

Collision in busy anchorage after grounding

It was evening with good visibility, vessel A, was approaching port. The Master had received orders to arrive at the pilot station at 20:40, which was one hour earlier than previously planned. To make the new ETA the speed had to be increased from 10 knots to 14 knots. Instead of following the passage plan, the Master decided to take a shortcut through an anchorage.

On the bridge was the Third Officer, who was the OOW, the Master who had the conn and the Chief Officer who was monitoring traffic both on the radar and visually. He was also talking on the VHF. An AB was manually steering. The Third Officer was filling out the logbook. The two ARPA radars were in north up, relative motion and the radars were switched between 3 NM and 6 NM range. The CPA alarm was set to 0.3 NM.

The Second Officer who was the Navigation Officer, had already entered the waypoints for the original passage plan into both ARPA radars and the ECDIS, and a cross-track error alarm of 1 cable had been set up. During the approach he was not on the bridge and the passage plan was not updated for the shortcut as the Master did not consider it was necessary to update the passage plan.

C-15 minutes: During the approach to the pilot station there were two smaller vessels ahead of vessel A that would be overtaken on their starboard side. Shortly after the vessels had been overtaken the Master ordered an alteration to port which meant that vessel A crossed in front of the bow of the two vessels.

C-12 minutes: The Master was also aware of two outbound vessels from the port, vessels B and C. These vessels were not acquired on the radar. Vessel B called up vessel A and asked what



their intentions were. The Master responded that he would like to have a port-to-port passing. Vessel B replied that it was turning hard to starboard to make the passing. The Master altered course to starboard. At this time vessel B was about 1 NM away on the port bow.

C-9 minutes: The Master became aware of vessel C on the port bow. He could see the green, red and forward top lights on vessel C but did not take any action. Vessel A was maintaining a speed of 10 knots.

C-7 minutes: The Master decided to open up/increase the CPA by altering 5 degrees to starboard for vessel C. A minute later the Master realised that vessel C was very close, and he ordered full ahead and hard to starboard. The vessels just passed each other clear by 10 metres. When vessel C was abeam the Master became aware of an island just ahead and he ordered hard to port. When C passed clear the Master ordered midships and then 20 degrees to port.

C-4 minutes: A minute later the pilot called the vessel on the VHF and asked why the vessel was heading dangerously close to the island. The vessel was now very close to it. The Master once again ordered midships and believed they would stay clear of the island.

C-3 minutes: Suddenly the vessel started to vibrate heavily and there was a loud noise. The vessel's speed was reduced to 5 knots. The Master was initially confused about what had happened but then understood that the vessel had hit the bottom but was still making way.

C-2 minutes: The Master identified that vessel D was at anchor only 0.15 NM ahead of them, at which point the AB informed him that the rudder was not responding. The Master ordered starboard 20 and then hard to starboard, but the AB repeated that the rudder was not responding. The vessel was now sailing at about 7 knots. The Chief Officer suggested dropping the anchor but the Master declined.

Collision: The Master ordered full astern but shortly afterwards vessel A's bow hit the side of vessel D.

The Master reported the grounding to the VTS but did not consider it was necessary to report the collision.

Shortly afterwards the vessel managed to disengage from vessel D by engine manoeuvres and later dropped anchor. ■

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. What should we do if the passage plan is changed?

5. How do COLREG 5 Look-out apply?

6. How do COLREG 6 Safe speed apply?

7. How do COLREG 7 Risk of collision apply?

8. How do COLRGE 8 Action to avoid collision apply?

9. What are our procedures regarding crossing the bow of another vessel?

10. What are our radar and CPA requirements?

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

12. Does our SMS address these risks?

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

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

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