

# Marine Safety Flash

## A13-09 (15<sup>th</sup> March)

### Steering tests & loss of steering



#### Incident Overview

A work vessel lost steering control shortly after passing through the breakwater whilst inbound to the berth.

The vessel turned sharply to starboard and made contact with the breakwater at a speed of 7 knots.

The impact caused a small puncture in the hull plating by way of the bow thruster compartment, which resulted in water ingress.

The vessel safely sailed to a nearby berth where the hole was plugged. The vessel will now be slipped in order to carry out full repairs.

#### Key Findings

The investigation is ongoing, however initial reports show that the secondary steering systems were being tested at the time of steering loss. At this stage, until the final incident report is published, it cannot be ascertained whether the steering test had a direct effect on the cause of the incident, however the following must be adhered to at all times:

- Secondary steering systems shall never be tested whilst sailing within confined / restricted waters.
- If tests of the steering system need to be carried out, these shall be done either at the berth under no propulsion or in open water where collision can be avoided.
- If steering suddenly becomes unresponsive or behaves erratically, the first response should be to de-clutch that particular system / side. Avoid attempting to counteract forward movement using thrust from the problematic side.

#### Recommendations

The company SMS shall be updated once the full investigation has been carried out and all learning points are known.