



FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis

April 23, 2024
Washington, DC

Findings of Concern 007-24

NAVIGATION BRIDGE VISIBILITY AND VISUAL LOOKOUT

Purpose. The U.S. Coast Guard issues findings of concern to disseminate information related to unsafe conditions that were identified as causal factors in a casualty and could contribute to future incidents. Findings of concern are intended to educate the public, state, or local agencies about the conditions discovered so they may address the findings with an appropriate voluntary action or highlight existing applicable company policies or state/local regulations.

The Incident. A Coast Guard inspected freight vessel with a landing craft configuration was underway on the waters of Kachemak Bay, Alaska, when it collided with an anchored recreational sportfishing vessel. The collision resulted in injuries to the two occupants of the recreational vessel and the subsequent sinking of the recreational vessel.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. The Coast Guard investigation into the collision revealed that the bow ramp of the landing craft obstructed the view directly ahead of the freight vessel from the navigation bridge. The visual obstruction was exacerbated when the landing craft was trimmed to the stern, as it was on the day of the incident. The obstructed view prevented the individual controlling the vessel at the operating station from detecting the recreational vessel via visual means. The operator was reliant on radar alone to assess any risk of collision forward of the vessel, and the 18-foot recreational vessel did not present a cross-section significant enough for radar detection.

Findings of Concern. Coast Guard investigators have identified the following measures to mitigate the risks associated with the contributing factors identified above:

- Navigation bridge visibility should be evaluated for all potential prevailing circumstances and conditions to determine whether a person at the operating station is able to maintain an adequate lookout to assess risk of collision in accordance with Rule 5 of the Navigation Rules. Those circumstances and conditions should include all loading conditions and their associated vessel drafts, lists, and trims.
- If navigation bridge visibility is deemed inadequate, measures to address the inadequacy should be considered, including but not limited to:
 - Posting of additional lookouts to maintain visual coverage of the segments obscured from the pilothouse; and/or,
 - Use of technology for maintaining a visual lookout from the operating station of obscured segments.

Closing. These findings of concern are provided for informational purpose only and do not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. For any questions or comments, please contact the Coast Guard Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis by email at HQS-SMB-CG-INV@uscg.mil.