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THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* LOUISIANA

**DRD TOWING COMPANY AND ITS OWNER SENTENCED IN  
CONNECTION WITH OIL SPILL IN MISSISSIPPI RIVER**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 19, 2011

**DRD TOWING COMPANY, LLC.**, a marine company located in Harvey, Louisiana, was sentenced today in federal court by U. S. District Judge Ivan L.R. Lemelle to two years probation for violation of Ports and Waterways Safety Act and a misdemeanor violation of the Clean Water Act and a \$200,000 fine, announced U. S. Attorney Jim Letten. In addition, **RANDALL DANTIN**, age 46, a resident of Marrero, Louisiana and co-owner of **DRD TOWING**, was sentenced to twenty-one (21) months imprisonment in a separate charge of obstruction of justice. **DANTIN** was also ordered to pay a \$50,000 fine and serve two (2) years supervised release during which time he will be under federal supervision and risks additional imprisonment should he violate any terms of the release.

According to court documents, on September 8, 2010, **DRD TOWING COMPANY, LLC.** pled to creating hazardous conditions by (1) assigning employees without proper Coast Guard licenses to operate certain vessels thereby causing these vessels to operate in the navigable waters of the United States with manning levels below those determined by the Coast Guard to be necessary for safe navigation, and (2) paying licensed captains to operate a vessel for 24 hour a day without a relief captain, knowing that the Coast Guard viewed the use of over-fatigued mariners operating tugboats and barges to be a hazardous condition that would not allow for safe operation of the vessel. The statutory standard related to fatigue was that operators were prohibited from working for more than 12 hours in a 24 hour period. **DRD** also pled guilty to the illegal negligent discharge of oil on July 23, 2008 admitting that the M/V Mel Oliver, owned by **DRD**, was pushing a tanker barge full of fuel oil when it crossed in the path of the M/T Tintomara, a 600-foot Liberian-flagged tanker ship and caused a collision which resulted in the negligent discharge of approximately 282,686 gallons of fuel oil from the barge into the Mississippi River.

"These sentences demonstrate our commitment to hold accountable those violators who damage the environment and, at the same time, endanger their workers by placing them in harm's way," said Ivan Vikin, Special Agent in Charge of EPA's Criminal Enforcement program for the Louisiana region. "DRD Towing has a history of operating undermanned vessels that are often staffed with unqualified personnel. This manner of 'doing business' is both dangerous and criminal and will not be tolerated."

In the second case, also on September 8, 2010, **DANTIN** pled guilty to obstruction of justice for causing the deletion of "electronic payroll sheets," from a **DRD TOWING** laptop computer which

were material to the Coast Guard Hearing convened to investigate the collision on July 23, 2008 between a the M/V Mel Oliver and M/T Tintomara.

This case was investigated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Criminal Investigation and the United States Coast Guard Criminal Investigative Service and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Dorothy Manning Taylor and Matthew Chester.