

Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY No. 14-21

To: Owners/Operators, Masters, Nautical Inspectors, Recognized Organizations

Subject: LOSS OF MOORINGS DURING LAY-UP

Date: 5 October 2021

The Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”), in coordination with the United Kingdom’s Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB), is conducting a marine safety investigation into a laid-up vessel’s loss of moorings.

Earlier this year during a period of high winds, a laid-up vessel’s mooring lines parted and the vessel was then blown off the jetty. The anchor, which had previously been set, initially dragged but re-set by the time the vessel was mid-channel. A second vessel laid-up at the same jetty was held alongside by tugs which were sent from a nearby location to reduce the potential of mooring failure. Both vessels had difficulty starting their propulsion systems and were subsequently re-secured to the jetty five days later.

Based on the investigation to date, it is recommended that when placing a vessel into lay-up owners and operators:

1. Identify a lay-up location that is appropriate for the planned lay-up status of the vessel (e.g., hot/warm lay-up or cold lay-up),¹ taking into consideration relevant classification society and underwriter guidance.
2. In coordination with the port authority where the vessel will be laid-up, conduct a comprehensive site-specific, joint risk assessment to ensure that the following are identified:
 - a. hazards associated with the planned lay-up location;
 - b. any limitations on the vessel’s mooring arrangements; and
 - c. appropriate controls agreed to by both the vessel owner and operator and the port.

It is also recommended that the risk assessment be based on the planned lay-up status (e.g., hot/warm lay-up or cold lay-up) of the vessel.

¹ It is understood that different organizations and segments of the maritime industry use variations of hot/warm lay-up, warm stacked, cold lay-up and cold stacked to describe different lay-up conditions. It is also understood that different organizations may define these various lay-up conditions differently.

This MSA is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

3. Develop lay-up procedures and contingency plans that consider:
 - a. the Administrator's guidance in RMI Marine Guideline [1-11-1](#), *Lay-Up of Vessels*;
 - b. port State guidance and requirements;
 - c. classification society guidelines; and
 - d. the results of the site-specific risk assessment.
4. Validate predicted weather data used for developing a mooring plan against actual local conditions experienced and adapt the lay-up plan accordingly. This is particularly important when a vessel will be laid-up in a location where there is limited local weather information or where the local topography might result in significant variations between forecasted and actual weather conditions at the berth.
5. Ensure that the planned crew will be sufficient to effectively implement the lay-up procedures and to respond to emergencies, including a complete loss of moorings.
6. Ensure that the vessel's crewmembers:
 - a. fully understand the mooring plan and that they maintain the vessel's moorings in accordance with the plan;
 - b. are prepared to start and operate the vessel's propulsion system if required by the mooring plan;
 - c. conduct regular drills to ensure they are prepared to respond to an emergency, including a full or partial loss of moorings;
 - d. have access to an emergency response plan with the contact details of all relevant parties; and
 - e. are aware of the time required for tugs, shore-side personnel, and emergency responders to arrive at the lay-up location.

The marine safety investigation into this casualty is ongoing and a report will be published once completed. However, these initial recommendations are being made to reduce the potential for similar marine casualties and marine incidents.