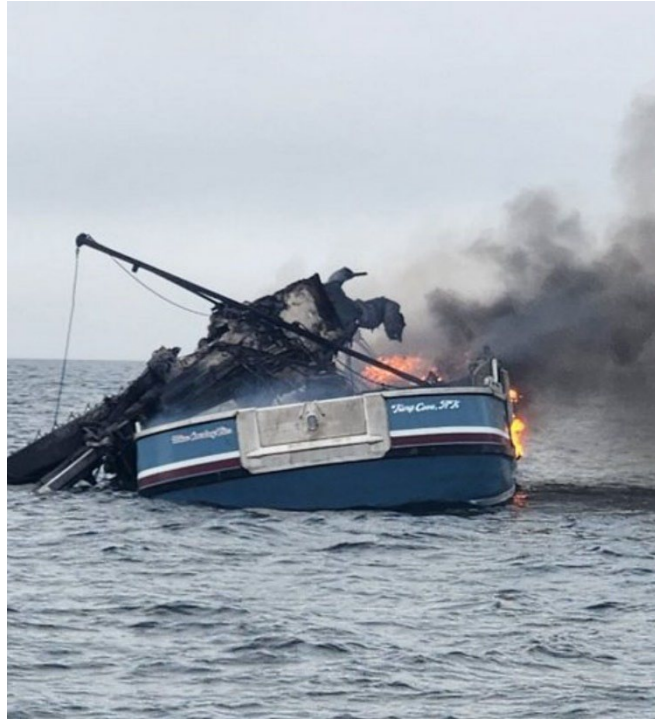
About 0700, the deck boss was in his stateroom when he noticed a burning smell that he associated with electrical components like "a hot wire." He notified the captain, and he and the captain opened the engine room door. According to the deck boss, a "big rush of smoke [came] rushing out of the engine room"; the captain said the engine room was "full of smoke." They could not see through the smoke to identify its source. The captain ordered the crew to abandon ship, and the deck boss put survival suits in the vessel's skiff. About the same time, in an attempt to extinguish the fire, the captain shut the engine room door, turned off the engine room ventilation fan, and activated the vessel's Halon fixed fire extinguishing system; however, the fire continued to burn. He used a deck hose (a garden-type hose typically used for washing the deck off) to spray water into the engine room toward an "intermittent glow" underneath the main engine, but the smoke got thicker and darker.

The *Just In Case*, a fishing vessel that had been anchored about 200 yards away, came alongside the *Miss Courtney Kim* to assist the crewmembers. While the captain was fighting the fire in the engine room, the deck boss, the cook, and the *Just In Case* crew worked together to salvage equipment and deck gear from the *Miss Courtney Kim*. The skiff operator used the skiff "to keep the boat straight," and he stated that while doing so, he saw the *Miss Courtney Kim* "burst into flames."

After about 10-15 minutes of fighting the fire, the captain went out on deck and saw "so much smoke coming out of that galley [above the engine room] like it

was completely engulfed in flames in the engine room at that time.” The captain and the deck boss abandoned the vessel onto the *Just In Case*.

By 0720, all *Miss Courtney Kim* crewmembers had transferred to the *Just In Case*. The fire continued to burn for another 4 hours. About 1130, the *Miss Courtney Kim* sank (see figure 3). The vessel was not recovered/salvaged.



**Figure 3.** *Miss Courtney Kim* on fire and sinking on July 18, 2024. (Source: *Miss Courtney Kim* owner)

## 2 Analysis

While the fishing vessel *Miss Courtney Kim* was anchored, the deck boss smelled a burning smell, and he and the captain discovered smoke in the engine room. Additionally, the captain reported seeing an “intermittent glow” in the engine room from beneath the main engine. This intermittent glow was likely fire. The captain and deck boss were not able to identify the source of the fire in the engine room. However, the deck boss associated the burning smell with an electrical source like “a hot wire.” Given the burning electrical smell, the cause of the fire may have been electrical in nature. If there was an electrical fault within nearby circuits or equipment, it could have created excessive resistance heating, which may have led to the ignition of nearby combustibles. However, because the vessel sank and was not recovered, the cause of the fire could not be determined.

## 3 Conclusions

### 3.1 Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the fire aboard the fishing vessel *Miss Courtney Kim* was an unknown source within the engine room, possibly electrical in nature.

## Vessel Particulars

Vessel	<i>Miss Courtney Kim</i>
Type	Fishing (Fishing vessel)
Owner/Operator	Private Citizen (Commercial)
Flag	United States
Port of registry	King Cove, Alaska
Year built	1993
Official number (US)	991477
IMO number	N/A
Classification society	N/A
Length (overall)	58.0 ft (17.7 m)
Breadth (max.)	19.1 ft (5.8 m)
Draft (casualty)	10.0 ft (3.0 m)
Tonnage	74 GRT
Engine power; manufacturer	480 hp (2,237 kW); Caterpillar 3408 diesel engine

NTSB investigators worked closely with our counterparts from **Coast Guard Sector Western Alaska and US Arctic** throughout this investigation.

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For more detailed background information on this report, visit the [NTSB Case Analysis and Reporting Online \(CAROL\) website](#) and search for NTSB accident ID DCA24FM042. Recent publications are available in their entirety on the [NTSB website](#). Other information about available publications also may be obtained from the website or by contacting—

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