

## Collision during port approach

It was early morning, before dawn, so it was dark outside. The weather was good, cloudy, visibility was about 4-5M with smooth seas. The vessel was a bulk carrier carrying iron ore as cargo and was waiting for its berth at the anchorage.

In the early morning the master was informed that the berth was ready and that they should proceed to the pilot station. He informed the 2nd officer who was the OOW to prepare for departure.

The 2nd Officer had prepared the passage plan the previous day from the anchorage to the berth, which the master had approved. The bridge was equipped with two ARPA radars, one with AIS feed, two GPS sets and all other required equipment. The 2nd Officer completed the pre-departure checklist and tested all the equipment and steering: everything was working properly.

The master joined the 2nd Officer on the bridge where an outlook was also present to do the hand steering.

The chief officer proceeded forward with the anchor party and heaved up the anchor without any problems. When the anchor was secured the chief officer proceeded to the bridge.

The vessel departed from the anchorage and the master had the conn. The vessel was in hand steering.

On the bridge the Chief officer and 2nd Officer assisted the master with navigation but they had no specific roles assigned. All conversations were in English.

The master navigated using the approved passage plan and had a speed of 12 knots. The officers discussed the traffic in the area. They could see an inbound cruise ship which



was on the port quarter 3M astern. The master acquired the cruise ship on the radar. It was inbound for the pilot station. The cruise ship was maintaining a speed of 16 knots. It became apparent that the cruise ship was overtaking the vessel and that their plan was to do this on the port side. According to the ARPA the CPA would be very close. The master reduced the speed to increase the CPA for the cruise ship.

The master also plotted an outbound vessel, which was on the starboard bow. This limited his options of altering to starboard.

Over the VHF the pilot's informed the vessel that the cruise ship would be picking up the pilot first and that the vessel should slow down and follow the cruise ship.

On the vessel the Chief Officer reported to the master that the cruise ship was 3 cables off their port quarter. The master became concerned as the radar vectors indicated that the cruise ship would cross just ahead if it maintained its course. He reduced speed to half ahead to let the cruise ship cross in front.

The cruise ship was still maintaining its course and speed. The distance was now only 1 cable and she was abeam, the master

ordered hard to starboard. He also stopped the engines.

The cruise ship crossed the vessel's bow and altered to starboard, while at the same time reducing its speed.

The bulk carrier could not avoid the cruise ship and hit it just astern of midship.

### **Consequences**

50 cabins were damaged, and the starboard side was ripped open on the cruise ship. No injuries occurred. Both vessels had to be repaired in a dry dock.

If the cruise ship had maintained its course and speed she would have cleared the bulk carrier. ■

### **The Swedish Club point of view**

At the end of the document, you will find issues to be considered related to this case.

# Discussion

Go to the "File" menu and select "Save as..." to save the pdf-file on your computer. You can place the marker below each question to write the answer directly into the file.



1. What were the immediate causes of this accident?

2. Is there a risk that this kind of accident could happen on our vessel?

3. What should the cruise ship have done to prevent the collision?

4. What should the bulk carrier have done to prevent the collision?

5. Discuss the COLREGs rules 2,13,16,17 & 34 as per this collision.

6. At what point would it have been acceptable to contact the other vessel over the VHF?

7. At what point would it NOT have been acceptable to contact the other vessel over the VHF?

8. Do our bridge team members have assigned roles and duties when navigating?

9. Is closed loop communication used on the bridge?

10. Do we practice MRM within our bridge team?

11. Do we have a risk assessment onboard that addresses these risks?

12. How could this accident have been prevented?

13. What sections of our SMS would have been breached if any?

14. Is our SMS sufficient to prevent this kind of accident?

15. If procedures were breached why do you think this was the case?

16. What do you think was the root cause of this accident?

## The Swedish Club point of view

- While navigating it is important to have assigned roles for Conn, monitor and navigation. For more detailed information see our Bridge instructions booklet.
- The pilot station could have done a much better job informing the vessel at an earlier stage at which order and times the pilots would board the vessels.
- If a situation is unclear it is very important not to let assumptions dictate, and to seek clarification.
- To prevent a situation like this, both masters should have asked for clarification from the pilot station over the VHF at an early stage before the risk of collision was apparent.
- It is well known that collision avoidance should not be discussed over the VHF but in this situation it was not clear what the vessels' intentions were. In the initial stage before the vessels were in close quarters, the masters could have asked for clarification from the pilot station and from the other vessel to ensure they would pass each other safely. If discussing over the VHF it needs to be verified which vessels are discussing with each other.
- It is important to clarify the situation and do evasive manoeuvres in ample time. The cruise ship manoeuvre was very dangerous and is not in accordance with proper ship handling and as per the COLREGs when overtaking a vessel as per the rules.
- The cruise ship was overtaking and should have stayed out of the way of the bulk carrier as per rules 13 and 16.
- The cruise ship also altered to starboard and reduced speed after it had crossed the bow of the bulk carrier. This could also be considered a breach of rule 34.
- The bulk carrier was the stand-on vessel as per rule 17 and should have maintained its course and speed until it was apparent that the cruise ship could not avoid collision.