

# M2036

*Posted on 16.08.2022 by Adam Parnell*

**Category:** [Maritime](#)

**Report Title** Breach of TSS regulations

## Initial Report

Shortly after midnight, a tanker with a deep sea pilot on board was approaching a traffic separation scheme (TSS). The ship's draught was 20 meters. The tanker was about to enter the internationally recognised designated deep water route.

The master of a container ship with a draught of 14m approaching the same TSS informed the tanker that both vessels would arrive at the entrance of the deep water lane at the same time and asked the tanker to give him more room.

The pilot on the tanker informed the container vessel that the tanker was following the deep water track and directed that the container vessel should take the other lane, east of the deep water lane and it should avoid overtaking at that point.

Instead of entering the alternate TSS lane to the east, the container vessel entered the southerly TSS lane against the traffic flow, which was clearly marked on the charts. The container ship called several oncoming vessels to request they alter course to starboard to permit the container ship safe passage.

Shortly afterwards, the Coastguard asked the container ship what it was doing in the opposite lane.

## Comment

Either of the vessels could have slowed down to avoid a close-quarters situation at the entrance to the TSS deep water lane. It is considered unlikely that a few minutes' delay at this point would materially change the arrival time at their next port. The container vessel could safely have navigated the alternative lane to the east but ignored the pilot's advice to do so and entered the lane to the south, against the general direction of traffic flow for that lane.

Did the container vessel's Standard Operating Procedures empower the OOW to amend their speed (i.e. slow down) or amend their nav-track to allow them to proceed in the alternative lane. If not, the master should be called. Slowing down could have generated the space to avoid a close-quarters situation and provided more time to assess the situation. CHIRP encourages watch officers to think in terms of 'time' as well as 'space'.

When approaching a congested area such as the entrance to a traffic separation scheme, it is good practice to prepare a contingency plan if the situation allows, and identify the time or place by which you need to make a decision. In this case, the container vessel had a choice of two traffic separation lanes and, when it became apparent that the tanker was using the deep water route, could have elected to use the alternative route to the east.

The action by the container vessel was very hazardous and contravened international regulations regarding traffic separation schemes; good seamanship demands that vessels use the correct lane and proceed in the general direction of traffic flow for that lane.

## Key Issues

**Pressure**– This incident arose as a result of perceived time pressure. In reality, slowing one vessel down so that they arrived at the entrance of the channel at different times would not have meaningfully delayed either vessel's journey. Slowing down generates additional time to think through a problem. Thinking about 'time' and not just 'space' is a good navigational skill to develop.

**Situational Awareness** – The container vessel hailed several vessels and asked them to keep clear. That should have prompted the OOW to consider whether they were in the correct traffic separation lane.

**Alerting**- Neither the bridge team on the container vessel, or the tanker, nor any of the oncoming vessels warned the container vessel that it was in the wrong traffic separation lane, and it was only the intervention by the Coast Guard monitoring station approximately 15 minutes later that brought this to their attention.

**pressure**Pressure

**loss\_of\_awareness**Awareness

**lack\_of\_assertiveness**Assertiveness



