



## Florida casino ferry boat that caught fire while shipping passengers

72-foot shuttle vessel, Island Lady, erupted into flames moments after leaving its dock at Port Richey. Some 50 passengers and crew members were forced to jump from the boat into shallow, freezing water and wade 100 yards back to shore.

The ferry had been bound for the Tropical Breeze Casino, stationed in international waters. The incident resulted in the death of a 42-year-old widowed mother of 12-year-old twins, Carrie Dempsey, who had inhaled fumes from the fire. Fourteen were treated for injuries. The board found that the owner of Island Lady, Tropical Breeze Casino Cruz, had failed to adequately maintain the boat and had neglected to install fire detection equipment in the area where the blaze broke out.

The company had also failed to provide proper training for crew on how to cope with the high engine temperatures that caused the fire or how to deal with the ensuing emergency.

### Second Ferry Fire, No Lesson Learned

NTSB chairman Robert Sumwalt was outraged that the company had not learned any lessons from an incident in 2004 when another one of its boats caught fire in similar circumstances in almost exactly the same location — the difference on this occasion was its negligence proved fatal.

“This is just absurd,” said Sumwalt during a two-hour hearing in Washington. “This person who died was a single mother. She left behind a pair of twins, a boy and a girl who were 12 years old, who now do not have parents.

“And here is a company that had the opportunity to learn from a tragedy in 2004. And they did absolutely nothing. And after it happened twice, what have they done? This is absolutely absurd,” he said. [안전 슬롯사이트](#)

### Captain Saved Lives

The NTSB also criticized the Coast Guard for failing to provide sufficient checks and balances to ensure the safety of the vessel.

But it reserved praise for the boat’s captain, Michael Batten, whose decision to turn the boat back to shore on receiving a high-temperature alarm from the boat’s port engine “increased the likelihood of survival for those on board.”

Two months ago, Tropical Breeze settled out of court for an undisclosed sum with a law firm representing Dempsey’s two children. The casino reopened four days after the incident.