

FLYER TO COMMERCIAL VESSELS

TRIDENT V: Collision with Cambridge Berth, St Peter Port **24th August 2014**



Figure 1: Passenger Vessel 'TRIDENT V'

Narrative

On the afternoon of 24th August 2014, TRIDENT V was operating a routine passenger summer schedule between St Peter Port Harbour, Guernsey and Herm Island, approximately 3 NM east of St Peter Port Harbour.

TRIDENT V departed the Cambridge Steps at 1515 to undertake a routine voyage to Herm Island and then return to St Peter Port. The vessel's complement consisted of a Master, Engineer and 3rd Hand. All crew held appropriate domestic certification for their respective positions on board.

The voyage to and from Herm Island was uneventful. TRIDENT V departed Rosaire landing stage with 167 passengers on board bound for St Peter Port.

As TRIDENT V entered St Peter Port Harbour, the crew departed the wheelhouse to prepare the deck as the vessel passed No 1 berth turning dolphin. This is the normal position when disembarkation is planned to take place at the Cambridge Steps.

At approximately 1600, TRIDENT V approached the Cambridge Steps to berth alongside, port side to. The Master engaged astern propulsion at the port engine controls to slow the vessel. As he applied more revolutions, there was no response. The Master immediately switched to the starboard side controls thinking that the port controls had failed. By this stage, TRIDENT V was too close to the south east knuckle of the Cambridge berth for abortive action and the vessel made contact with the structure. It is estimated the vessel was proceeding at approximately 3 knots at the time of contact.

It is understood that at the time of the collision, many passengers were standing and had moved to the forward section of the passenger cabin in anticipation of disembarkation. The contact caused many of them to stumble and/or fall.

Damage to the forward athwartships deck and belting was sustained at the port bow area (see figure 2).



Figure 2: Contact damage to forward deck

The Master manoeuvred astern from the starboard controls and then re-approached the Cambridge Steps. The crew made fast and the vessel remained motoring on the spring for discharge.

The Master shouted down to the crew asking “is anyone hurt?”. A crew member replied “a couple”. It is suspected that approximately 7 passengers attended hospital as a result of the collision.

Passenger disembarkation commenced immediately and took approximately 10 minutes. Once disembarkation was complete, the Master attended the main passenger saloon where he observed 3 remaining passengers with cuts and bruises. The crew were administering first aid.



Figure 3: TRIDENT V wheelhouse arrangement

At 1610, the Master then returned to the wheelhouse to call for medical assistance but noted that Paramedics were already arriving and making their way on board. He then called the company to advise management of the accident.

The Duty Harbour Officer and Police then attended the vessel. The Police had become aware of some members of the public in the area being bloodied and with minor injuries as a result of the collision. Port Control had received information from the Ambulance Service that they were sending assistance to the Cambridge Steps. The Duty Harbour Officer was then notified. At no point did the Master notify Port Control of the accident.

The Police requested a voluntary breath sample from the Master, who was fully compliant. The result of the sample returned negative.

As the tide was falling, the crew requested that the Master move the vessel astern to re-align the deck with the steps. The Master went to the port engine controls to apply astern propulsion and realised that there was still no response when he applied additional revolutions. This is when he noticed that the controls were set in 'troll' mode, not 'cruise' (see figure 4). The Master immediately recognised the setting was incorrect and switched the controls to 'cruise' when he instantly had full control again.

'Troll' mode is designed to allow the engines to be operated at very low speed and prevents increase in revolutions if the lever setting is increased. It is particularly useful for this particular operation when the vessel is motoring on a spring rope to keep the vessel firmly alongside during passenger operations as it assists in reducing thrust and wash, which can affect other vessels in the immediate vicinity.

TRIDENT V was subsequently taken out of service and surveyed to confirm the structural condition of the vessel.



Figure 4: EC300 Marine Control System

Background

The Master has worked at sea in various capacities in the Merchant Navy and on fishing vessels since 1966.

The Master joined the company in 2002. He obtained his Man-in-Charge license for 250 passengers in June 2002. He then took up a full time Master position within the company operating TRIDENT V and the sister vessel TRIDENT VI.

The Master has not been involved in any reportable accidents since being issued his Man-in-Charge license and is considered a very experienced and capable mariner.

The Master was fully rested when he started his shift at 0715 on 24th August 2014, having been on a rest day previously.

The EC300 Marine Control System was fitted to TRIDENT V during the annual refit period of January to March 2013. At time of installation, the manufacturer attended the vessel to provide training for all full time skippers. This included practical manoeuvring of the vessel.

The 'troll' mode function is used by some of the Masters when motoring at the Cambridge Steps. The benefit is that the thrust and wash produced is significantly reduced and therefore does not disturb other vessels moored on swinging moorings to the south of the steps.

Safety Lessons, Recommendations and Actions Taken

1. The collision occurred as a result of the main engine control system on the port side of the wheelhouse being operated in 'troll' mode without the Master realising so. This limited the available propulsion power to fully control the vessel during its approach to the Cambridge Steps.
2. Prior to the accident, no formal procedure was in place for the Master and crew to 'cross check' the engine control system settings prior to the requirement to manoeuvre in confined areas.
3. The operator has introduced a procedure prohibiting the use of 'troll' mode.
4. The operator has introduced a procedure for the Engineer to 'cross check' the engine control settings are in 'cruise' mode prior to the vessel entering harbours or areas with restricted sea-room.
5. Consideration should be given to the appropriate stage within the passage plan to change between control positions and carryout a function test to ensure full control is available. This should be carried out before the point of no return when an abortive manoeuvre remains possible.
6. The operator no longer conducts passenger operations at the Cambridge Steps. This removes the requirement to routinely manoeuvre the vessel from the port side controls thus reducing the need to change between control positions.
7. No announcements were made by the Master to inform passengers of the situation. Crowd control training and procedures should be considered to ensure passengers are provided with information during emergencies.

8. Port control was not advised of the accident and therefore were unable to provide assistance to the Master nor call the emergency services in a timely manner. The Master is required to report any accident as soon as practicable by the quickest means available.
9. Passengers were allowed to disembark the vessel without checking their condition or obtaining their details. Consideration should be given to ensure procedures are available to control multiple passengers who have sustained or potentially have sustained injuries.
10. Passengers should remain seated until the vessel is moored for their own comfort and safety. The operator has amended the safety announcement and has displayed notices around the vessel advising passengers to remain seated until the vessel is moored.

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