

Missing Freighter Breached Safety Rules

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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As the search-and-rescue operation for the missing Amurskaya cargo ship entered its fifth day Thursday, investigators said the freighter had violated multiple safety regulations and was not cleared to leave port.

The Investigative Committee said in a [statement](#) Thursday that the Amurskaya was understaffed, not suitable for carrying loose cargo and had not sought official authorization from port authorities for its voyage in the Sea of Okhotsk.

Investigators also established that the freighter, which was carrying between 700 and 750 tons of gold ore, was overloaded by at least 90 tons.

A criminal case has been opened on charges of breaking safety rules at sea, causing two or more fatalities. The charges carry a maximum punishment of seven years' jail time.

In comments carried by Interfax, the Emergency Situations Ministry speculated that rough weather conditions, human error or a technical fault could have caused the cargo ship to sink.

Neither the ship nor the nine missing crew members on board have been discovered. Emergencies officials said in a separate [statement](#) that rescue efforts continue by air, land and sea.

The Amurskaya disappeared near the Shantar Islands in the Sea of Okhotsk on Oct. 28 after it triggered an emergency beacon. The ship's cargo of gold ore was reportedly worth more than \$230,000.

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