

Division for Investigation of Maritime Accidents - Denmark

Heavy weather damage – VILLUM CLAUSEN – 11 January 2010



VILLUM CLAUSEN

Summary

On 11 January 2010, during a crossing from Ystad in Sweden to Rønne on the island of Bornholm, the high-speed craft VILLUM CLAUSEN hit one or more waves with a speed of 33-35 knots. The slamming caused severe indentations in the bow.

Following the slamming, the speed was immediately reduced to 21-23 knots. At this speed the voyage to Rønne was continued without further incidents.

Six passengers and one crewmember were injured when the vessel hit the waves. Upon arrival in Rønne, two of the six injured passengers had to be treated at the local hospital. The most severe injury was a broken hip.

Conclusion

The Danish Division for Investigation of Marine Accidents concludes that the incident was caused by the following factors:

- The speed reduction from 41-42 knots to 33-35 knots was insufficient to ensure a safe crossing given the actual conditions.
- When choosing the speed he considered safe, the master did not pay sufficient attention to the weather, the sea state and the possibilities for observing the waves and the geographic conditions in the area.

Recommendations

All the injured passengers were injured when they were thrown out of the fixed chairs in which they were sitting or laying.

- It is recommended that the ship owner considers means which will prevent passengers from being injured in future similar incidents.

The existing "service restrictions" for the vessel stated in the approved "Craft Operational Manual" is considered insufficient as a tool for deciding a safe speed in a given condition in the actual geographic area.

- It is recommended that the ship owner develops a decision-support system for assistance when deciding on a safe speed in a given condition. Such a support system should consider local as well as actual conditions and, in this way, assist in ensuring the safety of passengers and crew as well as in preventing structural damages to the vessel. It is recommended that this support system is integrated in the existing ISM/SMS system for the vessel.

A report is available in Danish.