

M2177

Posted on 18.01.2024 by Adam Parnell

Category: [Superyachts](#)

Report Title Near miss

Initial Report

In this incident, a large yacht was anchored in a confined area with other yachts when a sudden squall with strong winds struck. The anchor chain stretched, and the yacht began to drag the anchor, which was confirmed by the radar anchor watch. To respond, the bridge team started the main engines to reposition the yacht.

However, the crew in the water, who were busy securing recreational water equipment like jet skis, must be made aware that the engine was about to start. When the swim platform was raised for manoeuvring, those in the water could not reboard the yacht.

With no means of communication and the strong wind making it difficult to shout warnings, the crew dropped a line into the water to allow the yacht to manoeuvre freely. Those in the water had no choice but to get on the jet skis to stay afloat and were forced to tow inflatables, lines, and other skis away from the yacht, making the situation more complicated.

The propulsion system was engaged without warning, creating a severe safety risk. At this crucial moment, the captain and chief officer were on the bridge while the second officer was on a break. There were no officers available on deck to manage the unfolding situation.

Comment

This incident highlights the critical importance of effective communication, adherence to safety procedures, and situational awareness to prevent potentially hazardous scenarios involving crew members and watercraft near the yacht.

Line squalls, a common meteorological phenomenon, can be predicted with a vigilant bridge watch during recreational activities, including a weather forecast in the assessment before deploying watercraft equipment, which is fundamental. Once the decision to deploy watercraft and allow passengers and crew into the water is made, the bridge must always be aware of who and what equipment is in the water, and continuous monitoring is imperative. Unfortunately, in this case, the lack of rapid communication between the bridge team and the crew in the water compromised safety.

The morning toolbox talk should encompass all planned recreational activities, emphasising communication protocols, weather forecasts, and contingency plans for aborting activities if conditions become unsafe.

A thorough review of the anchor-dragging procedure is necessary for a dragging anchor. Initiating engine operations without informing anyone, especially with passengers and crew in the water without communication, poses a significant danger. Before any yacht manoeuvres, it is crucial to ensure the proper securing or retrieval of water sports equipment to prevent damage to propellers and the motor yacht.

Effective safety management involves assigning designated crew members the responsibility for deck safety, ensuring a constant focus on safety, even without officers present. Monitoring weather conditions, particularly preparedness for sudden changes like a line squall, is essential for proactive safety measures.

Regular safety training for all crew members is required, including routine safety drills to prepare the crew for emergencies, such as “cutaway procedures.”

Following an incident, conducting a thorough review is imperative. This post-incident analysis is crucial for learning from the experience and implementing improvements in safety measures on the yacht to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Key Issues

Situational Awareness- The imminent change in weather was realised when it was too late and prevented early action to get everyone back on board safely. What procedures does your company have for deteriorating weather when passengers and crew are engaged in recreational water sports? Do you carry out a “cutaway” drill?

Capability- can your officers recognise the signs of a line squall?

Distractions- With passengers and guests in the water, this should be classified as high-risk. Focusing on the vessel and passengers must be the top priority, with nothing to create a distraction.

Communications- Do you announce to all passengers and crew that this activity will be cut short if the weather conditions change? How do you inform your passengers and crew in similar circumstances?

Alerting- How would you arrange to alert everyone in the water engaged in water sports? What communications equipment does your vessel possess?

distractionDistraction

loss_of_awarenessAwareness

poor_communicationCommunication

alertingAlerting

capabilityCapability



