

## Search called off for missing crew member; Man failed to report for shift aboard tanker anchored in Burrard Inlet

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The search for a Chinese crew member missing off a tanker anchored near Second Narrows in Burrard Inlet was called off late Wednesday afternoon.

The incident has been ruled a missing-persons case and handed over to Burnaby RCMP, who carried out the land-based part of the search.

The disappearance was first noted when the man failed to appear for his 8 a. m. shift aboard the Panamanian-flagged tanker Fujigawa, which has been at anchor in the inlet "for some time," coast guard officials said.

A single life jacket is missing from the ship, they said.

A search of the tanker, which is operated by Tokyo Marine, immediately after the discovery turned up nothing.

Steven Pyne, spokesman for Vancouver's Montship, the vessel's agent while it is in port, confirmed that the missing man is from China.

A water search was conducted by the coast guard hovercraft Siyay and the harbourmaster's vessel Takaya.

The Siyay was near the scene in the inlet at the time it was called out for duty and sped to the narrows immediately, a spokesman

for the Joint Rescue Command Centre in Victoria said.

It is not the first time that Tokyo Marine has lost crew in Vancouver.

In 2008, three Bangladeshi sailors jumped off the Ginga Falcon as the freighter sat at anchor in English Bay, a kilometre off Locarno Beach.

One was found dead in the water about 500 metres from Spanish Banks later in the day.

Peter Lahay - Canadian co-ordinator for the International Transport Workers Federation, which represents foreign crew in port - said Wednesday that seafarers aboard vessels operated by Tokyo Marine have complained in the past about conditions on board.

Eight to 10 crew have left Tokyo Marine ships in port here, he said.

Chinese crew often come ashore with the aim of making a refugee claim, Lahay said.

"It's what happens when you hire crew from less-than-democratic countries, and where human rights are ignored."

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