



Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 09/16

Issued: 1st June 2009

Subject: LFI Collision with Quayside

Summary:

A supply ship was tasked by the charterer to load cargo for a run to an oilfield. The master was instructed to move to a loading berth. The bridge and engine room teams completed the required checklists for departure. Checklists note the status and readiness of certain important systems. The bridge check list confirmed that engine control was on the bridge.

Once the vessel was safely moored at the loading berth the Chief Engineer requested permission to carry out fault finding on an intermittent 24v earth alarm which had come up during the move and had also been reported by the previous crew. To facilitate this they agreed to leave the engines running and clutched in. Shortly afterwards the fire alarm sounded in the engine room after the starboard shaft disc brake engaged without warning, resulting in the brake pads overheating and catching fire. This was extinguished very quickly but left a great deal of smoke in the ER which caused numerous repeat fire alarms both in the engine room and on the bridge for a considerable period of time. The starboard propulsion system shut down, which meant the vessel was unable to carry out the cargo run until the brake was repaired. The master informed the charterer who requested he leave the berth so that a replacement ship could load.

The Master decided to leave the berth for a lay by berth using the port side propulsion system but with the addition of another engine so as to have maximum power available. In order to clutch the second engine in, the ECR took back engine control and this was acknowledged (by pressing a button on the manoeuvring console) by an officer on the bridge but not the officer who was standing by to manoeuvre the ship off the berth. On completion the ECR rang the bridge to say that the two engines were ready on the port side. This call was taken by the manoeuvring officer, but neither he nor the ECR thought to send the engine control back to the bridge. The vessel let go her moorings and, without control, drifted with the tide. The master instructed the manoeuvring officer to thrust back alongside and the vessel landed heavily on the quayside causing a severe indentation in the shell plating, but fortunately missing another vessel moored close by. Control was regained and the vessel proceeded to the lay by berth.

- The incessant fire alarms on the bridge and in the engine room resulted in a very stressful situation and difficulty in dealing with aftermath of the fire and other issues;
- The bridge or management team did not sufficiently separate the clearing up after the fire and the new task of leaving the berth. Departure to the lay by berth could have been delayed until the situation was fully discussed by the bridge team and the bridge and engine room were ready for the move;
- Because of the post fire situation the need to return engine control to the bridge was forgotten or not thought of;
- Stopping off at the loading berth was considered part of the voyage and a new checklist, which may have identified the engine control status, was not completed. The relevant procedures and checklists need to be amended to clarify this;
- The ER officers were distracted due to clearing up after the shaft brake fire. This led to a delay in answering the ECR telephone and therefore regaining engine control on the bridge.