

## SYNOPSIS

While on passage from Bilbao, Spain, to Avonmouth, UK, between 25 and 26 April 2001 the 2999gt Netherlands-registered vessel *Dutch Navigator* encountered poor weather conditions. This resulted in a shift of nine of her cargo container units in the foremost bay of her hold, Bay 1. Two of the units were tank containers, each holding 20 to 22 tonnes of incompatible dangerous goods. The incident was reported to the MAIB, via the DTLR's Duty Officer, by the Secretary of State's Representative for Salvage and Intervention (SOSREP) at 0350 on 28 April. An investigation began at 0430 that day.

The vessel arrived in Avonmouth at 2025 on 26 April 2001 with a slight starboard list. Avonmouth Docks are managed by The Bristol Port Company (BPC). Discharging her cargo began the following morning. During these operations, port staff became concerned about the safety of the two tank containers. BPC declared a Major Incident, activated its Emergency Plan and requested assistance from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and other emergency agencies.

The tank container at the bottom of a stack of three units was significantly damaged. It was, therefore, removed from the vessel at 1821 on 28 April. About 3 hours later it began to leak slightly. This tank was finally pumped out and filled with a neutralising agent 24 hours later.

The investigation found that the masses of each of the three stacks of containers in Bay 1 of *Dutch Navigator* exceeded the limits set out in the vessel's cargo securing manual. This resulted in the lower containers being subjected to racking loads, greater than their design value, while the vessel was on passage. The damaged tank was one of these. Further, both of the tank containers were overstowed, which is not in compliance with the International Maritime Goods Code and UK Regulations.

Other issues identified were; the lack of a reception facility for damaged containers at Avonmouth docks; unsatisfactory repairs to containers; weakness of the International Convention for Safe Containers; absence of a reporting requirement for vessels entering Avonmouth with a shift of cargo involving dangerous goods.

Recommendations are made to the owners of *Dutch Navigator* to ensure the masters of their vessels are aware of relevant requirements of The International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code, UK Regulations and the vessels' own cargo securing manuals.

Recommendations are made to BPC to consider introducing a mandatory reporting requirement for vessels which have suffered a shift of cargo involving dangerous goods, and to remind regular shippers to its ports of the IMDG Code and UK requirement that tank containers should not be overstowed on vessels which are not cellular container ships.

The owner of the damaged tank container, Tank Speed Ltd, is recommended to note some of the poor quality repairs which have been performed on his behalf, and be conscious of these when specifying future repairs, selecting contractors and monitoring standards.