

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Office of the

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY NO. 24-12

To: Regional Marine Safety Offices, Nautical Inspectors, Masters, Owners/Agents

Subject: NAVIGATION RELATED MARINE CASUALTIES WITH PILOTS ON BOARD

Date: 10 April 2012

Since July 2011 the Maritime Administrator has received 37 reports of Marshall Islands flagged ships with a Pilot on board that were involved in a collision, allision or grounding. Common contributing factors for these marine casualties included: Master's implicit trust of the Pilot; Master's over-reliance on the Pilot; the Pilot not using English or language common to the crew for bridge-to-bridge and bridge-to-shore communications; and, the Bridge Team not maintaining a plot of the ship's position, comparing the ship's position relative to navigational aids either visually or on radar, nor verifying that the Pilot's orders did not stand the ship into potential danger. In addition Pilots have not provided Masters with appropriate hydrographic information.

The following lessons learned and recommendations are offered to Operators and Masters of Marshall Islands flagged ships:

1. The pilot's presence on board does not relieve the Master of his duties and obligations for the safety of the ship. Masters and bridge watch officers must be aware of their duty to monitor, evaluate, and support the pilot's actions at all times.
2. A detailed Master / Pilot information exchange should be conducted in preparation for the ship's transit. The Pilot's proposed passage plan should be verified, including verification of the position of navigational aids and expected hydrographic conditions for the transit. During the transit, the ship's bridge officers should frequently plot the ship's position including verifying the position relative to navigational aids visually and with radar.
3. There must be clear and open communication between the Pilot and the entire bridge team so that all information related to the safe navigation of the ship is clearly understood by all involved.
4. It is recognized that according to SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 14.4, unless use of a common language is agreed to by the Master and the Pilot, that English is the required language to be used for bridge to bridge and bridge to shore communications. It is also recognized that for some ports the Master may not be able to require the pilot's use of English when he is communicating with local tug boats, other pilots or shore authorities. In these instances, the Master should ask that the Pilot repeat back all external orders, to other pilots, to tugs or to shore authorities, and have it logged if the pilot refuses to use English or a common language.