

Ref : DMA/AIFI/97/C 994

Date: 04/02/2019

Dear Captain
Good Day,

Pls note during the recent "fleet inspection & investigation committee meeting", it was decided to promulgate deep water anchoring procedure every three months to R.O.D. Fleet vessels.

The purpose is to remind the vessel's management team to ensure that the proper deep water anchoring precautions is followed at all time.

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Please be informed that one of fleet vessel has recently lost her anchor in deep waters. This is a repeated incident; it has happened many times during the last years. Henceforth we need to remind the ships of the requirements & procedures relevant in the company & international regulations:

- 1-Most of the anchor losses including this last case happened in deep waters. The anchor was said to be lowered up to two shackles by gear & then let gone. Unfortunately it went forever! along with her whole chain.
- 2-In some cases the agent had misinformed the master about the water depth. In these cases, later on it was found that the depth had been much more than that declared by the agent. So the point of inadequate data is prevailing. Therefore it is essential to act upon reliable data and the info received from the agents shall be counter-checked by other means.
- 3-The problem of anchor loss has happened in various areas such as in Chinese port anchorages, Indonesian areas, Red sea anchorages and some other areas. Some of these areas are un-surveyed or if surveyed, the data are sometimes obsolete or erroneous. In these areas the B.A. Charts should be used with extreme caution ,let alone the plans or maps provided by the agents which may not have any authenticity at all.
- 4-In various case studies & recommendations provided by research bodies or insurance organizations the deep water is considered some figure over 30-40 meters. So if we advise on a procedure for deep water anchoring; it shall be applied in depths over 30-40 meters.
- 5-As stated before in the elder circulars by SM departments as well as DMA; in deep waters the anchoring should be done by walking -back. That is to lower down by gear up to the required length depending on various requirements & considerations. There are draw-back in this procedures too:
 - 5A) In Emergencies; it may endanger the ship to wait walking back. You may loose time & get into grave conditions. This is as said in an emergency; any action to save the ship can override others; but **in normal cases, we must walk-back only.**
 - 5B) If the speed of vessel; let's say astern movement is faster that the speed with which we walk back; the anchor windlass & gypsy gear mechanical parts may not cope and get damaged. What we should do is that once arrived at the desired anchor position and letting go by walk-back starts; if the speed of astern movement is too much by the ship's astern engines or even the current or wind; then every effort should be made to let the walk back cope with it.

Amongst all even a head movement or kicks & short bursts of head engines will be a good solution.

6-The idea that how the anchor holds the ship may be variant among seafarers. Some believe that it should be dropped by weight to get hold of the ground (Buried). This may not be correct in many occasions. The flukes are supposed to be tilting when pulled back & catch the sea-bed. Dropping would not be a good solution as it may damage the anchor body & worst of all it may reach such accelerated movements(speeds) that it could be impossible to stop loss of the anchor & whole cable. The movements should always be controlled; once out of control; the consequences will be drastic. Letting go by gravity in deep water is synonym to uncontrolled motion & surely puts materials & life in great peril.

7-The idea of having bitter end to catch the running cable is basically wrong. The bitter end is to hold the cable in maintenance periods & of-course to avoid the loss of cable in *reasonably accidental run-outs*. A speedy gravitational let go in deep water is not a reasonable circumstance & one cannot blame the bitter-end attachment to give in & break away. In older days we used to have smaller ships with enormously grotesque bitter-ends. They would have held the whole assembly even under vigorous conditions. The recent changes as approved by the classification societies will allow weaker bitter-end connections. They are now supposed to give-in when under tremendous pressure. They at times could be referred to as breakable parts of the assembly. This is to avoid damaging the structural parts as well as the windlass components. In some ships' chain lockers ,the cable passes under a sort of chain holder plate (like those of electric wire cables) before getting fixed onto the bitter-end fitting. This is also a sign that it is not meant to be pulled rampantly nor be towed-by!

Most classification society surveyors disagree with the idea of too-much-reinforcement of bitter-end fixture. That place is supposed to break when & if necessary.

8-In some cases of anchor loss; a few of the ship's equipment such as one radar or the echo-sounder were not fully operational or were giving false data. There were technical inadequacies but the ability of the officers working with the aids were quite questionable too. So we must reiterate the requirement of having been properly familiarized with the ship's equipment especially those on the bridge affecting the maneuvering and Bridge-Team-Management requirements & characteristics.

9-The anchor loss cases are very costly for the company. The cost of anchor itself plus the cable & repairing the accessories can amount to high figures which will worsen the conditions with due regard to the economic situation in the world in general & shipping in specific arena. There are delays & loss of hires which make the whole scenario worse. The insurance companies are also concerned and worried about the increase in number of anchor-related accidents. We seem to have reached the limit for quite high-time now.

10-Please do not hesitate to ask the ship-management departments for their advice on possible support & rectification of deficiencies.

The anchor loss incidents have burdened uncontrollable movements; failure of brake systems & have intrinsically held human injury near-misses within. A flying anchor cable acting like a metallic whip-lash can take lives easily.

We have repeated obvious points for pondering but we very much needed to.

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You are requested to confirm receipt, discuss the contents in the next consolidated meeting on board & keep a copy in the file DA-11.

Best Regards,

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