

FLYER TO THE YACHTING INDUSTRY (02/2023)

The Importance of Proper Planning, Execution and Monitoring of All Voyages.

Over the last few years, investigations into various incidents on Cayman Island Flagged vessels, especially with respect to groundings/strandings, have revealed a lack of proper voyage/passage planning as one of the main contributory causes.

The main requirements for vessels to conduct voyage planning are contained in the Cayman Islands Merchant Shipping Act (2021 Revision) with the following sections being the most pertinent –

Section 110 (*Manning*), **Section 171** (*Application of Safety Convention and exceptions thereto*) and **Section 368** (*Offences involving endangering safe navigation, threats and ancillary offences*).



Essentially, these apply the requirements of the Standards of certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) II/1 and II/2 Levels plus Section A-VIII/2 “*Watchkeeping arrangement and principles to be observed*”, as well as the requirements of Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) chapter V regulations 27, 28 & 34 which apply to all vessels on all voyages.

The requirement for proper planning and execution of voyages applies equally well to those vessels fitted with Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) as to those not so equipped. It is imperative that the datums and quality of the charting data being utilized is taken into consideration when determining appropriate safety margins. Vessel characteristics and the likely environmental conditions need also to be taken fully into account. It is also important that complacency is not allowed to set in when conducting numerous voyages over the same route and that procedures ensure appropriate reviews are conducted.

The four key elements of proper voyage planning are widely recognized as –

Appraising all relevant information;
Planning the intended voyage;
Executing the plan taking account of prevailing conditions; and
Monitoring the vessel’s progress against the plan continuously.

There are numerous publications available which give more details of best practices in achieving effective voyage planning.

It is important that all members of the bridge team are fully aware of the passage plan, this includes the pilot(s) when on board. This should ensure safe execution of the passage with appropriate levels of oversight and monitoring.

Safety Issues

In addition to the above issues, all those involved in appraising, planning, executing and monitoring any voyage or passage should be aware of –

Berth to berth planning: Many incidents of grounding and stranding take place in the “pilotage” phase of a voyage and so it is important that all passage plans are “berth to berth”. “Port to port” or “pilot to pilot” passage plans omit this critical part of the voyage.

All voyages: All voyages should be properly planned, regardless of how short they may be, or how “familiar” the members of the bridge team are with the voyage. Passage plans can be saved for use on future voyages, but they must be checked against the latest versions of charts and other nautical publications before each use. Please remember that the UKHO (and other Hydrographic Agencies) update charts and nautical publications on a weekly basis.

Quality of Survey Data: Yachting destinations are often remote and away from busy shipping lanes. As such, survey data on charts is often sparse and old when compared to areas with a high density of shipping traffic. This should be taken into account when planning and monitoring the execution of voyages in these areas,

ISM responsibilities of companies: Owners and managers of yachts subject to the ISM Code should be aware of section 1.2.3.1 of that Code. This section requires a company’s Safety Management System to ensure “*compliance with mandatory rules and regulations*”. While the master, prior to proceeding to sea must “*ensure that the intended voyage has been planned using the appropriate nautical charts and nautical publications for the area concerned, taking into account the guidelines and recommendations developed by the Organization*” (SOLAS V/34), the company also has an obligation to ensure that the master complies with this requirement.

*Maritime Authority of the Cayman Islands
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