

SYNOPSIS

During the evening of 30 July 2008 the cruise ship *Pacific Sun* rolled heavily in gale force winds and high seas while returning to Auckland on the final leg of an 8-day cruise of the South Pacific. Of the 1730 passengers and 671 crew on board, 77 were injured, with seven sustaining major injuries.

The motion of the ship had increased during the day, and at sunset the master had hove to into wind and swell, in doing so reducing the vessel's speed to below that at which the one working stabiliser was effective. Two hours later, the ship rolled heavily three times, to an estimated angle of heel of 31°, as the master was attempting to reduce her motion by altering course.

Many of the injuries sustained by the passengers and crew were caused by falls and contact with unsecured furnishings and loose objects in the busy public rooms, including those designated as passenger emergency muster stations. Following the accident, the moving furniture and debris made many of the public rooms unusable, and the master instructed the passengers to return to their cabins for their own safety.

Had *Pacific Sun's* furnishings and fittings been sufficiently secured so as to resist moving when she heeled, the number of injuries would have been greatly reduced.

As a consequence of this accident, Princess Cruises has taken action to: supply its bridge teams with night vision glasses; improve deck officers' training in the risks associated with heavy weather; and review the securing arrangements for its vessels' satellite communications equipment.

Princess Cruises has been recommended to: review the role of active stabilisers in ensuring passenger safety; review the risk of injury from moving furnishings and objects, and develop suitable means of securing such items for heavy weather; develop a standard for securing furnishings and equipment in public spaces; and develop its heavy weather guidance and instructions to include actions to reduce the risk of injury to personnel.

MAIB has recommended that the Cruise Lines International Association and the Passenger Shipping Association develop a guide on industry best practice based on Princess Cruises' standard for securing furnishings. The trade associations have also been recommended to promulgate the lessons learned from this accident to their members.