



NORWEGIAN HULL CLUB

# CASUALTY INFORMATION

## NO 73 - JANUARY 2010

Norwegian Hull Club wishes to contribute to increased safety on board, focusing on **Lives, Health, Environment and Assets** and extracting **Useful Experience**. NHC has suffered two "Total Losses" in typhoons in the Far East from its members lately. In this letter we focus on Heavy Weather.

*Dear Captain*

In this letter we focus on heavy weather, and how you and your officers may prepare in the best way.

Please also refer to our Hurricane avoidance warnings shown on our homepage; [www.norclub.no](http://www.norclub.no)

Most of you have experienced the forces of a wild hurricane on the seven seas. We have examples where ship sides have been ripped open, hatches have become loose, and containers have been tossed overboard as if they were made of paper and not fastened at all.

When extreme wind meets sea currents, interference occurs, whereby standing waves may reach heights of tremendous levels. Reference is made to the Aguhla stream off South East Africa. The stream runs at 3 to 4 knots in a southwesterly direction, and may create waves of over 25 meters.

The best place to be during really heavy weather is in sheltered waters. However, the second best place is obviously in wide-open deep waters, being able to ride off the waves. In coastal waters the depth normally decreases the closer one gets to the shore, and again interference will occur.

Being at anchor is a high-risk business. Some seamen have the erroneous impression that once the vessel has come to anchor the need for vigilance is diminished. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We want to focus on a few vital issues as regards being at anchor and at sea.

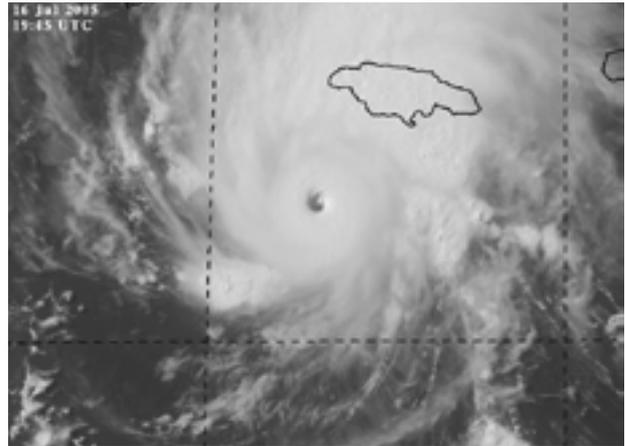
### **USEFUL EXPERIENCE:**

At anchor;

Always keep a proper watch on the bridge. Anchor bearings and distances should be checked continuously. The bridge team must be kept on normal alert as anchor watch during rough weather is not something to be handled by a cadet or other non-certified personnel.

Consider the prevailing weather conditions and be prepared for what may come. Do not hesitate to weigh anchor and proceed to open waters in due time before the situation becomes critical.

Do not disengage the engines unless certain about the weather forecast. Just recently a vessel at anchor in Norwegian



waters dragged and drifted on to the rocks in minutes in heavy weather. The result was severe oil spill and major damages to the bottom of the vessel. A local traffic control station monitored this situation, but as the vessel's position at anchor was outside the formal legal area of the station they did not take any action until it was too late.

Make sure the Chief Engineer maintains the engines to a state of readiness wherein they can be started on immediate notice. No maintenance to main engines at anchor, unless in a safe port.

If one anchor drags, drop the other immediately to sufficient length unless engines already are in operational mode.

Last but not least - what about the bottom conditions? In some areas, such as Vlissingen outside Belgium, vessels come adrift during almost every storm. Keep away if possible, and ride off the heavy weather by slow steaming at a safe distance from the coast.

At sea;

Make sure to stay updated on the latest weather forecast. Respond according to good seamanship and try to avoid the heavy weather area. Ensure sufficient safe distance to shoreline, other obstructions etc. Adjust the speed in due time to reduce the impact of the waves and subsequently the strain on ship and cargo. Ride off the waves, and try keeping your ship and cargo in a safe condition.

*Bon voyage.*