

SYNOPSIS



At 0257 on 15 May 2008, the Panamanian registered car carrier, *Grand Neptune*, was on passage in the Dover Strait Traffic Separation Scheme when she was manoeuvred hard to starboard and completed a 360° turn to avoid the Italian registered passenger cruise ship *Costa Atlantica*. *Costa Atlantica* was on passage from Le Havre to Harwich with 1697 passengers on board at a speed of 16 knots.

The incident occurred as the passenger ship crossed the separation scheme between *MSC Serena* and *Grand Neptune*, both of which were transiting the south-west traffic lane at speeds of 18 and 17 knots respectively. The distance between the south-west bound vessels was less than 3nm.

The investigation identified a number of factors related to the decisions and actions taken by the bridge team on board *Costa Atlantica* which contributed to the development of the close-quarters situation, including:

- The information on which *Costa Atlantica*'s master based his decision to cross the south-west traffic lane was inaccurate. It was derived from the results of an ARPA radar 'trial manoeuvre' with which neither the master nor the OOW were familiar.
- The manoeuvring of *Costa Atlantica* during the vessel's crossing of the south-west traffic lane was potentially confusing, and the intentions of her master were not readily apparent to other vessels.
- The bridge team on board *Costa Atlantica* were slow to appreciate the risk of collision with *Grand Neptune*.
- The bridge team on board *Costa Atlantica* did not appreciate the possible inaccuracy of ARPA data when manoeuvring.

Following the incident, the owner of *Costa Atlantica* conducted an internal investigation which identified similar safety issues. Accordingly, to prevent similar accidents from occurring in the future, it has taken a number of actions aimed at promulgating the safety lessons learned to its fleet, providing more detail in its bridge procedures, and improving the performance of its bridge teams. In view of the actions already taken, the MAIB has issued no recommendations.