

STRUCTURAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY TUG PUSH



- **HELMET ELEMENT 7 'Mooring & Anchoring' – Item 2 'Safe Tug Handling'**
- **Bridge Procedures Guide 6th edition – Ch. 6.6.2 'Use of Tugs & Mooring Boats'**
- **RISQ Section 14 'General Appearance - Hull and Superstructure' - Item 14.2**
- **VIQ 7 Section 11 'General Appearance and Condition' - Item 11.2**

INCIDENT

During the vessel's preparation for the upcoming Port State Control, the PAS Assessor requested from the vessel's personnel to perform a routine inspection of the ballast tanks. Inside one of the water ballast tanks, the crew found a significant dent. Upon further examination and discussion with the crew, it was evidenced that this damage was the result of a tugboat's pushing force during a berthing operation. The PAS Assessor discussed with the Bridge Team regarding safety procedures during berthing, as well as the importance of good communication and coordination between team members.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A dent inside the ballast tank raises concerns for a potential structural damage to the vessel. Furthermore, the fact that the damage resulted from the tugboat pushing during berthing, emphasizes the need of navigational practices improvement with a view to prevent similar incidents and enhance overall safety onboard.

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE VESSEL

- Conduct a safety toolbox meeting and address the risks associated with tug handling.
- Mark (vertically above) the "Tug-Push" areas on the main deck for instant verification.
- Discuss the mooring plan and desired maneuvers in advance with the Pilot.
- Enforce clear communication among the Bridge Team, the Pilot and tugboats.
- Ensure that the Pilot keeps the Bridge Team informed about the orders given to tugs and mooring boats, particularly if not in English or the working language of the vessel.
- Ensure that the vessel's speed is reduced as necessary, before any engagement with the tugs.

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE VESSEL

- Run a safety campaign to raise awareness and highlight the importance of critical thinking, remaining alert and identifying all potential hazards, while working with tugboats during pilotage.
- Consider specific training for the Bridge Team, focusing on communication and coordination during berthing operations.
- Review and update, if necessary, the safety procedures related to working with tugboats.