

M2093

Posted on 27.02.2023 by Adam Parnell

Category: [Maritime](#)

Report Title Near miss due to distractions

Initial Report

Three deck crew on a superyacht tender were engaged in taking guests for a swim at sunset off some Caribbean islands.

The average depth was 2-5 metres, and you get a lot of shifting sands. The helmsperson was looking back, talking to guests whilst drifting, with one guest standing on the stern looking into the water.

One crew member noticed the echo sounder at a shallow depth, almost touching and immediately told the helmsperson, who reacted quickly by accelerating away. The guest fell backwards into the water with a near miss to the props! Fortunately, no one was hurt, but it could have ended badly. It is unclear if prop guards were fitted.

Comment

In taking immediate action to avoid grounding the vessel, the helmsperson did not assess (forgot?) to warn the guests that the tender would manoeuvre violently. The reporter did not state whether the helm checked that no one was in the water before coming astern, but this is an essential 'must do' every time – even in an emergency.

The helmsperson was distracted because they were talking to guests (a topic raised at the previous SYAB in report M1969). There is a natural tension between needing to concentrate on navigational safety and 'keeping your head out of the boat' and simultaneously being friendly and attentive to passengers and guests who do not appreciate the consequences of distracting the helm from their primary task. Good people skills are required to make the safety case with the passengers who may not always appreciate what you are trying to do.

Key Issues

Safety culture: A proactive safety culture would have empowered the helmsperson to remind the guests that they needed to focus on safety. Is this the case on your vessel?

Distraction: Guests and passengers should be reminded as they embark not to distract the crew;

this should be part of the safety culture on board.

Local practices: In general, vessels should go to anchor and turn off their means of propulsion before allowing anyone to enter the water. If this is not possible, then a prop guard should be fitted.

pressurePressure

distractionDistraction

loss_of_awarenessAwareness

poor_communicationCommunication



