

SYNOPSIS



At 0630 (UTC+2) on 7 May 2001, the Norwegian-registered cargo ship *Lysfoss* ran aground at the northern entrance to the Sound of Mull while on passage from Lysekil in Sweden to Belfast. The chief officer was alone on the bridge and, because of several anomalies in his account, and the absence of any recorded navigational data, it has not been possible to establish with any certainty the sequence of events immediately before the accident.

SOSREP reported the accident to the MAIB at 0753(UTC+2) on 7 May 2001, and an investigation began that day. The ship was refloated on 11 May.

Although some pollution was caused by escaping fuel bunkers, this was generally contained, and is not believed to have affected any aquaculture in the immediate vicinity.

It is considered that several factors contributed to the action or inaction of the chief officer, or mechanical failure, to result in grounding. These included:

- The passage through the Sound of Mull and its approaches did not allow the same freedom of movement normally expected when coasting, and also provided limited sea room in which to take action to prevent grounding.
- The master did not consider it necessary to take any additional precautions for the passage through the Sound of Mull and its approaches.
- The voyage had not been properly planned and the charts had not been prepared in accordance with The Norwegian Maritime Code or the ICS Bridge Procedures Guide.
- The chief officer was alone on the bridge.
- The chief officer was probably not aware of all navigational dangers.
- There were several shortcomings in the company's shipboard procedures.
- Instructions for the safe navigation of the ship were of limited scope.
- The company had not developed a safety culture or an effective safety management system.

Recommendations are aimed at improving the owner's safety management system, with emphasis on making its operating instructions more comprehensive. In particular, they are intended to ensure all passages are properly planned, that appropriate precautions are taken when transiting restricted waters, and that the requirements for additional lookouts can be met at all times.