

Collision between tankers while approaching anchorage area of port.

CASUALTY CIRCULAR NO.3 OF 2007 (Regulatory / Guidance / Information)

No:11-NT(2)/2005

Dated: 28.05.2007

Sub: Collision between tankers while approaching anchorage area of port.

Objectives:

- To share disseminate valuable information with ship-owners, ship managers, Masters and crew of a ship regarding the importance of observing practice of good seamanship during the operation of the vessel in port
- To guide the Master and the crew to exercise reasonable care, and skill during the maneuvering of ship in the approaches of ports.

NARRATIVE:

The Master of an Indian tanker while making an approach to an Indian port in Gujarat planned her passage to pass ahead of another anchored vessel, a tanker. The Master intended to anchor his vessel in a safe assigned anchorage position after passing ahead of the anchored vessel. During this operation, he mis-judged the effects of tide and currents and noticed the measures taken by him to counter the effects of these forces were not adequate to avoid the development of close quarter situations with the anchored tanker. This act on part of the Master resulted in collision with the anchored vessel.

OBSERVATIONS:

1. The Bridge team failed to take precautions which are required by the ordinary practice of seamen taking into account limitation of the vessels involved and special circumstances prevailing during the maneuvering of the vessel.
2. Good navigational watch keeping practices prescribed under the provision of STCW / ISM Code were not adhered to.
3. The primary cause of this collision was attributed to underestimation of drift due to tide / currents while executing the maneuver at slow speed.
4. The secondary cause of this incident was attributed to reduction of vessels headway with the tide on her beam which forced this vessel to drift on to the anchored vessel.

LESSONS LEARNT:

1. Masters shall prepare comprehensive anchorage plan in accordance with SOLAS requirement Chapter V  Safety of Navigation.
2. This plan shall be explained to the Bridge team well in advance.
3. The positions of all vessels around the intended anchorage position shall be plotted as a part of good navigational watch keeping procedures prior to approaching the anchorage area.
4. A tenet of good seamanship shall be exercised by the Master by passing stern of the anchored vessel giving bold helm and engine movement to control the set in drift of the vessel . Bold main engine movements should be used when required to control the set/ drift or gain steering control of the vessel.
5. Substantially enhanced drift when proceeding at slow speed due to prevailing tides / currents should be anticipated when approaching or leaving harbors

The Directorate being committed to safety of ships during its navigation in the approaches of Indian ports draws the attention of shipowners, shipmanagers, charterers and agents to casualty Circular No. 6 of 2006 (available on DGS web site www.dgshipping.com) which provides the guidelines to the ship master while making an approach to Indian ports.

In the light of above, the shipowners, ship managers are once again advised to provide necessary guidance to their Masters in a documented form impressing upon them the significance of exercising extreme caution during the maneuvering of a ship congested waters.

Sd/-

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