



NORWEGIAN HULL CLUB

# CASUALTY INFORMATION

## NO 67 - SEPTEMBER 2008

Norwegian Hull Club wishes to contribute to increased safety on board, focusing on **Lives, Health, Environment and Assets** and extracting **Useful Experience**.

The hurricane season is a well known, annual recurring event in the Gulf of Mexico. The area is also known to be congested with oil installations and to have a high density of ships calling various Gulf ports, including the Mississippi River. Therefore it comes as a surprise to us when ships are still caught in the middle of a hurricane's "eye", and ships and installations are still escaping the hurricane's predicted path by fleeing to its most dangerous first quadrant. We thought principles of evasive actions were basic knowledge, but experience from the start of the hurricane season tells us that some lessons should be re-learned.

### HURRICANE AVOIDANCE PLANNING

#### COURSE OF EVENTS:

Well in advance, and long before the hurricane enters the Gulf, the hurricane path is predicted and closely monitored by a number of organisations. Among those offering a full public forecast service is the National Hurricane Centre ([www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)), which among others has a specialised service in the area. The forecast is widely distributed, and it contains relevant information for most stakeholders. In addition, there is a well of other different services and sources that are issuing adequate and tailored warnings for ships and offshore installations. So, for all practical purposes there is really no excuse to be caught in the "eye" of an approaching hurricane.

Despite this, having experienced the first hurricanes of the season in the Gulf of Mexico, both ships and rigs have been reported in embarrassing and dangerous positions where we quite honestly have been astonished to find ships and rig units from renowned owners. It seems that a lot of people have forgotten, or simply ignored the impact and the lessons learned of the 2005 hurricane season.

#### DISCUSSION:

In the Gulf of Mexico we are in the Northern hemisphere, and it should be known to mariners that the winds are



Hurricane "Ike" approaching Galveston

strongest in the dangerous "first quadrant" of a hurricane. As every typical hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico is moving west and then weaving its course northerly before hitting shore, the storm surge is at its highest level in the same dangerous quadrant. When the system is pushing the ocean masses towards shallow water, the surge is rising; hence an escape to the north is the least clever evasive option.



Path of hurricane "Ike"

So – what is the big concern?

Our concern is that as an insurer we are constantly reminded about the risks involved during the hurricane season – and during hurricane "Ike" we were involved in several incidents.

With this casualty newsletter we hope stakeholders acknowledge the safety risk. The risk aspect, and the way to minimise the risk needs to be understood by marine units, ships and floating rigs as well as managers and commercial parties. Hurricanes are potentially deadly and are expensive to every stakeholder in all ways. So – keep clear.

#### USEFUL EXPERIENCE:

Ensure you and your organisation are situationally aware – and know the tools to avoid a disaster.