



## Asteroid Hits Bulk Cargo Vessel

### Description

**A bulk cargo vessel was recently struck by an asteroid.** The Master claims the incident was totally unexpected. The asteroid smashed a large hole in the side shell of the vessel and damaged the adjacent structure as well. At the time, the vessel was in ballast and the damage was all above the waterline. The asteroid finally came to rest in the cargo hold.

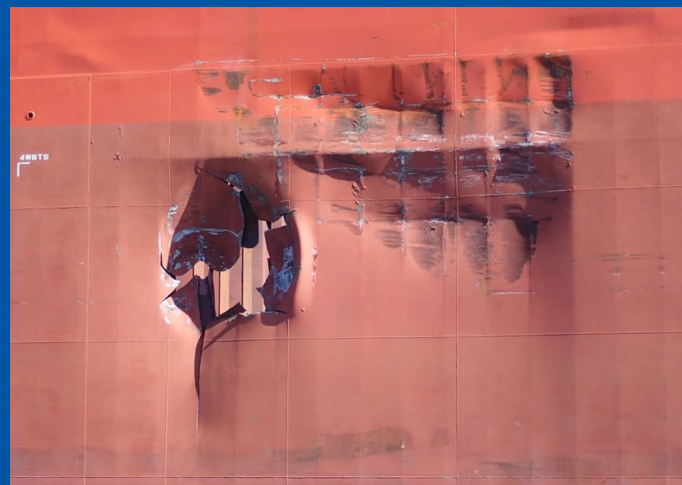
**Just kidding.** The damage was the result of a collision between the bulk cargo vessel and an offshore support vessel.

The collision happened as the bulk cargo vessel was leaving port shortly after midnight. A pilot was onboard, and the departure was routine. An offshore support vessel was inbound on its side of the channel. A tug was inbound on a similar course as the offshore support vessel but was to the right of the channel moving at 3 knots (kts). The tug was pulling an unloaded ocean barge with a high freeboard. The offshore support vessel decided to overtake the tow and pass it. The mate on watch felt he could pass it on the bend in the channel because the tug and barge were outside the channel.

Just as it was about to overtake the tow, the mate on the offshore support vessel saw the barge moving into the channel. It was a windy night with gusts up to 25 kts and it appeared the barge was being pushed by the wind. The mate reacted quickly with a hard rudder command. Unfortunately, that turned the offshore support vessel towards the outbound bulk cargo vessel.

The pilot and Master on the bulk cargo vessel both saw the offshore support vessel crossing the centerline of the channel, ordered the rudder to 30° starboard, and sounded 5 blasts on the vessel's horn. However, the bulk cargo vessel was unable to turn fast enough to avoid the collision.

The mate on the offshore support vessel was so focused on not colliding with the barge in the dark that he lost situational awareness until he heard the 5 horn blasts from the bulk cargo vessel. By that point the collision was imminent.



### Actual Damage

**The damage to the bulk cargo vessel was limited to one cargo hold. Sections of hull plating had to be replaced as well as numerous structural members in that area. Damages exceeded \$115,000. The damage to the offshore support vessel was limited to the bow but was extensive. Repairs costs exceeded \$85,000. Costs for the lawyers to sort it all out nearly exceeded the cost of the damage.**

## Potential Damages

Had the bulk cargo vessel been fully loaded, the collision would have likely impacted the main deck and possibly cargo hatches. The repair costs could easily have doubled.

## How could this have been prevented?

- ★ If you were the mate on the offshore support vessel, what could you have done differently?
- ★ How can you improve situational awareness at night in an area with traffic?
- ★ If you were on the bulk cargo vessel, how could you have avoided the collision? How could you have reduced the risk of a collision?

When you identify a hazard before something goes wrong...

**it's a Good Catch.**

When you stop an operation before something bad happens...

**it's a Good Catch.**

When you recognize the risks from passing a tug pulling an unloaded ocean barge on a windy night and decide not to pass them on a turn in the channel with an outbound vessel in the vicinity...

**that's a Good Catch, too!**



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