

# World record polluting fine paid in Boston

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A Hong Kong ship's captain has reportedly agreed to pay a \$10.5 million dumping fine -- the largest criminal environmental fine in Massachusetts history.

The captain of the Panama-flagged MSC Elena, owned by MSC Ship Management Ltd. of Hong Kong, pleaded guilty this week to illegally dumping oil sludge into the Atlantic, the Boston Herald reported.

The penalty is also the largest paid anywhere in the world for deliberate polluting by one vessel, officials said.

U.S. Coast Guard inspectors discovered the operation last May when the containership docked in Boston Harbor to offload cargo from Europe. Guardsmen found disassembled oily piping they concluded was used to regularly dump as much as 40 tons of sludge and oil-contaminated water, said U.S. Attorney Michael Sullivan.

Sullivan said Elena crew members, under orders from Hong Kong officials, lied and concealed evidence after inspectors confronted them and used phony ship's logs to make it appear as if the ship was complying with anti-dumping laws.

Besides pleading guilty to conspiracy and other charges, Sullivan said MSC Ship Management will bring all its approximately 80 ships in compliance with U.S. and international codes.

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