

Val Rosandra

Maritime Chemical Accident

1990, April 28

Port of Brindisi, Italy

Propylene (Class 2) in ship gas tanks; liquefied compressed gas, flammable

Summary: On the night of April 28, 1990, the gas carrier **Val Rosandra** was unloading a cargo of propylene in the port of Brindisi in south-eastern Italy. A **fire** started between the compressor room and the No 3 cargo tank. The crew was unable to settle the fire and alerted the authorities. For safety reasons the ship was towed out 10 km off the coast. Fire crews continued to douse the vessel with water from a safety distance of 300 m. The salvage attempts continued for three weeks before it was decided to change the course of action. On May 15 Val Rosandra was towed to a position about 50 km off the coast where a **safety zone** of 12 mile radius and 6 km height was set up. The four intact cargo tanks were ruptured with **explosives** to allow the remaining 1,800 tonnes of propylene to burn off. Also the bunker fuel was burnt off with the help of explosives. On June 11 a final round of explosives were used to sink the ship. Measurements taken after the incident have shown no evidence of pollution in the area.

Cause of Accident: A fire between the compressor room and the No 3 tank.

Comments on Response: The incident of the Val Rosandra started as a rather small fire but the crew did not succeed to use the fire fighting equipment to extinguish the fire. The method to let the propylene burn out and then scuttle the ship was considered by the responsible agencies to be the best solution.

Source of Information: 1) The fire of gas carrier Val Rosandra. Report from REMPEC by G. Tosco. 2) "Hard nuts to crack", Hazardous Cargo Bulletin, September 1990.

(Abstracted July 2001 by Edvard Molitor, Swedish Coast Guard HQ)