

SAFETY BULLETIN No.3 of 2013

FAILURE TO KEEP A PROPER LOOKOUT

Over the past year, there have been a number of totally avoidable incidents, which have been caused by a failure to keep a proper look-out.

In a recent incident, a vessel collided with a narrow boat after re-entering the navigational channel at the Coin Street Moorings. The impact damaged the narrow boat's stern and disabled her steering. The Master admitted not seeing the narrow boat at all. **Where visibility is restricted or small craft maybe encountered, Masters should consider whether they require someone else to assist to maintain a proper lookout.**



In another incident, a vessel collided with a mooring buoy in clear visibility while the Master had been distracted re-booting navigational equipment. **Masters should avoid distraction by delegating tasks to crew to ensure that a proper lookout is maintained at all times.**



A further incident involved a vessel contacting a mooring buoy at night. The crew knew that the buoy was in the vicinity, but did not see it. **When navigating at night in close proximity to known or suspected hazards; Masters should take extra care, ease speed and use a search light to confirm their location.**

Earlier this year, a passenger vessel operating a commuter service collided with Westminster Embankment wall at 7 knots in clear conditions and without any mechanical failure. **This incident would not have occurred if the Master had been fully aware of his surroundings and maintaining a proper lookout.**

In all of these incidents, the cause was identified as a failure to keep a proper look out by all available means, which is not only a fundamental requirement of the International Collision Regulations, but also the ordinary practice of good seamanship. It is vital that the master and crew work together to maintain a proper look out at all times, none of these incidents would have occurred if they had done so.

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Telephone calls, VHF radio traffic, CCTV and radar traffic images may be recorded in the VTS Centres at Gravesend and Woolwich.

www.pla.co.uk

