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MARINE SAFETY ALERT

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BRIDGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PILOTAGE WATERS

This Safety Alert serves as a reminder to the maritime community that navigation watch teams should at all times use Bridge Resource Management (BRM) best practices and techniques even when the ship is being directed by a properly licensed pilot.

What is Bridge Resource Management?

BRM is the effective management and utilization of all available resources, both human and electronic, by the navigation watch team to ensure the safe navigation of the vessel. The essence of BRM is a safety culture and management approach that facilitates communication, cooperation, and coordination among the individuals involved in a ship's navigation. BRM is required by the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers.

Recent Case Highlights BRM Failure in Pilotage Waters

A recent marine casualty investigation of a bridge allision involving a deep draft tank ship revealed the local pilot was navigating the vessel in highly reduced visibility conditions without any substantive navigation assistance or input from the vessel's bridge watch team. The pilot and both watch officers on the vessel's bridge had taken a BRM course within the last five years. The pilot's course was a "BRM-P" course (i.e., a BRM course designed and approved to focus on the functions, tasks, experiences, and needs of compulsory pilots). The vessel's operating company had policy and procedures in place requiring crews to utilize BRM yet communications between the crew and the pilot were lacking.

Effective BRM Requires Proactive Action by Owner/Operator, Master and Pilot

Masters are reminded they are ultimately responsible for the bridge watch team's conduct and safe navigation. This includes maintaining discipline in promoting teamwork and information exchange, especially when cultural or language barriers may exist between the pilot and the vessel's crew. The presence of a properly licensed pilot does not relieve a vessel's bridge team of its responsibilities for safe navigation.

The Coast Guard **strongly recommends** all vessel owners, operators, and masters ensure effective BRM is being utilized aboard their vessels, and that mechanisms exist to ensure that a *cooperative, mutually-supportive working relationship* is developed between the bridge team and the pilot in recognition of their respective responsibilities for safe navigation. **Vessel operators** are encouraged to utilize a robust audit program to frequently monitor and evaluate the extent to which BRM principles are being practiced. The Coast Guard also recommends **vessel pilots** employ appropriate mechanisms to facilitate effective BRM to the maximum extent possible, including a thorough Master-Pilot exchange, and effective communication and collaboration while navigating, particularly during periods of restricted visibility, maneuvering, or heavy traffic.

This Safety Alert is provided for informational purposes and does not relieve any foreign or domestic requirement. Developed by the Coast Guard Sector San Francisco. Questions may be addressed to LT. Jon Lane; Jon.D.Lane@uscg.mil.