

RISK ACCEPTANCE – HAVE WE GOT THE BALANCE RIGHT?

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Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of FEEDBACK. We aim to improve safety for all seafarers, so I am pleased that this issue contains reports about bulk cargo vessels, gas and oil tankers, container carriers, fishing vessels and super yachts. Although the reports might at first appear not to share many similarities, there is a common theme that runs through them all: risk acceptance.

It is well understood that maritime operations are more hazardous than many other occupations, but have we as seafarers become so accepting of risks that we no longer see them? Have mariners become numbed to dangers because they don't believe they can challenge them – or that nothing will change if they speak up?

In our first report concerning a timber carrier, we investigate why the crew had to walk on the ship's railings to get from one part of the vessel to another. In another, we examine why a ship undocked even though the weather conditions were unsuitable. Sometimes we accept risks through repetition, which was the case when a superyacht tender ran aground at speed because nothing untoward had occurred on previous transits of a similar route.

But we also report on occasions when crews did speak up, as in the case of an LNG tanker which sounded a fire alarm when they were unsure whether they saw steam or smoke coming out of the compressor room. And we also report on a port operator who realised that an emergency command had been missed and spoke up.

Regular readers will know that we often report on pilot ladder shortcomings. To help avert future incidents, we encourage ships to adopt the 'pilot ladder permit to work' form that we have published at the end of this newsletter.

Don't forget! CHIRP is here to receive your safety concerns in confidence. It welcomes reports of incidents, accidents and near misses from commercial seafarers, recreational mariners or those working ashore in the maritime industry.



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