

## Contact while berthing

It was early morning and the general cargo vessel was sailing up a South American river with a pilot onboard. The master and pilot had done a pilot exchange where the pilot presented the plan for the berthing. The vessel would be berthed portside between two vessels which were already berthed. The master asked the pilot if any tugboats would be necessary but the pilot said it would be unnecessary as the vessel would have 200 m clearance between the berthed vessels.

The vessel had a speed of about 2 knots over the ground in the river as there were strong currents and some wind.

During the final berthing manoeuvre the vessel passed one of the berthed vessel with only 20m clearance on the portside as the current set the vessel towards the berthed vessel.

The master had the conn and was positioned on the port wing as he was manoeuvring the vessel, the pilot gave him advice and instructions. When the master noticed that the vessel was

very close to the berthed vessel he ordered full power to starboard on the bow thruster.

Despite the master's efforts to turn the bow to starboard the vessel continued turning to port and the bow made contact with the berthed vessel. The vessel's superstructure was forward so the bridge wing also caused some damage to the berthed vessel.

The master finally managed to get control of the vessel and berth it. Upon berthing the vessel, the master noted that the distance between the two berthed vessels was only 10 m forward and 20 m aft. ■



# 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. How do we ensure that the berth is suitable?

5. How do we ensure that we keep track of the current and wind and how is this communicated within the bridge team?

6. Do we have assigned roles for the bridge team, so the officer having the conn gets proper information?

7. If the berthing arrangement is very different from that planned, what are our procedures?

8. Would it be okay to berth with our vessel and no tugs with just 20 m clearance?

9. If the pilot's information is not as planned how should we proceed as a bridge team?

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

11. Does our SMS address these risks?

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

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

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