



Ship Type: All Trade Area: Worldwide

Bulletin 517 - 03/07 - Keeping a safe anchor watch - Worldwide

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) has published a Shipping Circular referring owners, managers, operators and masters of Singapore registered ships to an IMO circular published in May 2004, after an investigation into the collision of two ships at anchor.

The MPA Shipping Circular refers to a recent incident where there was contact between two ships at anchor due to one ship dragging her anchor. Investigations revealed that the master of one of the ships had not ordered a navigational watch to be maintained despite the fact that there were other ships anchored in close proximity.

Masters of ships are reminded to comply with the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watch Keeping (STCW) Code Chapter VIII Section A-VIII/2. Additionally, they should also be guided by the IMO circular no. STCW.7/Circ.14 – "Guidance for Masters on Keeping a Safe Anchor Watch", the details of which are described below.

1. The master of every ship at an unsheltered anchorage, at an open roadstead or any other virtually "at sea" conditions in accordance with chapter VIII, section A-VIII/2, part 3-1, paragraph 51 of the STCW Code, is bound to ensure that watchkeeping arrangements are adequate for maintaining a safe watch at all times. A deck officer shall at all times maintain responsibility for a safe anchor watch.
2. In determining the watchkeeping arrangements, and commensurate with maintaining the ships safety and security and the protection of the marine environment, the master shall take into account all pertinent circumstances and conditions such as:
 1. Maintaining a continuous state of vigilance by sight and hearing as well as by all other available means
 2. Ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication requirements
 3. The prevailing weather, sea, ice and current conditions
 4. The need to continuously monitor the ships position
 5. The nature, size and characteristics of anchorage
 6. Traffic conditions
 7. Situations which might affect the security of the ship
 8. Loading and discharging operations
 9. The designation of stand-by crew members
 10. The procedure to alert the master and maintain engine readiness.

The association has previously experienced cases similar to this and it should be stressed that although the actions which can be taken by a ship at anchor are limited because of the nature of her condition, any ship involved in a collision or other incident is not necessarily exempt of liability because she was at anchor.

Source of information: MPA Singapore
www.mpa.gov.sg