



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Office of Investigations and Casualty

December 6, 2022
Washington, D.C.

Findings of Concern 018-22

DISTRACTED OPERATIONS

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. This Findings of Concern presents issues similar to those highlighted in [Marine Safety Advisory 01-10](#), which recognizes the dangers of distracted operations across all transportation modes and specifically the importance of bridge resource management as an essential element of risk management and safe vessel operations.

The Incident. A piloted 1,095-foot container ship was aground for over 35 days after missing a turn south and grounding outside of the channel during an outbound transit. The vessel was eventually freed after dredging was completed to a depth of 43 feet, resulting in 206,280 cubic yards of material dredged, and the removal of 505 containers from the vessel.

Approximately 30 minutes before the grounding, the bridge team completed a scheduled watch relief which was comprised of the Pilot, the Third Officer, a Deck Cadet, and an Able-Bodied Seaman. The Master was below decks for the evening meal at the time of the casualty.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. For approximately half of the two-hour transit, the Pilot on board the container ship placed and received numerous calls, texted messages, and draft emails on their personal cell phone right up until the incident. Additionally, the Pilot admittedly relied solely on their Portable Pilot Unit (PPU) for navigation and was watching playback of a previous transit at the time of the incident. The Pilot was drafting an email on their personal cell phone in the minutes leading up to the planned turn south, when the vessel sailed through its waypoint and grounded. The vessel's bridge team attempted to cue the pilot by repeating the heading. However, by the time the bridge team became more assertive about the ship's heading, it was too late to prevent the vessel from grounding.

Findings of Concern. Coast Guard investigators identified the following prudent measures to be implemented on vessels in similar service to mitigate the risks associated with the above identified contributing factors:

- Develop and implement effective operational policies outlining when the use of cellular telephones and other devices is appropriate or prohibited.
- Ensure PPU users receive comprehensive training on devices and software functionality.

- Ensure PPU users receive training on how to properly integrate PPU devices into a complete bridge resource management philosophy.

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 Office of Investigations and Analysis, Investigations Division, Commandant (CG-INV-1), at (202) 372-1029 or by email to CG-INV1@uscg.mil.