

SYNOPSIS

At 0738 local time on 21 June 2004, the 74,373gt UK registered container vessel, *Hyundai Dominion*, and the 6,899gt Hong Kong registered container vessel, *Sky Hope*, collided in the East China Sea. There were no injuries or pollution. Only *Sky Hope* suffered any significant damage. Each vessel was able to continue passage.

As the vessels approached, in good visibility, the officer on watch on *Sky Hope* incorrectly assessed the encounter as one where *Hyundai Dominion* was overtaking his vessel. Action by either vessel was then delayed by discussions on the VHF. Further delay resulted when the OOW on *Hyundai Dominion* requested the other vessel to keep clear using the free text facility on the Automatic Identification System (AIS).

In spite of very late avoiding action taken by both vessels, they collided. The starboard bridge wing, lifeboat davit and a container on *Sky Hope* were damaged. Damage to *Hyundai Dominion* was limited to slight indentation of a breakwater on her port bow, distorted handrails on the forward deck and scratches to paintwork on the port bow.

The accident was investigated by the UK's Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) and the Hong Kong Marine Department (HKMD) as a joint investigation in accordance with the International Maritime Organization's (IMO's) Code for the investigation of marine casualties and incidents.

The investigation highlighted several causal and contributory factors. These included:

- Neither watchkeeper claimed to be fatigued, however both had worked in excess of the hours permitted under the international convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for seafarers (STCW) over the previous two days.
- *Sky Hope* had been observing the approach of *Hyundai Dominion*. However, other than VHF communication there was no avoidance action taken until she was within a range of 0.2 nautical mile (nm).
- *Sky Hope* judged *Hyundai Dominion* to be an overtaking vessel which, in accordance with the COLREGS, required him to take no immediate avoiding action.
- *Hyundai Dominion* considered *Sky Hope* was a crossing vessel requiring *Hyundai Dominion* to "stand-on".
- In VHF communications between the vessels leading up to the collision, it is likely that a disagreement took place due to the difference in opinion over the "crossing" or "overtaking" situation.
- The OOW of *Hyundai Dominion* stated that he sent a text message over AIS asking *Sky Hope* to keep clear. The OOW of *Sky Hope* stated that he did not receive this message.
- *Hyundai Dominion* made a sound signal before the collision, using the forward whistle. There was no sound signal given by *Sky Hope* before the collision.

- Neither OOW advised his master prior to the collision.
- Correct emergency procedures were not followed by *Hyundai Dominion* after the collision.
- *Sky Hope* resumed passage some 22 minutes after the collision. It is unlikely that a proper assessment of the vessel's condition could have been completed within this time.
- The bridge watchkeepers of *Hyundai Dominion* lacked a clear understanding of the operation of the engine controls.

Following the collision, the managers of *Hyundai Dominion* have issued the results of a review of company navigational procedures, which began in May 2004. They have also introduced company specific navigational training for junior officers and deck cadets. In addition, they have increased the number of internal and external navigational audits of their vessels.

Recommendations have been made to the managers of both vessels to advise their bridge watchkeepers to call the vessel's master at the early stages of a developing hazardous situation, the importance of ensuring watchkeepers receive adequate rest and the procedures to be followed in the event of a collision. Further recommendations have been made to the managers of *Sky Hope* regarding application of the COLREGS and use of VHF and sound signals in collision avoidance. Recommendations have been made to *Hyundai Dominion*'s managers with respect to familiarisation of bridge watchkeepers with engine controls, the use of AIS text facilities in situations requiring prompt action and the need for OOWs to be able to communicate with other bridge team members.

Similarly, recommendations have been made to the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) to promulgate to its members the lessons learned from this accident regarding the dangers of using AIS text facilities in situations requiring prompt action. It is also recommended to reinforce the advice contained in the ICS's *Bridge Procedures Guide* covering use of the COLREGS, calling the vessel's master and post collision actions.