

## **SAFETY BULLETIN 02 OF 2024:**

### **Failures in passage planning and execution lead to serious consequences.**

This Safety Bulletin draws attention of Mariners to the need to both appropriately plan and subsequently monitor the plan including any subsequent changes that are made. It forms the combined response to reviews by the Jersey Maritime Authority of two separate serious maritime incidents involving the grounding of large (47m and 22m long) Jersey-Registered pleasure vessels on charted obstructions in the Mediterranean. In both cases there were significant deficiencies in the way that the voyages were initially planned, how subsequent changes to those plans were made and how the plans were monitored and executed. In both cases the vessels suffered serious damage and required assistance to make port. One required extensive salvage operations.

#### **Common circumstances:**

- In both cases the vessels had just emerged from refit and were conducting positioning voyages with no guests aboard and reduced crew.
- On each vessel, the skipper was the only qualified officer aboard for the voyage. Due to the nature of the voyage the skipper had in each case determined that the second qualified watchkeeper, and in the case of the larger vessel also the engineer, could rejoin at a subsequent port. This decision limited the support available to the skipper both with respect to watchkeeping and also as the incident developed.
- The skippers had also made decisions to change the intermediate ports of call during the positioning voyages without having made an adequate assessment and updated the passage plan in the vessels' navigational equipment. This impeded the ability to monitor the voyage and maintain situational awareness.
- The result was in both cases that, during the hours of darkness and alone on the bridge, the skipper lost situational awareness. Both vessels struck well charted underwater obstructions.



#### **Additional Issues:**

In the case of the larger vessel, the skipper was injured when he was flung against the console by the force of the impact. Without the support of a mate or engineer, the decision to subsequently beach the damaged vessel was made by the skipper without a full assessment of the damage or available options and led to the vessel's capsizing.

This lack of support had earlier led to the skipper dealing with a radar fault with his shore-based maintenance organisations whilst still on watch. Lack of basic pre-departure checks and absence of on passage compass error checks also led to a 10-degree heading error on the GPS compass and autopilot post-refit, which had remained undetected.

## Relevant issues and recommendations:

**Manning and Qualifications:** Guidance on the required manning levels for pleasure vessels being operated commercially can also be used to provide guidance for the owners of Pleasure vessels which are not certificated for commercial operation. It is available on the Jersey Ship's Registry website. The manning level and the qualification and experience of the crew must form part of the owner's and skipper's assessment of their 'Responsibility for Safe Navigation and avoidance of Dangerous Situations'.

Both incidents took place during the hours of darkness and, from first principles, all but the very smallest of vessels should have an additional lookout to support the bridge watchkeeper (OOW) at night.

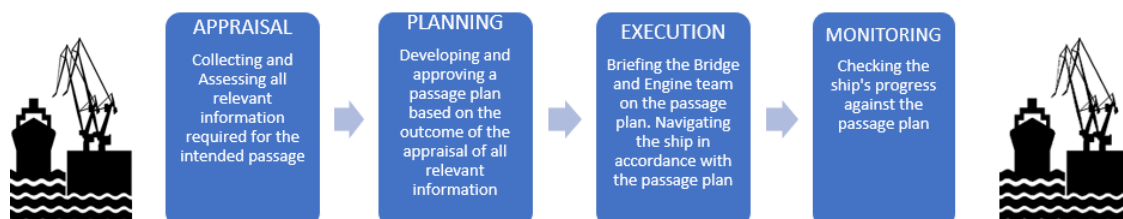
A crew is only as good as their training and familiarisation. In one case, with the vessel re-entering service after a refit, only a single drill had been carried out after leaving the shipyard with subsequent drills programmed only on a monthly basis.

**Passage Planning:** For reference: please see UK Marine Guidance Note MGN 599 section 7. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5dd5680ced915d086aa3cb5d/MGN\\_599\\_on\\_Pleasure\\_Vessel\\_Regulations.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5dd5680ced915d086aa3cb5d/MGN_599_on_Pleasure_Vessel_Regulations.pdf); & IMO resolution A893(21) 'Guidelines for passage planning' [A 893 21 \(imo.org\)](https://www.imo.org) )

In neither case was either the passage planning, or its subsequent execution carried out to an appropriate standard, neither were the capabilities of the navigational equipment aboard appropriately utilised to assist the crew to safely execute the voyage.

Whilst it is accepted that sailing for pleasure is focused on enjoyment, time spent on planning is rarely wasted and enjoyment soon stops when there is an accident which potentially places the vessel and those aboard at risk. In particular, it is important not to place total reliance on the accuracy or reliability of GNSS (GPS) systems and to cross check position using other methods.

There are four stages involved in the successful execution of a voyage:



**Summary:** Passages should always be appropriately planned and executed. The intended route should be fully entered into the Electronic Navigational systems to enable the available features of the equipment to assist with the monitoring of the passage and support situational awareness. Where due to small crew size the available support for the skipper is limited, the assistance available from features of the navigational equipment and knowledge of its functions, capability, and limitations, is particularly important.