

Grounding of a container ship

A 90,449 GRT container ship ran aground on the Varne Bank in the English Channel. The investigation report highlights some inadequacies in voyage management system skills and errors of judgement resulting from a disregard for conventional navigation.

The ship was set on a course to pass south of the Varne Bank, in accordance with the Voyage Plan. At 0410 the OOW altered course 6° to port due to the traffic situation and, 15 minutes later, 8° to starboard, so as to meet the old course line. Subsequently, the lookout reported a light from the Varne lightship and an object crossing into the fairway from the port side. The OOW then planned a 12° to starboard evasion manoeuvre, which took the ship between the east and west cardinal buoys marking the Varne Bank – which he interpreted as moving fishing vessels.

While approaching the Varne Bank – and subsequently running aground – approximately 15 to 20 different acoustic signals were heard, which the OOW interpreted as a problem with the engine system. It went unnoticed for some time that the ship was aground and that there was no longer any speed over the ground.

The ship was equipped with an Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) but it only had the status of an Electronic Chart System (ECS). The report notes that too often, the distinction between the various operating modes of an ECDIS are not clear enough, and that the term 'Voyage Management System' tends to be used if no specific operating mode should be set.

It adds: *'In all operating circumstances, a Voyage Management System (VMS) is used to facilitate the fulfilment of the navigational tasks of the officer of the watch on the bridge. This generic term covers types of systems that differ with regard to handling and functionality and the core purpose of which is always essentially to display chart information on a computer screen.'*

Ultimately the ship ran aground as a result of the crew's inadequate voyage management system skills and resultant incorrect settings, particularly in relation to depth contours, chart alarms and the depth alarm settings; and, errors of judgement on the part of the chief officer and/or the bridge team in disregarding conventional navigation.

Accident Investigation Reports

The report concludes that errors made by the OOW in the handling of the VMS and the interpretation of the chart display could have been avoided with navigational due diligence. Although it was not possible to determine whether navigation was carried out using the paper charts, the report assumes that during his bridge watch, the OOW relied too much on the 'ECDIS' displays and navigated solely 'according to the computer'.

The report suggests that it is imperative that the operators of nautical vessels check and clarify which on-board systems and electronic charts currently fulfil ECDIS status and whether these systems have been accepted by the relevant administrative bodies of the flag country as fulfilment of the regulations relating to equipment. It adds that crews must be instructed unequivocally on how the on-board navigational systems and equipment should be used.

The full report can be downloaded from: www.bsu-bund.de/cIn_016/nn_101754/EN/publications/Investigation_20Reports/investigation_report_node.html?__nnn=true (Investigation Report 1/08)

Reports & Studies

SYMPOSIUM 2009

Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC)

The SIRC Symposium is held every two years with the intention of feeding back their research findings to those across the sector who may find them of interest, and use, in forming policy, in reaching decisions about strategy, and in considering operational matters. The six papers that were presented are included in this single document, including: **Patterns in injury reporting** (Michael Bloor); **Making sense of differences in perceptions of risk** (Nick Bailey); **Investigating and Reporting Accidents at Sea** (Mohamed Ghanem); **Supply chains and best practice in the management of health and safety at sea** (David Walters); **Vessel design and the wellbeing of seafarers** (Neil Ellis); **Training and technology: potential issues for shipping** (Lijun Tang).

Downloadable from: <http://www.sirc.cf.ac.uk/pdf/Symposium%2009.pdf>

HAS THE 'GLOBAL VILLAGE' INFLUENCED THE SAFETY OF OUR SHIPS?

Captain Valerio De Rossi MSc, MNI

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DEVELOPING STANDARDS FOR MARITIME ENGLISH FOR SAFER SEAS

Professor Reza Ziarati

General Coordinato
TUDEV Institute of Maritime Studies

A report on the outcome of the MarTEL (Maritime Test of English Language) Project being developed by several European countries within the framework of the European Union Leonardo da Vinci educational programme. The aim of the project is to establish international standards in Maritime English to improve safety in the shipping world.

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MANAGEMENT ON BOARD

Captain Shahrokh Khodayari

The subject of management on board like any other system requires a planned approach. There are various patterns which are used to manage a collection of people working in a group or in a company. In this latest essay from Captain Khodayari, he offers some thoughts on the supervision and leadership that is needed to be practiced especially by the master on board.

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THE HUMAN ELEMENT - AN INTRODUCTION

Lloyd's Register

This introductory booklet to the Human Element has now been translated into the Chinese and Turkish languages. Chinese version downloadable from: www.he-alert.org/documents/published/he00855.pdf Turkish version downloadable from: www.he-alert.org/documents/published/he00860.pdf

w: www.he-alert.org
e: editor@he-alert.org

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