

Technical Bulletin

NUMBER 6 2003

Navigational record keeping

UK Club inspectors regularly find that vessels fail to keep records of all navigational activities from berth to berth

Vessels employed on international voyages are required to keep proper records of 'all navigational activities' from **berth to berth** (SOLAS, ch.V, reg 28.). The Club's inspectors regularly find this does not take place, records only being kept in detail from pilot station to pilot station.

The STCW Convention Section A-VIII/2 – Watchkeeping arrangements and principles to be observed, demands that a passage plan (Part 2, paragraphs 3 to 7) must be made for each voyage prior to the commencement of the voyage and be continuously updated during the voyage if any large deviations are required.

Also the STCW Convention Section A-VIII/2 (Part 3, paragraphs 8 to 58) demands that a proper navigational watch must be maintained throughout the voyage, **from berth to berth**. It follows therefore that:

1. The passage plan should always be as detailed document as possible from **berth to berth**, containing all way points, courses, distances, charts and publications to be used, tidal, under keel clearances, and squat calculations with all other navigational and weather information pertinent to the voyage.
2. Throughout the voyage the master and/or his deputy are required to monitor the voyage as planned, including the actions of the pilot. Also the watch keeper must continuously monitor the position and movement of the vessel, keeping the records logged as required by SOLAS, ch.V, reg 28.
3. Use of the echo sounder in shallow coastal and pilotage waters should be verifiable from the printout, which should be marked and signed by the OOW when started and stopped. If fitted, the



course recorder should be used in a similar way.

4. A full log record of events in writing must include positions verified by all available means at regular intervals – shorter intervals in coastal and pilotage waters are required where high density traffic and under keel/squat, currents, weather conditions, etc. may have greater effect on safety of the vessel.
5. Weather and navigational warnings records should be maintained, both for actual weather experienced and any weather reports/navigational warnings received during the voyage.

The above records are not only important for the safe navigation of the vessel but also extremely important when defending claims which may be made against the vessel, for example, wash damage. Evidence of where the vessel was, at what time and what manoeuvres were taking place are particularly important where spurious claims are lodged.