

Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 11-11

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Subject: Maneuvering and Crew Competency

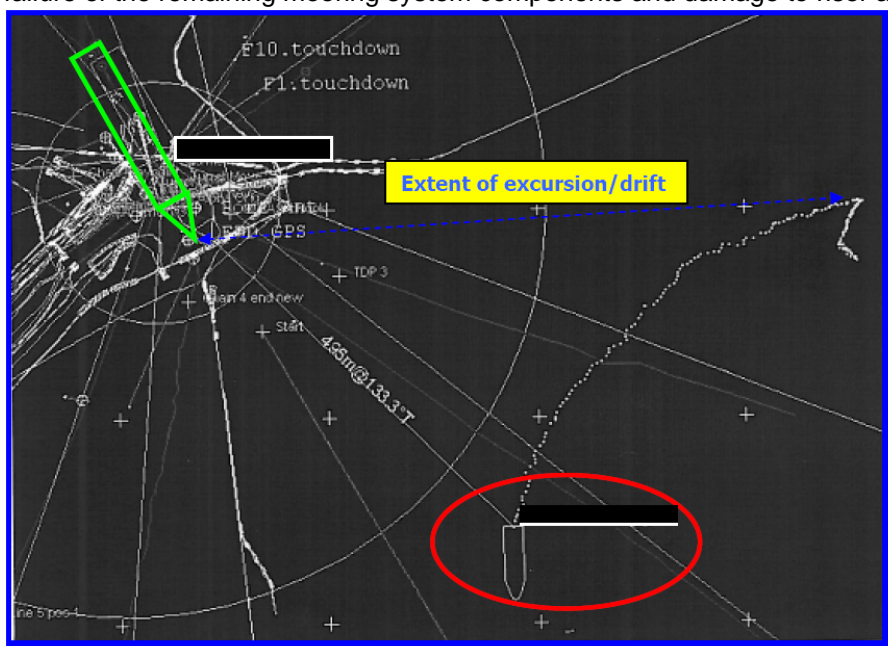
Recently whilst supporting an FPSO with heading assist duties a drift off incident occurred with one Offshore Support Vessel. The incident was classed as a high potential near miss and could have resulted in a major accident had the FPSO at the time of the incident, been without its own propulsion. Below is a brief description of the incident and a summary of the findings from the subsequently investigation.

Incident: Weather: Wind – SE 60knots, Seas 8-9 metres

During extremely poor weather the mooring system of a north sea FPSO suffered failure of several mooring lines and assistance was urgently needed in order to prevent the situation from escalating further. The vessel was commissioned to act as a “live anchor” and provide heading control in order to support the positioning of the FPSO. Before the incident another offshore vessel had conducted the same operation without any problems reported.

Whilst performing this duty as a contingency heading control vessel the offshore vessel apparently lost heading and drifted some considerable distance from its designated position.

The drift off, at the time of the incident, was estimated to be approximately 900 meters and 100 degrees off the line bearing. Had the vessel been operating as a “live anchor” or actively engaged in heading control the situation could easily have resulted in the FPSO subsequently losing heading control with possible further failure of the remaining mooring system components and damage to riser assemblies.



Incident investigation subsequently showed the following:

- Bridge manned at the time of the incident by a junior officer and a lookout.
- Maneuvering done in manual mode.
- Though standing order was issued by the Master the work not planned and conducted as a high risk operation.
- Competency of junior officer inadequate for the operation.

Lesson learned:

- Operation not clearly defined between installation and vessel.
- The OOW did not follow the instruction in the standing order.
- Hazard identification was not properly carried out by vessel.