

SFF SERVICES – GUARD VESSEL INCIDENT NOTIFICATION

Discovery of a leak in steel hull

BACKGROUND

During a Guard Vessel's passage to shelter the bilge alarms sounded, alerting the crew to water ingress in the fish room. The Engineer proceeded to start the pumps and drain the bilge dry and the fresh water tank was blanked off, in case there was a fracture in the pipe causing the water to spill into the bilge area. With everything isolated the area was inspected and salt water was discovered. The suspected cause of the leak was therefore believed to be a problem with the hull. The Skipper informed SFFSL of the situation, reporting that all fixed pumps were operating effectively and that the situation was currently under control and being monitored.

Once inspected on the ship lift, a small hole around the size of a fifty pence piece in fish room section of the hull on the starboard side was identified as the cause of the leak.



ANALYSIS

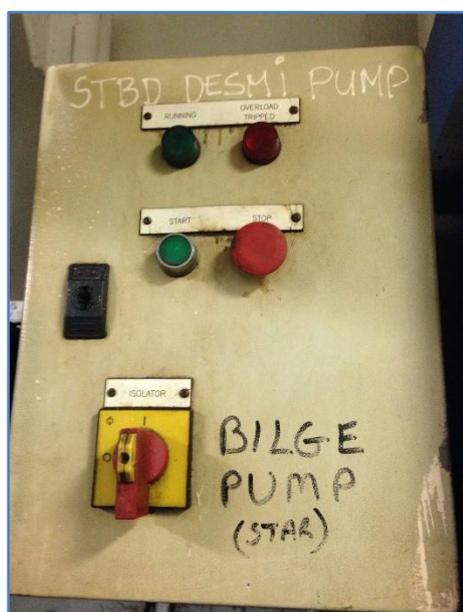
The cause of the hole was believed to be a bolt or something similar which has been moving and wearing the steel over a long period of time. It was fortunate that the vessel was heading for shelter from forecasted poor weather, meaning the vessel's proximity to a safe haven was shortened during the night.

Once alerted to the problem the crew acted quickly and prevented a more serious incident occurring.

SFFSL was contacted first thing in the morning to advise on the situation, and all relevant information and timings were included in the vessel's daily report at 0800 hours.

LESSONS LEARNT

- The incident reinforced the importance of early communication of incidents to SFFSL, to allow the required reporting procedures to take place
- The Coastguard should also have been informed of incident even though it was under control, in case the situation intensified
- The incident highlighted the importance of **operational bilge alarms, well-maintained bilge pumps** and the necessity for **regular visual checks for foreign objects in all bilge compartments**



SFF Services recommends:

- **weekly testing of bilge alarms** should be undertaken and recorded
- **regular visual checks of bilge wells** should be undertaken and recorded
- **the Coastguard should be contacted** in the event of any water ingress, even as a notification that the situation is under control