

MARINE CASUALTY

Serious marine casualty: Grounding after steering gear failure in a port entrance

What happened?

A cargo ship was in the entrance to her port of destination. The pilot embarked and shortly afterwards noticed that he was unable to steer the ship anymore. The officer on watch attempted to operate the rudder by applying different switches. However, he did not succeed. Ultimately, the master intervened and was able to gain control of the ship by using the tiller. Meanwhile, the ship had deviated from the course to such an extent that she grounded with her fore ship.

The crew could not detect any damages during the subsequent technical inspection. The main engine and the steering gear worked error-free. Hours later, the ship got clear with the assistance of three tugs.

Why did it happen?

- The crew was new on the ship and not fully informed on how to switch over the steering gear on the bridge.

What can we learn?

- Handing over the ship to another crew must be carried out extensively.
- Further education by the shipping company should keep the ship's crew constantly up to date

Who may benefit?

Ship's commands, seafarers, vessels owners