

Grounding because of missed waypoint

It was night and the vessel was sailing towards the next port close to the coast. It was also raining, so visibility was limited.

The 2nd officer was on the bridge and acting OOW. The passage plan had been approved by the Master and the bridge team and it had been entered into the GPS and ECDIS.

Suddenly the vessel vibrated heavily and veered strongly to port. The OOW was confused as to what had happened. Soon afterwards the forepeak alarm sounded. The Master came to the bridge and asked what had happened. The OOW was still confused.

The Master called the chief officer and asked him to check the forepeak. A couple of minutes later the chief officer informed him that there was water in the forepeak and that it was rising.

The Master stopped the engines and the vessel drifted until the situation could be assessed. The Master realised that the vessel had hit the bottom and contacted the nearest JRCC and informed them that the vessel had hit the bottom and was taking in water. He asked for assistance as he was unsure what had happened.

There was no pollution or injuries. Fortunately, the steering gear, engines and bow thruster were all operational. A rescue ship from the nearest port came to the vessel but no assistance was needed, and the vessel sailed to the nearest port to assess the damage and berthed without incident.

The vessel traded frequently in this area, so the voyage was not unusual. It was discovered that the navigation officer had forgotten to insert a waypoint in the GPS. This meant that the course took the vessel straight over a shallow area where the vessel ran aground.



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.



When discussing this case please consider that the actions taken at the time made sense for all involved. Do not only judge, but also ask why you think these actions were taken and could this happen on your vessel?

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. How could this accident have been prevented?

4. Do we use all navigational equipment and reference publications when completing a passage plan?

5. When the passage plan is completed, is it a requirement to do a two-person check?

6. Is the OOW supposed to check the parameters of all nav equipment such as e.g. ECDIS, GPS, Radar, VHF?

7. Do we do a two-person check for critical operations?

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

9. Does our SMS address these risks?

10. How could we improve our SMS to address these issues?

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

12. Is there any kind of training that we should do that addresses these issues?

Issues to consider

- When creating the passage plan it is suggested that the plan is double checked by another officer to ensure all waypoints have been selected.
- The passage plan needs to be signed by all OOWs and the Master.
- It is prudent to do a two-person check of the passage plan and navigational equipment before departure.