



GOOD CATCH from **The American Club**

DOCK DAMAGE CLAIMED?

Description

A large general cargo vessel had left its load port the morning before, loaded with cargo heading to its discharge port.

The Master was in his office checking emails. He opened an email from the vessel operations manager with some concerning news. The facility the vessel just departed from indicated its intention to file a claim against the vessel for damage to the concrete dock. The email included a few pictures of the damaged dock that showed crumbled concrete, gouges in the concrete, and several missing chunks of concrete.

The Master was unaware of any damage to the vessel or the facility when they departed. Still, he had been heavily involved in monitoring the pilot's actions and other vessel traffic. He conferred with the Chief Officer who was also unaware of any damage to the vessel or the dock. However, as per normal practice and his standing instructions, he had reminded the mates on the bow and stern to take a few quick pictures or a short video of the dock and fendering system prior to and after berthing. It was something an old Master had suggested to him several years before. Even when arriving or departing at night, there was usually sufficient lighting to document the condition of the dock and fendering system.

The mate at the stern had the clearest pictures. They were date-stamped in the ship's file and showed the concrete on the dock significantly more intact.

On closer examination of the pictures from the facility, the Master noticed something else. The paint scrapings on the concrete were an orange-red color. They couldn't have been left by his vessel because the hull above the waterline is black, and the underwater hull is dark red.



Actual Damage

There was no doubt that the concrete on the dock had been damaged. Initial estimates were that repairs would cost at least \$50,000. However, clear evidence indicated the damage had not been done by this vessel. With that shared evidence, the facility apologized and indicated that no claim would be filed against the vessel.



Crew Actions That Made A Difference

- ★ Instead of panicking or getting defensive, the Master and Chief Officer evaluated the evidence of the allegation their vessel damaged the dock.
- ★ The Master and Chief Officer consistently tried to be aware of all issues as they happened and made it a practice to stay vigilant on the bridge when arriving or departing port. Thus, they were surprised by the report of damage as they had expected to hear of any damage from their crew right away.
- ★ The mates assigned to the bow and stern during mooring operations were instructed and trained to maintain an awareness of the dock condition both before arriving and immediately after departure.
- ★ The mates took good pictures to document the condition of the dock before they moored and immediately after the vessel departed. The pictures were cheap and easy insurance for this exact possibility.

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 prevent a claim against the vessel because of vigilance and prudent actions...

that's a Good Catch, too!



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