

SYNOPSIS



(All times are UTC)

At about 0408 on 23 January 2005, just south of Grimsby Middle in the River Humber, the UK registered 1696gt tanker *Amenity* collided with the Norwegian registered ro-ro cargo vessel *Tor Dania*. Both vessels suffered significant damage but there were no injuries or pollution and both vessels were able to continue to berth un-aided before being withdrawn from service for repairs. There was a north-westerly wind blowing force 4 to 5, visibility was good and there were moderate seas.

Both vessels were being piloted by their respective masters, who held Pilotage Exemption Certificates (PECs) for the Humber. *Amenity* was outbound from Immingham Oil Terminal (IOT) with a cargo of 815t petrol and 1435t diesel. *Tor Dania* was inbound from Cuxhaven with four passengers and a cargo of new cars.

As *Tor Dania* made her turn for the South Shoal buoy, south of Grimsby Middle, the master of *Amenity* incorrectly concluded that *Tor Dania* had turned onto a collision course. He decided that his only option was to put the engine of his vessel full astern and, in an attempt to counter the port swing that this would induce, he put the steering hard to starboard. However, *Amenity* turned to port and hit *Tor Dania* close to midships on the port side at a speed of about 7 knots.

There was no ship's machinery failure or influence from the prevailing conditions; the collision occurred as a result of the actions taken by *Amenity's* master. He expected *Tor Dania* to display a green sidelight briefly, as she turned for the South Shoal buoy at Clee Ness. However, it is likely that he was either distracted or mentally overloaded, perhaps by completing the 0400 logbook entries, and when he looked back up he was not presented with the sight he was expecting. This might have led to him making a quick decision based on a perceived emergency situation. However, *Amenity* had sufficient depth of water to navigate safely outside the main channel, and ample space to manoeuvre out of the way without reducing speed.

ABP is restricted in the training and examination requirements it can impose on applicants for PECs; they may not be more onerous than those applied to pilots. The training the master of *Amenity* received to qualify for his PEC consisted of many voyages inbound under the supervision of both another PEC holder and authorised pilots, in addition to the study required for the examination. He had not completed any simulator training.

Under the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC), each Competent Harbour Authority (CHA) is allowed to prescribe its own requirements for the authorisation of pilots and PEC holders. This leads to some CHAs requiring a practical stage to the PEC examination on board the vessel and/or in a vessel simulator, while others require only an examination of the theory, using table-top exercises.

The MAIB investigation identified the following safety issues:

- According to the local bye-laws, *Amenity* was the give way vessel as she was sailing against the tide.
- The master of *Amenity*:
 - Might have become overloaded in piloting the vessel.
 - Made a quick decision based on scanty information, and did not re-evaluate this decision as more information became apparent.
 - Took action that was contrary to rule 7c of the collision regulations.
 - Had no other officer present on the bridge to assist him and monitor the pilotage.
 - Did not use his lookout to best effect.
 - Did not have a formally assessed act of pilotage as part of his PEC training or examination.
 - Displayed poor practical pilotage abilities in an emergency situation that were not recognised during the training and examination for his PEC.
- There are no national standards for the examination and issuing of PECs to applicants. The PMSC requires CHAs to ensure best practice in addressing the risks identified in their waters.

Following this accident:

- Associated British Ports Humber Estuary Services (ABP HES) took a number of actions. These included altering their procedures so that each PEC candidate is either formally assessed by a senior pilot on his final qualifying trip, or the examination is conducted on passage.
- F.T. Everard has also taken a number of actions, including implementing a new bridge procedure throughout the fleet. The new procedure requires two qualified navigating officers to be present on the bridge at all times when in pilotage waters, except in the area immediately off the berth.

The MAIB has recommended that the Port Marine Safety Code Steering Group evaluate, then promulgate current industry, best practice to port operators on the issuance of PECs, in the form of guidelines. Such guidance should recognise the need for:

- Practical evaluation of the PEC candidate's local knowledge and ship-handling ability.
- Assessment of the candidate's ability to cope with foreseeable emergency and/or high density traffic scenarios.
- Verification of the relevant bridge team manning arrangement, to ensure appropriate levels of support for the PEC holder during port movements.