

Loss of anchor

The vessel was waiting for its berth to become available so it was decided to anchor. A pre-anchor briefing was held on the bridge where how many shackles to be used was discussed and what different tasks the crew had during the anchoring operation. One week earlier the bosun had inspected the windlass including the brake linings and had reported that all was in good condition.



The weather forecast warned about rough-weather the following day. The master informed the bridge team that he would decide what to do later on.

The anchoring party consisted of the chief officer, bosun and two ABs. The bosun was controlling the brake, the chief officer was reporting what was happening to the bridge, and giving orders to the bosun and ABs. This was the first time the crew had anchored at this anchorage.

The vessel approached the dedicated anchor position that the VTS had given them. When the vessel was fully stopped the chief officer ordered the bosun to walk the anchor out using the windlass motor. When the anchor was about half a shackle above the seabed the anchor was let go. All went well and the crew resumed their normal duties when the vessel was safely moored.

During the night the weather deteriorated. The OOW noticed that the vessel started to move and realised that the vessel was dragging. He called the master who came up on the bridge. The weather was now rapidly deteriorating and the master woke up the chief officer and told

him to assemble the anchor party and heave up the anchor.

The weather had now increased to Beaufort 8 and the bow was slamming because of the large waves. Suddenly, while the anchor was being heaved up the windlass motor stopped. The chief officer could see smoke coming from the windlass motor. It was obvious that the motor could not be fixed straight away. At the same time the weather was deteriorating even further so it was decided that the anchor chain should be cut. When the chain had been cut the vessel left the anchorage and drifted in a safer position.

Consequences

The anchor and chain was lost. The vessel was not allowed to continue its journey until the anchor and chain had been replaced. The vessel had a spare anchor but the operation to replace it and the chain took several days.

The port authorities also demanded that the anchor should be recovered. A salvage company was hired to retrieve the lost anchor and chain.



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. Where does the chain of error start?

3. What is the risk of this type of accident happening to our vessel?

4. Are our anchoring procedures sufficient to deal with problems like this?

5. Is maintenance for anchoring equipment in the PMS sufficient?

6. What are the environmental parameters for leaving the anchorage?

7. What is the maximum depth that our anchoring equipment is designed to anchor at?

8. How could this accident have been prevented?

9. What sections of our SMS were breached if any?

10. Is our SMS sufficient to prevent this accident?

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

12. Do we have Risk Assessment procedures onboard that address these risks?

13. Would a work permit have identified these risks?

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