

M2070

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Category: [Maritime](#)

Report Title Mooring launch crushed against the side of a container vessel

Initial Report

The port berthing officer was attending to a large container vessel's berthing when he received a radio message from the mooring team to quickly head aft to investigate a serious incident during mooring operations.

The aft mooring launch sat at the stern of the containership, waiting for the third line to be lowered to them. Instead, the two lines that had been run ashore and were fast on the bollards were slackened off by the aft mooring team and dumped into the water. The launch tried to move away from the lines to avoid getting tangled. When the launch was almost clear, the ship heaved up on the two lines again, only to catch the mooring launch, lifting it out of the water and crushing against the underside of the ship's flare. The two launch crew considered abandoning the craft, as the prolonged shouting and blast of their horn did not affect getting the crew's attention. Finally, the ship's after mooring crew realised what had happened and slackened off the lines. Other than the boat crew being severely shaken by the incident, there were no injuries to the crew but some damage to the mooring boat.

Comment

This is an obvious case of miscommunication during a critical phase of the mooring operation.

Vessels often pay out lines to take the weight off them prior to transferring them to the working drums. The safest method is to do this only after all lines are ashore, and then moved one at a time, so that the lines and the vessel always remain under control. *CHIRP* wonders if there was a real- or perceived-time pressure on the mooring party for them to take such a dangerous short-cut?

Key Issues

Situational Awareness– While launches or other vessels such as tugs often make line handling easier, it complicates the mooring officer's task because they must simultaneously retain an awareness of what is happening on board as well as over the side. It is rare that a vessel has enough crew to dedicate one person to each of these tasks, although that would be ideal. Instead, additional care must be taken when working lines with vessels nearby.

Pressure- Mooring operations must never be rushed. Care is required by the master and pilot to provide timely messaging to the mooring teams to ensure that each order is carried out carefully and in an unhurried manner.

Distractions- The mooring team were distracted when they failed to hear the mooring boat crew's alert when they were trapped against the ship's hull. Keeping alert during mooring operations is vital, given the changing nature of the ship's movement and the strain on the mooring lines.



