

MONTHLY SAFETY SCENARIO

JUNE 2021

Swept away by large wave



The vessel was at anchor awaiting further orders when the weather started to worsen, with a wind force of 5-6, southerly winds and a south-westerly swell of about 3 metres.

The Chief Engineer was on deck and noticing that one of the mooring ropes was trailing in the water from the stern, he informed the bridge. Soon afterwards the Second Officer and three ABs, followed by the Chief Officer, came to help retrieve the rope. The Master was on the bridge and monitored the operation.

While the crew were retrieving the mooring rope the weather rapidly worsened bringing with it a squall. The Chief Engineer saw a large wave coming towards the vessel and immediately called to everyone to try to find something to hold onto. The wave was about 5 metres and hit the open deck, carrying the Chief Engineer and one AB into the water.

The crew could see the Chief Engineer and the AB in the water about 25 metres astern. The crew could not

find any lifebuoys on the stern as they had been taken to the deck workshop to be repainted. This meant that they had to run midship to find lifebuoys but none of these had a line attached. Three lifebuoys were thrown into the water, but they did not reach the Chief Engineer or the AB. The Master released the starboard MOB light from the bridge into the water. He broadcast a man overboard distress signal on DSC, MF/HF, VHF and Sat C. The coastguard was also informed about the incident and started to search for the lost crew members immediately.

The vessel launched its fast rescue boat, proceeding towards where the crew members were lost. The Master could see the MOB lifebuoy smoke signal in the water for about two minutes and then heavy rain and swell restricted the visibility. He now pushed the MOB button on the GPS and on the ECDIS. The Second Officer came to the bridge and started to fill out the MOB checklist. There was no sight of the two men.



A coastguard aircraft informed the vessel a couple of hours later that they had sighted a body a couple of miles away but lost contact because of poor visibility. Lookouts were positioned on the bridge wings to watch out for the men. The vessel and coast guard searched for the two men for two days but without success.

Questions

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 sections in our SMS, if any, were breached?
5. Would our SMS have been enough to prevent this accident?
6. If procedures weren't followed, why do you think this was the case?
7. Do we have risk assessment procedures on board that address these risks?
8. What do you think is the root cause of this accident?