

Vessel ran aground

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A vessel on a short voyage ran aground while navigating through a narrow channel at low tide.

What happened?

Although there were no injuries nor pollution, the incident highlighted a significant lapse in navigational planning and watchkeeping. The vessel was successfully refloated without any damage to hull or propulsion.

What went right?

- The main engines were stopped immediately after grounding to prevent further damage, and the anchor was dropped to stabilise the vessel until refloating was possible,
- Emergency checks including tank soundings, draft readings, and surrounding water depth were performed promptly.
- The Master reported the incident immediately to shore-based management and the local authorities.
- The members of the bridge team were all fit for duty (healthy, rested and free from alcohol or drugs).

How could the incident have been avoided?

- Stopping to hold a toolbox talk or a pre-voyage or pre-task briefing.
- Using a formal passage plan instead of relying solely on visual observation – even for such a short voyage.
 - SOLAS mandates the use of passage plans, as does company policy.
- Acknowledging and estimating correctly, the risks involved in what may look like simple and straightforward activities.
 - Complacency and overconfidence are to be guarded against – particularly, as in this case, in familiar waters.
- Avoiding being distracted – here the bridge team were distracted by numerous questions from a third party during the navigation.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Bypassing safety controls

What are some lessons we can draw?

- Have a complete and approved passage plan in place, regardless of voyage duration or familiarity with the route.

- When manoeuvring in confined or shallow waters, have a thorough understanding of local tidal data and under-keel clearance.
- Stay focussed; know when to politely ask someone to be quiet: Bridge teams should remain focused on navigation and avoid distractions until the vessel is safely alongside.

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