

CONTACT DURING SHIP TO SHIP TRANSFER

Posted on 31.03.2015 by Adam Parnell

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Report Title Contact during ship to ship transfer

Initial Report

Report Text:

On completion of unmooring, in light breeze conditions, with a tug made fast forward and another made fast aft, the Manoeuvring vessel opened the bow and as result, the stern closed on to the anchored Mother Vessel which had maintained a steady heading. The Master of the Mother Vessel and the mooring master tried to contact the pilot and master of the Manoeuvring vessel on the agreed working VHF Channel 71 but without success. The master of the Manoeuvring Vessel was responsible for the manoeuvre assisted by the pilot. To minimise the impact, the master of Mother Vessel ordered 'Hard to starboard' and engines 'Dead slow ahead' in order to open the stern and to keep both vessel wings clear to avoid the contact. The Manoeuvring Vessel's port side wing railing touched the Mother Vessel's starboard side bridge wing searchlight causing it to be detached from its position.

Throughout the operation, the master and the pilot of the manoeuvring vessel stood on the port side but inside the fully closed bridge, which precluded any direct communication between the ships.

Lessons Learned

During STS operation it is crucial to establish good communications between the vessels with a back up method to be agreed in order to avoid same incidents in the future. It would be also a good practice during manoeuvrings for STS operation searchlight to be secured inside the bridge wings to avoid damage.

CHIRP Comment

The causal factors in this incident are the poor levels of communication between the ships and no appropriate agreed plan of action, nor a contingency plan to correct unsafe conditions. Owners

should also ensure their masters have been trained to handle ships in these close quarter situations. Masters should ensure:

- (a) the fenders are fit for purpose and advice given on their correct positioning, and
- (b) tugs have the required Bollard pull. Best practice guidance can be found in the “Ship to Ship Transfer Guide” published by Witherby Publishing, with authors being ICS/CDI/OCIMF/SIGTTO.



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