

M2216

Posted on 14.05.2024 by Adam Parnell

Category: [General Maritime](#)

Report Title Inappropriate pressure placed on the master

Initial Report

The master of a large vessel received unusual instructions from charterers concerning pre-arrival reporting to the authorities.

The vessel had sailed with both anchors damaged, one more so than the other. A dispensation to sail was granted, and a condition of class was imposed on the vessel. New anchors would be supplied to the vessel at the next port.

The master was advised not to mention the dispensation letter to the port authorities at the next port, as revealing the state of the anchors would require a tug escort to the berth.

Comment

A dispensation letter is usually a one-off temporary permit to sail to the next port, where spare parts or replacements for technical problems can be rectified. The authorities granting the dispensation letter, usually from the class society, do so based on a risk assessment. As such, it must be conveyed to the next port during the port pre-arrival information exchange. The dispensation letter is a lifeline, granting temporary reprieve amidst technical challenges.

The Master must exert their overriding authority to mitigate the risks. This is a legal requirement, and pressure to do anything other than act safely must be refused. CHIRP advocates that when such requests are received, the master consults them to the ship's DPA in writing.

Given the complete loss of anchoring efficiency for one of the anchors, employing an escort tug is the correct mitigation measure in a higher-risk port area to ensure safe passage to the berth.

Additionally, failure to follow the dispensation requirements can invalidate the vessel's insurance cover in the event of an incident. Cutting corners has severe consequences—a single misstep can unravel insurance coverage, leaving the vessel vulnerable to legal issues.

Ultimately, in an incident where the anchors are required but they cannot function, and the port has not been informed, the company can be prosecuted for failure to notify.

When in doubt, escalate. The master's duty is not just to navigate the vessel; it is to navigate through a maze of regulations, ensuring every decision is a commitment to safety. Commercial

costs for providing an escort tug must never interfere with the vessel's safety.

There is no compromise in maritime operations: safety must always come first.

Key Issues

Pressure- Excess pressure to ensure that commercial costs and operational deadlines are met is a dangerous human factor that creates unnecessary doubt and can cloud the judgement of those making critical safety decisions.

Culture—The chartering team's connection with safety was poor, and the ship management team did not support the master's openness in reporting the dispensation with the port authorities and sharing the risks outlined by the dispensation letter.

Teamwork- The organisation is pulling in different directions, compromising safety. Reading this report, do you feel that this sometimes happens to you?

Local Practices—Follow the correct legal requirements as Master and put in writing your concerns. Contact the DPA. The financial consequences of using an anchor that cannot function and then discovering that the situation has not been disclosed in the port arrival information will be many times higher than the tug escort fees. The reputational damage to the company will be even higher.



