

HULL FAILURE

Scenario description

The vessel is en route to her next port, and she is travelling approx 21 miles away from the nearest coastal line.

Weather is force 8 from Solar Subsurface Weather SSW, decreasing with approx 3 meter seas. The vessel maintains good speed as per the weather condition considered.

When de-ballasting from heeling tank located on the port side of the ship, oil on the water was observed both from the bridge and from the deck.

There has been no bilge alarm, nor does the ship list or otherwise behave abnormally.

Details of Action to be Taken:

The Master was notified immediately and he orders ballast operation to be stopped and vessel speed reduced to half ahead.

Manual sounding of the heeling tank reveals traces of oil on the measure tape. Sounding of the fuel tank aft of the heeling tank shows less quantity than expected.

It was concluded that a leak exists between the fuel tank and the heeling tank. To verify this, the heeling tank was opened up for inspection.

Measurements for explosive vapours were taken before ventilation of the tank was commenced.

Visual inspection confirmed that the bulkhead between the two tanks had cracked and that oil was seeping into the heeling tank.

Transfer of fuel oil was initiated to get the level below the crack.

The Company was notified about the situation, as well as Canadian authorities, the P&I club and the Designated Person Ashore about the oil spill. (ref. SOPEP).

The development is continuously monitored during the transfer, and the seeping of oil into the heeling tanks diminishes as expected and finally stops when the level inside the fuel tank is below the crack. For safety reasons yet another 100 tonnes of oil is transferred.

The starboard heeling tank is also opened up for inspection and is also found to be contaminated. The heeling tanks are then sealed off from the rest of the ballast system to prevent further contamination.

The Canadian coast guard is kept informed and notified about the amount of oil discharged, the approximate size of the spill, drift direction, speed and so on.

The vessel's list is controlled with other ballast tanks and the voyage towards Halifax is resumed.

The Company is kept abreast of the development, and cleaning gangs are ordered for Halifax to clean the fuel tank sufficient to repair the crack and clean up the ballast system.

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