

# Coast Guard probes ship in Puerto Rican oil spill

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SAN JUAN --

(AP) -- The U.S. Coast Guard is investigating whether a boat owned by a New York company may have been the source of a large oil spill that slicked Puerto Rico's southwest coastline in August.

Agents boarded the Genmar Progress, a vessel belonging to General Maritime Corp., last week in Port Arthur, Texas, and believe it could be involved in the 10,000-gallon spill, Ricardo Castrodad, a Coast Guard spokesman in San Juan, Puerto Rico, said Monday.

General Maritime spokesman Darrell Wilson told The Associated Press the company is cooperating with authorities and has sent a team to help with the cleanup, although it has yet to be determined that the ship is definitely to blame.

He said that while anchored in Puerto Rico, the Genmar's crew reported a sheen near the vessel but it was allowed to depart. The company later launched an internal investigation, and last week contacted the Coast Guard to share preliminary results indicating the ship probably contributed to the spill.

Castrodad said that if the company is found to be responsible, it would have to pay three times the cost of the cleanup. The U.S. Attorney's Office would then decide whether to launch a criminal case for violation of environmental laws.