HM Government of Gibraltar

Office of the Marine Accident Investigation Compliance Officer

Report on the investigation of the collision of

SM KESTREL and DIAMOND STAR II on

18th March 2025

This report is subject to the Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting & Investigation) Regulations 2012.

Office of the Marine Accident Investigation Compliance Officer
Ministry for Business, Tourism and The Port
HM Government of Gibraltar
Suite 971, Europort
Gibraltar
GX11 1AA

The Gibraltar Merchant Shipping
(Accident Reporting and Investigation)
Regulations 2012

NOTE

Investigations under the Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulation 2012 ('the Regulations') shall not be concerned with apportioning blame nor with determining civil or criminal liabilities.

The purpose of safety investigation into marine accidents is to reduce the risk of future casualties and incidents and reduce their serious consequences including loss of life, loss of ships and pollution of the marine environment.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AB	Able-Bodied Seaman
AIS	Automatic Identification System
ARPA	Automatic Radar Plotting Aid
BGTW	British Gibraltar Territorial Waters
Cable	One tenth of a nautical mile (185.2m)
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CoC	Certificates of Competency
COG	Course Over Ground
ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
CPA	Closest Point of Approach
GPA	Gibraltar Port Authority
GPS	Global Positioning System
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
ISM	International Safety Management System
kW	Kilowatt
LT	Local Time
LNG	Liquified Natural Gas
m	Metre
NM	Nautical Miles
OOW	Officer Of the Watch
PSC	Port State Control
RGP	Royal Gibraltar Police
SMS	Safety Management System
SOF	Statement of Fact
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea
UK	United Kingdom
UTC	Universal Coordinated Time
VDR	Voyage Data Recorder
VTS	Vessel Traffic Management and Information System
VTSO	Vessel Traffic Management and Information System Officer

SYNOPSIS

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SYNOPSIS

On 18 March 2025, while departing Gibraltar Western Anchorage following instructions from Gibraltar Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) due to forecast deteriorating weather conditions, the vessel *SM Kestrel* collided with the anchored vessel *DIAMOND STAR II*. Strong west-south westerly winds, subject to an active strong wind warning, adversely affected the vessel's manoeuvrability during anchor heaving operations. After weighing anchor, the vessel experienced significant leeway to port caused by strong beam winds, limiting its ability to safely manoeuvre clear of nearby anchored vessels despite engine and helm actions ordered by the Master. The collision occurred at approximately 0116 LT and resulted in damage to both vessels.

At 0230 LT, the vessel subsequently re-anchored at a position bearing 060 degrees, approximately 0.8 nautical miles from Gibraltar "A" Head Lighthouse.

The investigation determined that the Master and bridge team did not adequately assess the effects that the prevailing weather and environmental conditions would have on the anchor heaving manoeuvre. As a result, insufficient consideration was given to the combined effects of wind and tidal conditions prior to commencing departure, leading to reduced control of the vessel during the manoeuvre. Although Gibraltar VTS monitored the situation and instructed the vessel to proceed to sea in accordance with Gibraltar Port Authority procedures during worsening weather, these actions did not prevent the accident.

Recommendations have been issued to the vessel operator to enhance bridge team risk assessment and manoeuvring procedures for departures without pilotage, particularly in adverse weather conditions.

SECTION 1 – FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 Background Information

All times are Local Time (LT) in Gibraltar, that is UTC +1 hours, unless stated otherwise.

1.2 Ship Particulars – 'SM KESTREL'

A photograph of 'SM Kestrel' anchored at Western anchorage, Gibraltar, following the collision, is shown at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 'SM KESTREL' afloat at Gibraltar Western Anchorage

Particulars of 'SM KESTREL'

Type:	LNG Carrier
Flag:	Panama
Port of Registry:	Panama
IMO Number:	9917579
Owner:	SMKLC LNG6 S.A.
Operator:	KLC SM Co. LTD
Classification Society:	Lloyd's Register & Korean Register
Construction:	Steel

Gross Tonnage:	114,180GT
Length Overall:	291.96 metres
Engine Type/ Power:	HYUNDAI-MA B&W 5G70ME-C10.5-GA / 8013kW x 2 x 65.7RPM
Date of Delivery:	26 September 2023
Cargo:	LNG

1.2.1 Voyage Particulars

'SM KESTREL' was at Gibraltar Western Anchorage following completion of lubricating oil bunkering operations and the receipt of provisions. The vessel was instructed to depart the Western Anchorage due to deteriorating weather conditions.

1.3 Ship Particulars 'DIAMOND STAR II'

'DIAMOND STAR II' berthed at Algeciras after the collision, is shown at Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 'DIAMOND STAR II' – alongside at Port of Algeciras after the collision

Particulars of ‘DIAMOND STAR II’

Type:	Bulk Carrier
Flag:	Panama
Port of Registry:	Panama
IMO Number:	9449273
Owner:	Full Speed Shipping Ltd
Operator:	ASP Ship Management Singapore Pte LTD
Classification Society:	RINA
Construction:	Steel
Gross Tonnage:	33,205
Length Overall:	190.00 metres
Engine Type/ Power:	STX MAN-B&W 6S50MC-C7 / 9480KW
Propulsion:	Single Right Hand Fixed Propeller
Date of Delivery:	2011
Cargo:	Cement Clinker

1.3.1 Voyage Particulars

‘DIAMOND STAR II’ was anchored at Gibraltar Western Anchorage conducting fuel bunkering operations with the bunker tanker *FORTUNA I*. The vessel was manned by 22 Indian and Filipino crew members in accordance with the requirements of the vessel’s Minimum Safe Manning Document.

1.4 Marine casualty or incident information

Class of Incident: IMO Serious Marine Casualty – Collision

Date and time of the collision incident: 01:15 LT on 18 March 2025.

Position and location of the marine casualty or incident: Western Anchorage, Gibraltar Bay in position 36° 06.4' N 005° 21.6' W.

1.4.1 Damage to 'SM KESTREL'

The following damages were observed and reported upon by attending Class Surveyor (see figure 3 & 4 for hull damage):

- Side shell plating indentation, from frame 83+3000mm to frame 87+1000mm, between middle stringer platform and lower stringer platform, with side shell longitudinal stiffeners in way affected, from 16th from main deck to 21st from main deck.
- Web frames affected: 84, 85, 86 and 87.
- Middle stringer platform plating found indented, from frame 84+1500mm to frame 87.

Figure 3 - View of Port side hull damage

- Side shell plating found holed:
  - At location frame 85+1000mm, between side shell longitudinal stiffeners 10th and 11th from deck.
  - Hole of 500x500mm.
  - At location frame 86+500mm, between side shell longitudinal stiffeners 10th and 11th from deck.
  - Hole of 500x500mm. In way of frame 85, at 17th side shell longitudinal stiffener from deck.
  - Hole of 300x300mm.

Figure 4 - General View of Port side hull damage & breached / holed hull

1.4.2 Damage to 'DIAMOND STAR II'

The following damages were observed and reported upon by attending Class Surveyor:

- Aft poop deck and transom plating found deformed /buckled between from – 5 to 0 with two holes in upper locker starboard.
- Crack with hole in the upper deck corner starboard side / aft and at aft deck midship coinciding with 2nd vertical frame from starboard side.
- Freefall lifeboat & davit found damaged. Davit connection to main deck found damaged and detached.
- Panama chock found damaged.

Figure 5 - General View of freefall lifeboat & davit secured by welding after damage

Figure 6 - General View of davit support structure collapsed & aft peak tank air pipe damaged / fractured

Figure 7 - General View of mooring equipment damaged

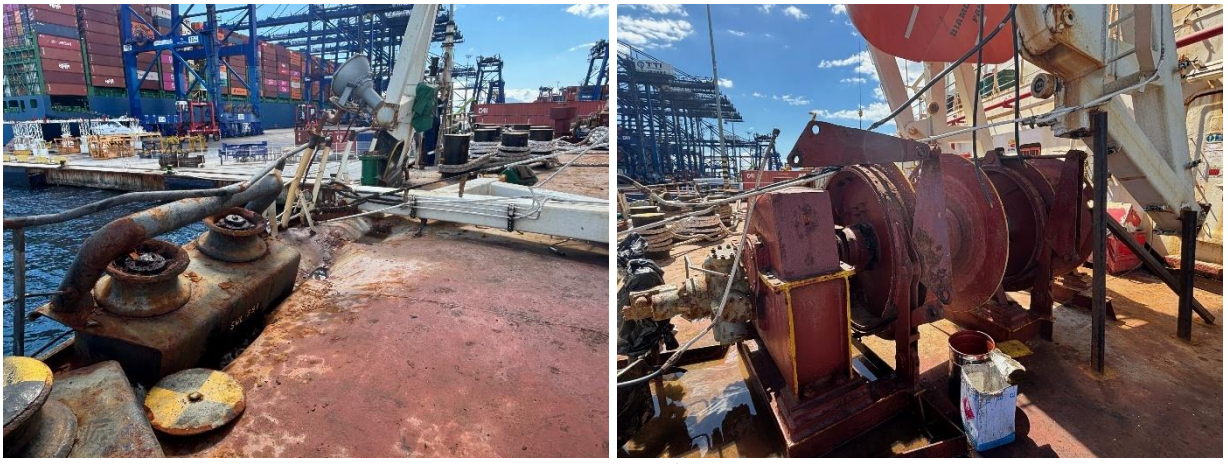


Figure 8 - General View aft deck deformed & buckled / Mooring windlass brake structural damage

Figure 9 - General View internally of aft Stbd side quarter deformed / buckled / holed

Figure 10 - General View internally aft transom plating deformed / buckled

Figure 11 - General View of aft transom plating deformed / buckled

1.5 Environmental Conditions

The 'SM KESTREL' deck logbook recorded the weather at time of incident as being a south easterly Beaufort Force 6 wind, tide direction 237 degs / 0.4m, swell direction south easterly / 3-3.5m with visibility 9-10nm.

Met Office

Inshore Waters Forecast

Date: 17 March 2025

HERE IS THE FORECAST FOR INSHORE WATERS WITHIN 5 NAUTICAL MILES OF GIBRALTAR VALID FROM 1500 LOCAL TIME today UNTIL 1500 LOCAL TIME Tuesday.				
WIND:	**Southeast 2 to 3 at first, veering west or southwest 5 to 7.**			
WEATHER:	**Showers, occasionally thunderstorms, becoming fair.**			
VISIBILITY:	**Good or moderate, occasionally poor.**			
SEA STATE: (wind wave)	**Smooth becoming slight or moderate.**			
SWELL:	**Short or average, very low, from the west (from the east at times overnight).**			
SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURE:	**PS 15.**			
NEXT HIGH WATERS GIBRALTAR	**1704**	LOCAL TIME MONDAY AND	**0510**	LOCAL TIME TUESDAY
NEXT LOW WATERS GIBRALTAR	**2237**	LOCAL TIME MONDAY AND	**1057**	LOCAL TIME TUESDAY

Forecaster: Duty Meteorologist **Issued by Met Office RAF Gibraltar at: 171148 Z**

Figure 12 - Extract from Met Office Gibraltar dated 17/03/2025

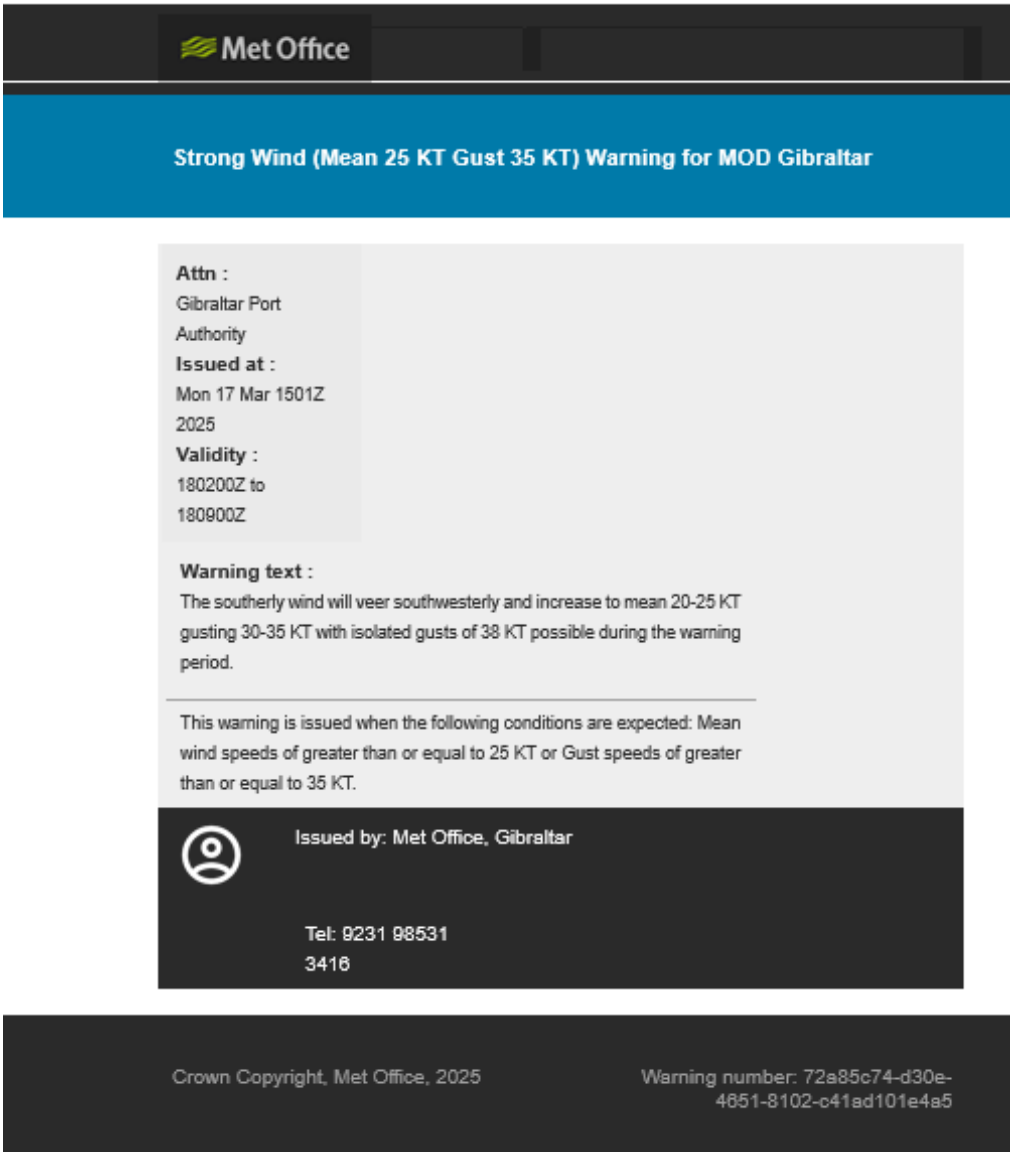


Figure 13 – Screenshot from Met Office Gibraltar, Weather forecast dated 18/03/2025

1.6 VDR PLAYBACK

The SM KESTREL VDR data was provided and able to run using the VDR software.

VDR details as follows:

Manufacturer:	Furuno Electric Co. Ltd
Model:	VR-7000
Software version:	V 1.63

VDR and ECDIS playback were run to show the positions and tracks of 'SM KESTREL' and 'DIAMOND STAR II', and the other vessels transmitting Automatic Identification System (AIS) data located in the Western Anchorage at the time of the incident.

Screenshots of the ECDIS play back are shown at Figure 14 & 15 below.

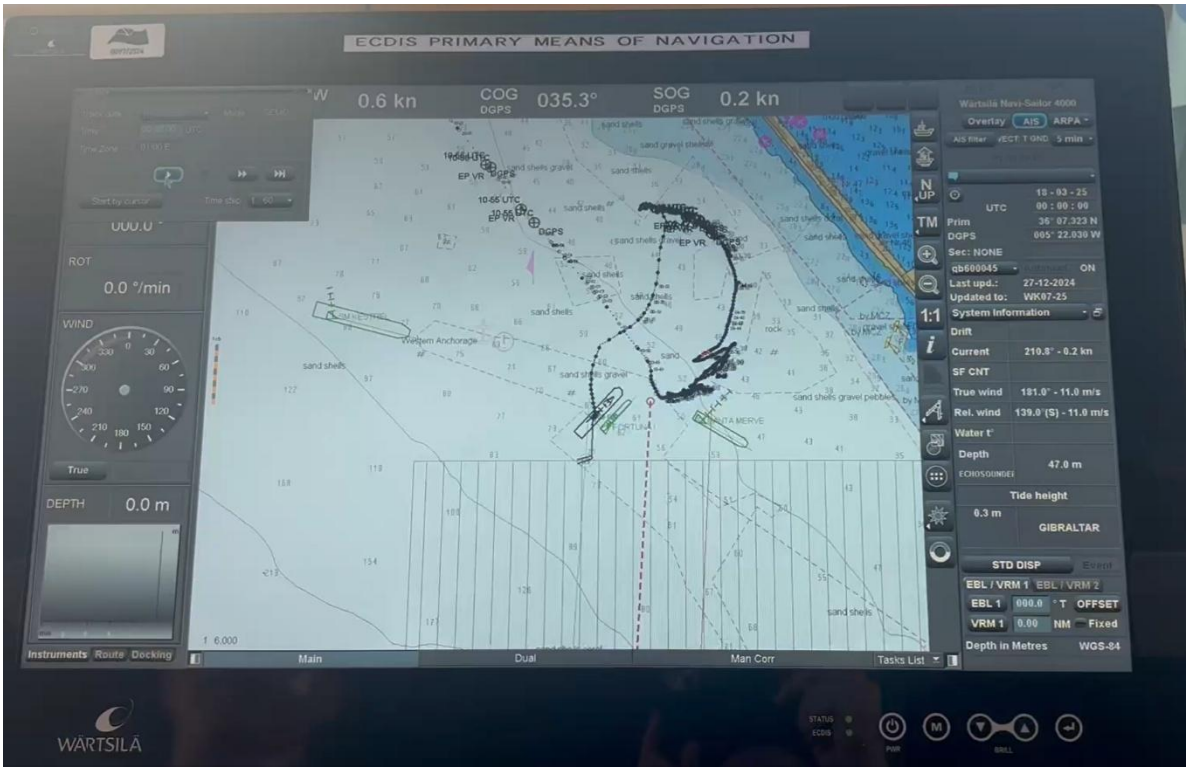


Figure 14 - Screenshot of DIAMOND STAR II ECDIS Play back position of both vessels at 00:00 UTC

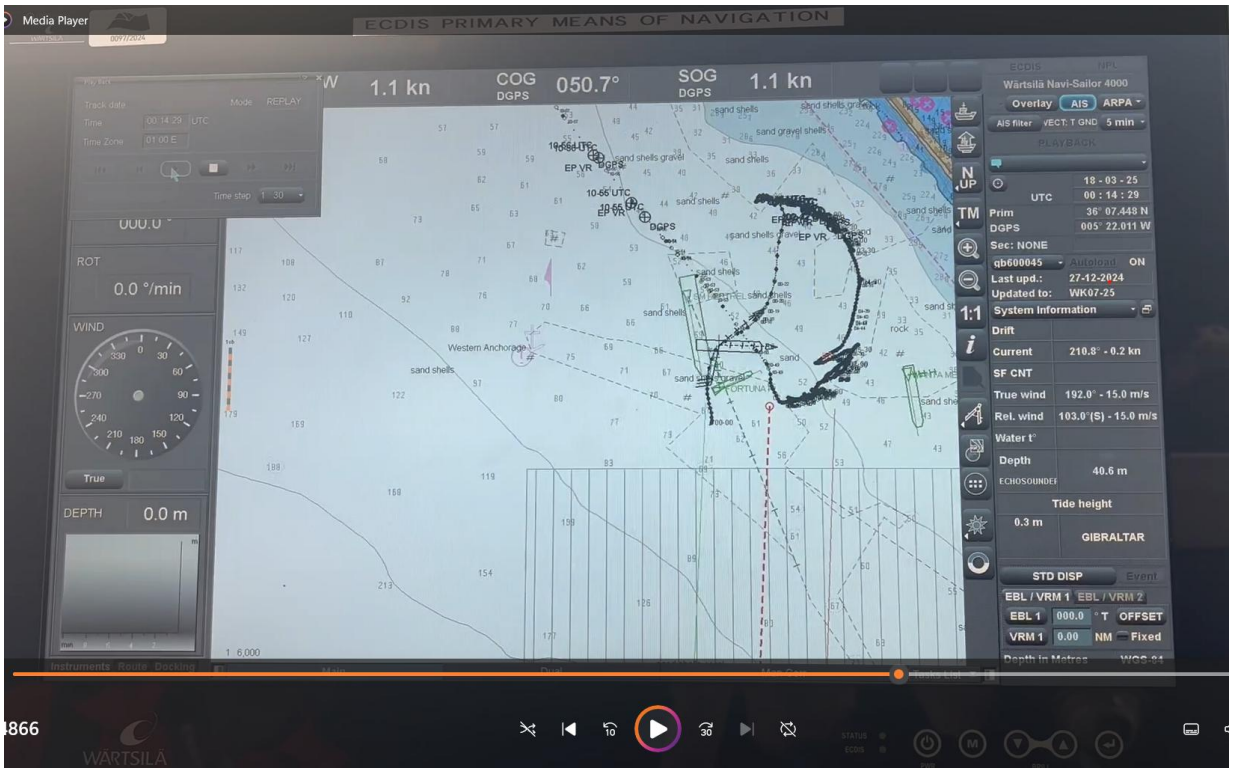


Figure 15 - Screenshot of DIAMOND STAR II ECDIS Play back at time of contact

1.7 Human factors:

1.7.1 'SM KESTREL'

Bridge manning:

The Certificates of Competency (CoC) for each of the officers involved was found to be correct and in compliance with the vessel's Minimum Safe Manning Document.

The recorded hours of rest, recovered from 'SM KESTREL', indicate that all crew were compliant with the MLC requirements for rest periods.

At the time of the incident the bridge of 'SM KESTREL' was manned with the Master, Second Officer, and the duty AB who was the helmsman. The Chief Officer oversaw the anchoring operation on the fo'c'sle.

Drug and Alcohol testing was carried out by the 'SM KESTREL' crew following the collision incident and found negative.

1.7.2 'DIAMOND STAR II'

The bridge of 'DIAMOND STAR II' was manned by the Third Officer and the Cadet. The watch Able-Bodied Seaman (AB) was on deck rounds and in VHF radio communication with the bridge.
The recorded hours of rest provided by 'DIAMOND STAR II', indicate

that all crew were compliant with the MLC requirements for rest periods.

1.8 Bridge Procedures

1.8.1 'SM KESTREL'

The **KLC SM Co. Ltd. Safety Management Manual**, Section *Ship Operations Procedure – 13*, contained procedures for preparing for vessel arrival and departure.
This procedure required the completion of a **Bridge Pre-Departure Checklist** prior to departure. Part A of the checklist, relating to the passage plan, required that weather information and weather charts be obtained before departure and to review relevant maritime safety information and communicate this to the bridge team.
No evidence was sighted to confirm that a bridge team toolbox meeting and associated risk assessment for this unscheduled early departure was carried out.
(Bridge Pre-Departure Checklist included below).

Pre-Departure Check List for Bridge

VESSEL	SM KESTREL	VOY. NO.	V.014-OUT
PORT	GIBRALTAR WESTERN ANCHORAGE	DATE	2025.03.17

NO.	Contents of Check	Confirm
A. Passage Plan		
1	Berth to berth passage plan for the intended passage prepared and available on the bridge with the route plotted on up to date and appropriate scale charts (Official paper or Electronic)	☑
2	Passage Plan checked and approved by the Master	☑
3	Passage Plan briefed to the Bridge Team	☑
4	Route displayed on ECDIS and/or other electronic navigation aids, as appropriate	☑
5	Up to date charts and nautical publications available (Last Notice to Mariners Week No.12/25)	☑
6	MSI(Maritime Safety Information) checked and communicated to Bridge Team	☑
7	Obtain weather chart prior to Departure.	☑
B. Bridge Equipment Checks (Tested and Ready for Use)		
1	AIS (Voyage data updated and correct)	☑
2	Ancillary bridge equipment (e.g. Binoculats)	☑
3	BNWAS	☑
4	Clocks synchronised with engine room	☑
5	Controllable pitch propeller controls and indicators (If applicable) F.P.P	N/A
6	Course Recorder	☐
7	ECDIS and/or other electronic navigation aids (Position accuracy must be compared with GPS)	☑
8	Echo Sounder (Including Record Printer) / **[Depth Alarm : 2.0 m]**	☑
9	Electronic position fixing systems (e.g. GPS, DGPS)	☑
10	Emergency Engine stop function	☑
11	Engine(s)/propulsion (Engine Trial, Ahead and Astern with permission of Port Authority)	☑
12	Engine Movement Recorder / Bell Book	☐
13	GMDSS communications(VHF, MF/HF, NAVTEX, INMARSAT, etc) and GMDSS log	☑
14	Gyro/magnetic compass and repeaters, including repeater in steering gear area	☑
15	Internal communications (e.g. P/A, Transceiver, Telephone)	☑
16	LRIT (e.g. connected with Inmarst-C)	☑
17	Navigation lights, shapes and sound signals	☑
18	Radar(s) and ARPA	☑
19	RPM and ROT indicators and repeaters in wing bridge (port & starboard)	☑
20	Signalling equipment including whisle, flags, search lights and signal lamps	☑
21	Speed and Distance log	☑
22	Stabilizers (If applicable)	N/A
23	Steering Gear (Details Refer to **[SMP-10-F01]**). Use more than 1 steering gear power unit.	☑
24	Thrusters (If applicable)	N/A
25	VDR/S-VDR	☑
26	Wind Direction/Speed Indicator and Barometer	☑
C. Port and Pilotage		
1	MASTER/PILOT INFORMATION EXCHAGE and PILOT CARD Prepared **[SOP-27-F02]**	N/A
2	Pilot Boarding Time confirmed	N/A
3	Pilot Boarding Arrangements ready for the Pilot **[IMO Resolution A.1045(27)]**	N/A
4	Port and VTS Channels monitored	☑
5	Port, VTS and Pilot advised of any special requirements	☑
6	Check Tide and Tidal Current	☐

Remark : 2330 – 2400 C/J

Checked by	Verified by Master
2/O T.W. KIM	H.D. LEE

SM KLCSM

The **Safety Management Manual Ship Operations Procedure – 17**, *Preparation and Action for Heavy Weather at Berth and Anchor*, contained a checklist addressing heavy weather conditions both at berth and at anchor.

Section 6.3.2 of this procedure outlined countermeasures for wind speeds of up to 20 knots and for conditions where wind speeds exceed 30 knots. The guidance highlighted that large vessels are particularly exposed to wind pressure when manoeuvring at slow speeds in strong winds. Accordingly, the procedure stated that in such circumstances the vessel should consider heaving up the anchor and coordinating with the relevant team regarding the option of drifting in a safe area when necessary. The use of checklist 17- F05 was not sighted to have been used. This procedure / checklist should include preparations and actions for departure from berth and at anchor in heavy weather and the assessing all of the associated risks on these occasions.

*A **berth-to-berth passage plan** was available for the vessel's voyage from **KRK, Croatia, to Gibraltar**. The plan included consideration of the following:*

- *Weather stations to be used during the voyage*
- *Expected weather conditions during the voyage*
- *Voyage passage plan checklist*
- *Identification of known navigational hazards and potential adverse weather conditions*
- *Predicted weather, currents and tides*
- *Toolbox meeting for passage planning and passage planning (ECDIS).*
- *Risk assessment for passage planning and ECDIS operations*

*A **specific passage plan for departure from Gibraltar** was not sighted, as the vessel had been scheduled to depart on **18 March at 1300 LT**.*
Had the departure taken place as originally scheduled, it is likely that, as part of the passage planning process, the Master and bridge team would have carried out a more comprehensive assessment of the prevailing weather and environmental conditions and the potential impact these could have on the anchor heaving manoeuvre. Such considerations would typically form part of the bridge team toolbox meeting and associated risk assessment prior to departure.
(See voyage passage plan checklist below as an example).

Voyage Passage Plan Check List

Voyage No. : 014-OUT From : KRK, CROATIA To : GIBRALTAR, GIBRALTA

No.	Check item	Check
1	Is the Passage plan carried out the risk assessment? (Attached)	☑
2	Are the nautical charts (include ENC Chart) and publication (sailing directions, light lists, radio signals, guides to port entry and tide tablesetc.) necessary for the intended voyage carried and corrected with the latest N/M available? [SOLAS V/27] <<Prescribe the details in the next page>>	☑
3	Has the intended voyage been planned using appropriate nautical charts (include ENC Chart), large scale charts for coastal, publications and taking into account guidance in Bridge Procedure Guide and SOLAS Chapter V.Reg.34?	☑
4	Have the requirements regarding traffic separation scheme (TSS) / vessel traffic routing services (VTS) been considered? [SOLAS V/34.2.1]	☑
5	Does the passage plan ensure sufficient sea room for the safe passage of the ship throughout the voyage? [SOLAS V/34.2.2] Dep.(Draft limitation: 14.0M , Airdraft limitation: N/A), Arr. (Draft limitation: N/A , Airdraft limitation: N/A).	☑
6	Does the passage plan including transit under bridges, power cable and other height restriction? (if not applicable, check N/A) [Shall maintain a minimum clearance one(1) meter from the bridge and two(2) meter from the cable] - Vertical clearance of the Bridge(name:) : m / Ship's airdraft when transit : m - Vertical clearnace of Power cable(GPS location:) : m / Ship's air draft when transit : m	☑
7	Does the passage plan anticipate all known navigational hazards and adverse weather conditions? [SOLAS V/34.2.3]	☑
8	Does the passage plan take into account marine environmental protection measures that apply and avoid, as far as possible, actions and activities which could cause damage to the environment? [SOLAS V/34.2.4]	☑
9	Has the planned route clearly displayed on appropriate charts? [STCW A-VIII/2 Part 2-6]	☑
10	Have the needs of the intended voyage, such as fuel, water, lubricants, chemicals, expendable, spare parts and tools been considered and the schedule determined? [STCW A-VIII/2 Part 2] <<Prescribe supply schedule in the next page>>	☑
11	Has security information regarding pirates and armed robberies likely to be known in the area of intended voyage been studied and considered necessary measures to be taken?.	☑
12	Have all navigational warnings (local and NAVAREA) that affect the route been consulted and if appropriate, applied to the carts?	☑
13	Have the aids to navigation been studied and highlighted for landfall and position monitoring purpose?	☑
14	Has all available port information been studied, pilot boarding area and anchorage etc. includinginformation pertaining to the availability of shore-based emergency response arrangements and equipment?	☑
15	Has the navigation charts or ECDIS indicate the obstacle(fishing farms, no go area which is received from local agents, etc)?	☑
16	Are there any local regulations, relevant to the type of vessel or cargo being carried that must be borne in mind?	☑
17	Has the use of parallel indexing techniques been considered as a way of monitoring the vessels progress?	☑
18	Has consideration been given to the density of traffic likely to be encountered throughout the voyage or passage?	☑
19	Have the vessel's draft, the maneuvering characteristics and squat in shallow waters been taken into account at various stages of the voyage?	☑
20	Have the identified risks from the de-briefing of the previous voyage plan been reflected? Reflected risks :	☑
21	Have you conducted a briefing on the established voyage plan?	☑

Remarks;

1. The Master shall prepare a detailed voyage plan which shall be covered the entire voyage from berth toberth, including those areas where the services of a pilot will be used.
2. The plan shall be **available at all times on the bridge** to allow officers of the navigational watch immediateaccess and reference to the details of the plan.
3. The progress of the vessel in accordance with the voyage and passage plan should be closely andcontinuously monitored. Any changes made to the plan should be made consistent with the Bridge Procedure Guide and concerned regulations.

Date: 3/11/2025
Checked by: 2/O T.W. KIM
(Name, Rank & Signature)

Date: 3/11/2025
Master: H.D. LEE
(Print Name)

Had the Master requested operational guidance from the VTS including advise on the availability of pilotage and tug assistance the Master may have factored this guidance into the assessment of departure risks and his decision making.

Had the Master consulted the pilot prior to departure, a Master–Pilot exchange would have taken place before heaving the anchor, in which the proposed manoeuvre could have been reviewed and evaluated.

In practice, it is common for the Master to follow the pilot's recommended manoeuvre.

1.9 Shore authority involvement and emergency response

As per Gibraltar Port VTS incident the following applies:

- At 0114, GIBRALTAR VTS noticed SM Kestrel departing anchorage close to anchored vessel Diamond Star II.
- GIBRALTAR VTS warned SM KESTREL to keep clear of the anchored vessel.
- Collision warning sent. Vessel is noticed passing very close to stern of Diamond Star II.
- At 0116, Master of Diamond Star II confirms to VTS damage to stern of vessel.
- VTS informed DIAMOND STAR II Master to stop bunkering and cast-off barge Fortuna I soonest.
- At 0118, Senior Port Office informed.
- At 0120, pilot informed to proceed to SM Kestrel and re-anchor vessel. Pilot informed to inspect condition of both vessels.
- At 0124, SM kestrel and Diamond Star II informed by VTS to report on damage.
- At 0135, Pilot proceeding to SM Kestrel. Will anchor vessel remotely
- At 0146, DIAMOND STAR II confirms no water noticed on board but damage to lifeboat and railing and no injury to crew.
- At 0156, Bunker Barge Fortuna 1 cast off from Diamond Star II. Fortuna 1 confirms no contact with his vessel
- At 0215, Pilot unable to board SM Kestrel due to weather will anchor remotely from pilot boat.
- At 0228, Pilot informs hole in ballast tank high up above waterline
- At 0230, SM Kestrel anchored.

1.13 Pilotage

There are seven Gibraltar Pilots, supplied with three high-speed pilot boats. Gibraltar Pilots are a self-administrating company, regulated by HM Government of Gibraltar. The Gibraltar Pilots website provides the following information for vessels arriving at the anchorage.

Services - Arrival Information

- *Pilotage is compulsory for all commercial vessels entering the port, the anchorage or when steaming in the Bay within Port Limits.*
- *Vessels should give 2 hours' notice prior to arrival on VHF Channel 12.*
- *Vessels should call again when 5 miles from the Pilot Boarding Area.*
- *A listening watch must be kept on VHF Channel 12 at all times.*
- *Tugs for berthing and unberthing will be ordered by the pilot.*
- *The Masters of Passenger Vessels however will be responsible for ordering tugs.*
- *Vessels leaving a berth should give 30 minutes notice prior to departure.*
- *Pilotage is not compulsory for vessels leaving the anchorage.*

The total number of pilotage acts by Gibraltar Pilots, by all seven pilots, for the year 2025 was in excess of 9,500 movements.

Most vessels do not take a pilot on departure from the anchorage as it is not compulsory; however, a small number of operators do require that a pilot is taken on departure. It is understood that the cost of a pilotage from the anchorage would be charged at the same rate as on arrival. This would incur an additional charge as it is another pilotage movement.

1.14 The Western Anchorage

Anchorages are available to the West and East of Gibraltar. The Western Anchorage is primarily used for vessels bunkering fuel oil.

The Western Anchorages are shown at 16 below.

'SM Kestrel was anchored at the South Loop anchorage **(see Figure 16 – Slot 9)**, and 'Diamond Star II' was anchored at the Rosia Internal Anchorage position.

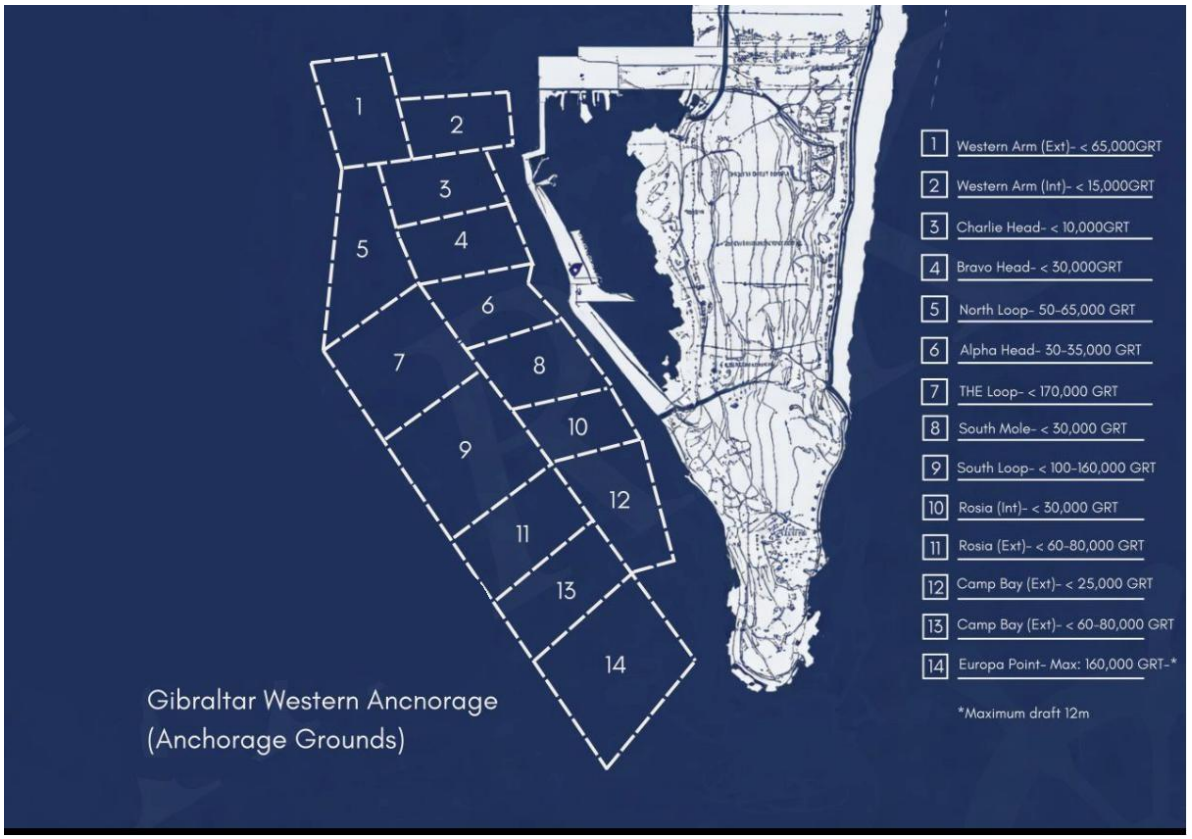


Figure 16 designated Gibraltar Western Anchorage positions

1.15 Vessel Traffic Services (VTS)

Port of Gibraltar Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) is part of the Gibraltar Port Authority.

The VTS control room is continuously manned with three personnel, two VTS Officers (VTSO) and a VTS Supervisor, who is responsible for the shift. All VTS Staff are trained to CO103/1 level and VTS Supervisors are trained to the CO103/2 standards.

VTS Management is made up of a Deputy VTS Manager and a VTS Manager.

All operational issues are escalated to one of the two Senior Port Officers, with any further escalation to the Marine Officer / Deputy Captain and eventually Captain of the Port if, required.

The VTS control room equipment consists of a Kongsberg C-Scope with two AIS Base Stations and three Radar systems all integrated into a single display with all traffic information available at each VTS workstation.

It is standard practice for VTSOs to instruct vessels, anchored at both the Eastern and Western Anchorages to proceed to sea when significant weather deterioration is forecast.

1.16 NARRATIVE

On 17 March 2025, the SM Kestrel arrived at Gibraltar Western Anchorage to receive lubricating oil bunkers and conduct a crew change.

With Pilot onboard she dropped anchor in a position Latitude 36°07.34'N and Longitude 005°22.3 West and FWE in position Latitude 36°07.20'N and Longitude 005°27.3' West.

Diamond Star II dropped anchor with pilot onboard in position Latitude 36°07.40'N and Longitude 005°21.8' West. (See image below of vessels position at 00:00 UTC on the 18t March 2026.)

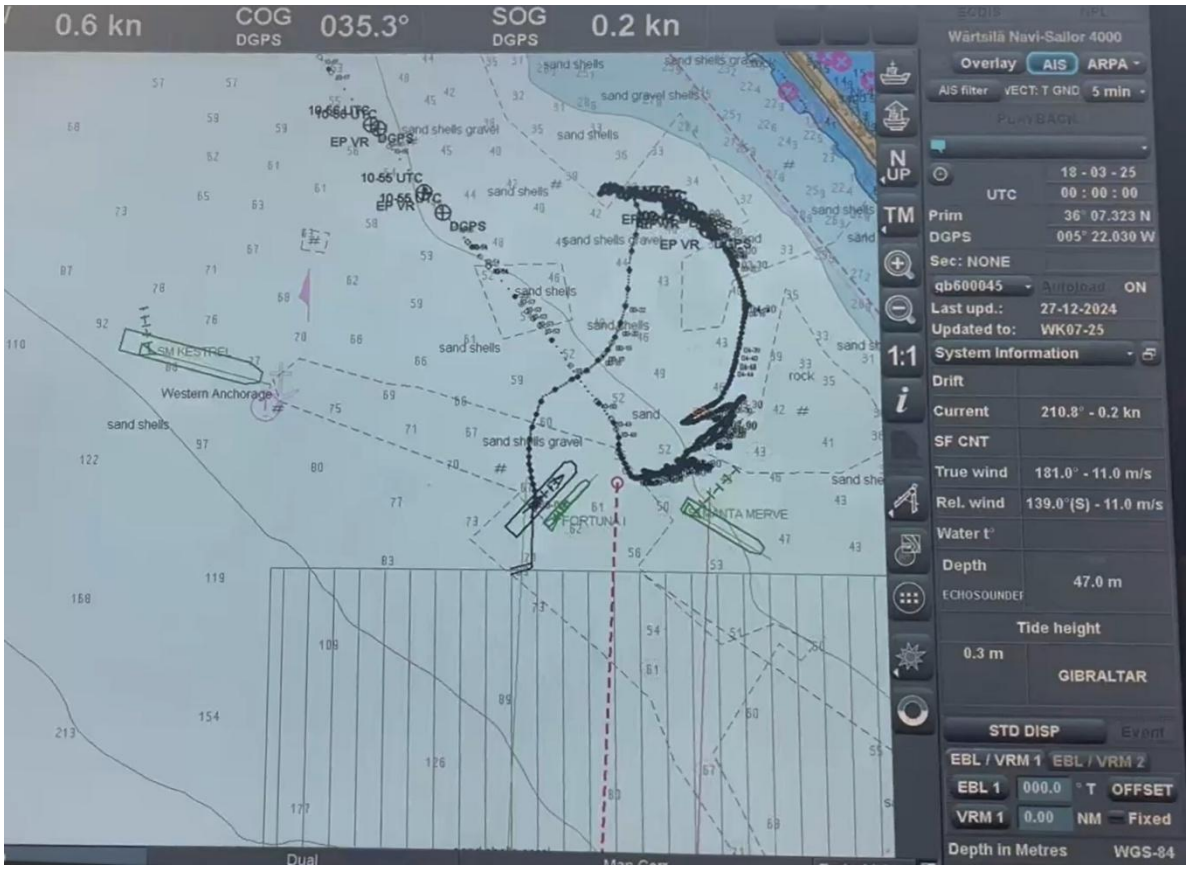


Figure 17 - Positions of 'SM Kestrel' and 'Diamond Star II' at anchor 01:00 LT - 00:00 UTC

An Inshore Waters Forecast issued by the UK Met Office on 17 March 2025, valid from 1500 LT on 17 March until 1500 LT on 18 March, indicated southeast winds force 2–3 initially, veering west-southwest force 5–7 later in the period. Additionally, a Strong Wind Warning was issued for Gibraltar forecasting mean winds of 25 knots with gusts up to 35 knots, and isolated gusts reaching 38 knots, valid from 0100 LT to 0800 LT on 18 March 2025.

At 0010 LT on 18 March 2025, the vessel received an initial notification from Gibraltar Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) instructing departure from the Western Anchorage due to the forecast deterioration in weather conditions. The vessel responded at 0011 LT indicating its intention to depart at 1300 LT. Gibraltar VTS reiterated the urgency of the situation and advised immediate departure due to strengthening winds.

It should be noted that under section 5 of the ISM Code the master has overriding

authority to make decisions concerning the safety of the ship and protection of the environment.

A second instruction to depart was issued at 0015 LT.

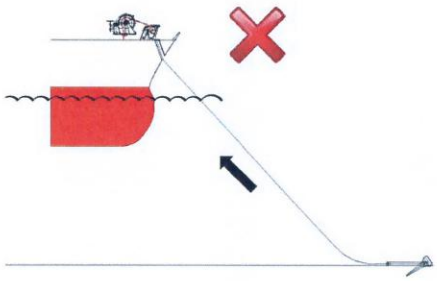
In accordance with the vessel's anchor handling procedures from within the anchor manual, (see figure 18), it stated that too much high tension in the chain when heaving is to be avoided, as if the chain load exceeds the winch max capacity, it can cause severe damage to hydraulic motor.

(2) ⚠ CAUTION Maintenance must be done by a person with enough knowledge.

(3) ⚠ CAUTION Expel air from the circuit completely and fill the hydraulic motors and pumps with oil before restarting them after disassembling.

3. Warning and Cautions when heave in chain

NO GOOD



⚠ CAUTION

Avoid too high tension in chain when heaving.
If the chain load exceeds the winch max. capacity, it can cause severe damage to the hydraulic motor.
(Especially, this could cause serious damage to the con rod assembly, retaining ring, valve housing, Oldham's coupling, distributor valve spool of hydraulic motor)

GOOD

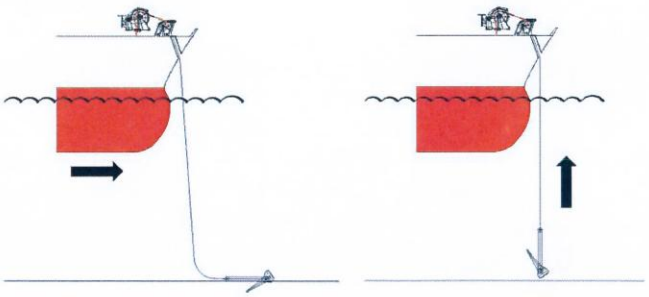


Figure 18 Warning and cautions when heaving up anchor from anchor manual

Anchor heaving commenced at 0030 LT. In accordance with the anchor handling manual, the Master stated that during the heaving operation various main engine orders were applied to ensure that the anchor cable remained leading up and down. These manoeuvres, together with the south-westerly wind acting on the vessel's starboard side, may have contributed to the vessel's continuous movement to port and her gradual approach towards the South Mole breakwater.

At approximately 0105 LT, with the anchor aweigh, the vessel began experiencing continuous drift to port caused by strong beam winds, significantly reducing manoeuvrability. At this time, the distance to the western breakwater was approximately 0.5 nautical miles and decreasing (figure 19).

Figure 19 Positions of 'SM Kestrel' when anchor away at 01:05 LT 00:05 UTC underway at 21:52:0

At 0110 LT, the Master ordered full ahead revolutions to regain steerage and turn the vessel to starboard; however, the vessel's rate of turn remained limited to approximately 5–7 degrees due to the prevailing environmental conditions.

Subsequently, the vessel collided with the stern of the anchored vessel *DIAMOND STAR II*. Master of the SM kestrel recorded within the deck and bell books contact to have taken place at 01:15 LT (see figure 20).

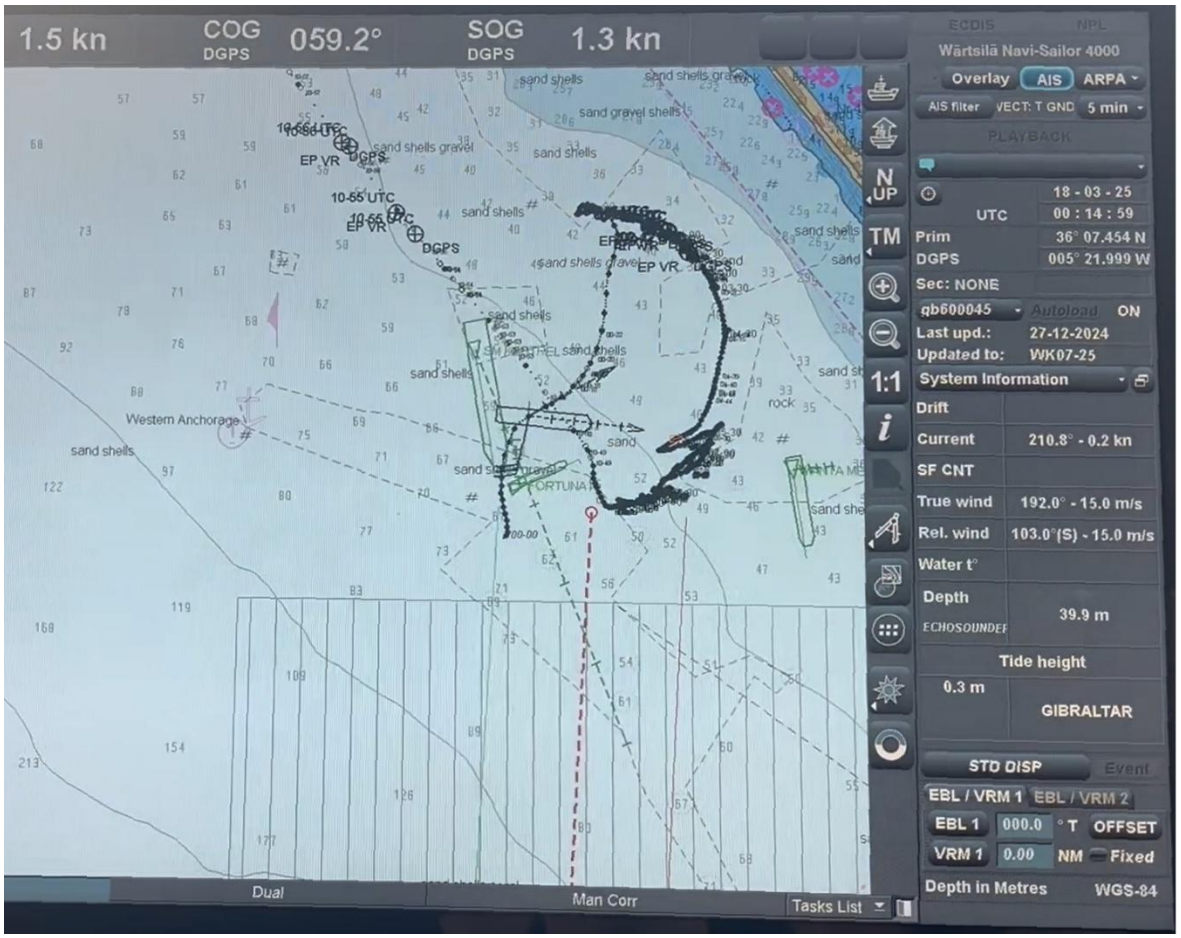


Figure 20 Positions of 'SM Kestrel' at time of collision taken from the ECDIS of the "Diamond Star II) at 01:15 LT 00:15 UTC

The collision was reported to Gibraltar VTS by the Officer of the Watch at 0116 LT.

At 0120 LT, a pilot was instructed to proceed to *SM Kestrel* in order to assist with the re-anchoring of the vessel and to assess the condition of both vessels involved in the collision. At 0124 LT, Gibraltar VTS requested both *SM Kestrel* and *DIAMOND STAR II* to report on the extent of any damage sustained.

At 0135 LT, the pilot proceeded towards *SM Kestrel*; however, due to the prevailing poor weather conditions, it was not possible for the pilot to board the vessel. As a result, the pilot assisted the vessel remotely in conducting the anchoring manoeuvre.

At 0230 LT, the vessel re-anchored at a position bearing 060 degrees, approximately 0.8 nautical miles from Gibraltar "A" Head Lighthouse.

‘**SM Kestrel’ Accident Report / Statement of Fact.**

The Master of *SM KESTREL* completed the Company collision report and provided a Master’s statement describing the circumstances of the incident. The statement noted that:

“The anchor was up and down, but the vessel was drifting continuously to port due to the side wind. The distance to the breakwater was approximately 0.5 nm and the vessel was closing the distance. Engine RPM was increased to full ahead; however, the vessel was not turning to starboard as expected due to the effect of the side wind, with the rate of turn approximately 5–7 degrees. Contact occurred with the stern of the anchored vessel *DIAMOND STAR II*. The incident was reported to Gibraltar VTS and, due to the weather conditions, remote pilotage was provided and the vessel subsequently re-anchored.”

‘**DIAMOND STAR II’ Accident Report / Statement of Fact**

The master of DIAMOND STAR II completed a company standard initial report and provided a Master’s statement describing the circumstances of the incident and the damage sustained.

The statement noted that:

M.V. DIAMOND STAR II arrived at Gibraltar on 17 March 2025 at 1936 LT and anchored at the Western Anchorage at 2006 LT with pilot onboard for bunkering.

At approximately 0112 LT on 18 March 2025, the outbound vessel SM KESTREL (IMO 9917579), while passing astern, contacted the stern centre and starboard aft area of DIAMOND STAR II.

The contact caused damage to the freefall lifeboat davit, poop deck, stern bulkhead, steering gear room vent pipe, aft fairlead rollers, Panama lead, and aft railings, with additional denting and buckling to structural members in the stern area.

No injuries or pollution were reported. Port Control was informed at 0114 LT via VHF Channel 12.

SECTION 2 - ANALYSIS

2.1 Aim

The purpose of the analysis is to determine the contributory causes and circumstances of the accident as a basis for making recommendations to prevent similar accidents occurring in the future.

2.2 Overview

This section examines the factors that led to the collision between *SM KESTREL* and the anchored vessel *DIAMOND STAR II* at Gibraltar Western Anchorage during the early hours of 18 March 2025. The analysis considers the prevailing environmental conditions, the vessel's decision-making and bridge team actions during the anchor heaving and departure manoeuvre. Attention is given to the adequacy of the risks assessment carried out prior to departure in the context of the forecast strong winds and the effect these conditions had on the vessel's manoeuvrability once the anchor was weighed. The section also examines whether the prevailing wind and tidal conditions were sufficiently considered by the Master and bridge team.

2.3 Actions Onboard 'SM Kestrel'

On 17 March 2025, the vessel arrived at Gibraltar Western Anchorage to receive lubricating oil bunkers and conduct a crew change.

An Inshore Waters Forecast issued by the UK Met Office on 17 March 2025, valid from 1500 LT on 17 March until 1500 LT on 18 March, indicated southeast winds force 2–3 initially, veering west-southwest force 5–7 later in the period. Additionally, a Strong Wind Warning was issued for Gibraltar forecasting mean winds of 25 knots with gusts up to 35 knots, and isolated gusts reaching 38 knots, valid from 0100 LT to 0800 LT on 18 March 2025.

At 0010 LT on 18 March 2025, the vessel received an initial notification from Gibraltar Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) instructing departure from the Western Anchorage due to the forecast deterioration in weather conditions. The vessel responded at 0011 LT indicating its intention to depart at 1300 LT. Gibraltar VTS reiterated the urgency of the situation and advised immediate departure due to strengthening winds. A second instruction to depart was issued at 0015 LTT.

A pre-departure checklist was completed and anchor heaving commenced at 0030 LT. However, the Master and bridge team's assessment of the prevailing environmental conditions and associated risks was insufficient to fully consider the hazards and their potential effect on the anchor-heaving manoeuvre. A bridge team toolbox meeting and a passage planning risk assessment were not conducted on this occasion due to the unscheduled departure.

Such procedures would normally be expected prior to normal scheduled departures and may have assisted the bridge team in identifying and mitigating the risks associated with departing in the prevailing conditions.

In accordance with the anchor handling manual, the Master stated that during the heaving operation various main engine orders were applied to ensure that the anchor cable remained leading up and down.

At approximately 0105 LT, with the anchor aweigh, the vessel began experiencing continuous drift to port caused by strong beam winds, significantly reducing manoeuvrability. At this time, the distance to the western breakwater was approximately 0.5 nautical miles and decreasing.

At 0110 LT, the Master ordered full ahead revolutions to regain steerage and turn the vessel to starboard; however, the vessel's rate of turn remained limited to approximately 5–7 degrees due to the prevailing environmental conditions.

Subsequently, the vessel collided with the stern of the anchored vessel *DIAMOND STAR II*. The collision was reported to Gibraltar VTS by the Officer of the Watch at 0116 LT.

At 0120 LT, a pilot was instructed to proceed to *SM Kestrel* in order to assist with the re-anchoring of the vessel and to assess the condition of both vessels involved in the collision.

At 0135 LT, the pilot proceeded towards *SM Kestrel*; however, due to the prevailing poor weather conditions, it was not possible for the pilot to board the vessel. As a result, the pilot assisted the vessel remotely in conducting the anchoring manoeuvre

At 0230 LT, the vessel re-anchored at a position bearing 060 degrees, approximately 0.8 nautical miles from Gibraltar "A" Head Lighthouse.

2.4 Actions Onboard 'Diamond Star II'

The 'Diamond Star II' was anchored in position with bunker barge Fortuna I secured on her starboard side. At 0108 LT, the SM Kestrel was seen underway and closing in onto the Diamond Star II eventually making contact at approximately 01:12 LT. Master informed Gibraltar VTS of contact at 01:14LT. On completion an assessment of the vessels condition and damaged sustained was carried out and reported to the Gibraltar Port Authorities.

2.5 Intervention of VTS

The VTSOs were monitoring the departure of the "SM Kestrel" throughout, including visually. Gibraltar VTS warned SM KESTREL to keep clear of the anchored vessel.

There was no requirement for the master of 'SM Kestrel' to advise VTS of his intended manoeuvre prior to the anchor being aweigh, or when the vessel was

underway. It is standard practice for VTSOs to instruct vessels, anchored at both the Eastern and Western Anchorages to proceed to sea when significant weather deterioration is forecast.

It is important that any clear operational guidance provided to vessels departing the Western Anchorage is consistent and readily available Such guidance should include, the availability of pilots and tug assistance,

2.6 Pilotage

Pilotage is compulsory for vessels arriving at the Western Anchorage but is not mandatory for vessels departing.

Pilotage ensures that vessels anchoring in the Western Anchorage are positioned appropriately, allowing the anchorage to be used safely and efficiently for the delivery of bunkering services in Gibraltar.

Departure from the Western Anchorage in light wind and weak tidal conditions is generally a relatively straightforward manoeuvre and is monitored by VTS. However, on this occasion, consultation with local pilots or seeking advice prior to departure would have assisted the Master in assessing the prevailing conditions and determining the safest manoeuvre / course of action, including the consideration and recommendation of tug assistance where appropriate.

While collisions of vessels departing the western anchorage are rare, the risk does exist.

Pilotage is provided to ensure the safe arrival of vessels at the anchorage and the effective use of available space. Consulting pilots for advice on the most appropriate manoeuvres when departing the anchorage, particularly in poor weather conditions, would assist Master's in heaving anchor and executing their departure safely. Additionally, the ship handling experience and local knowledge of harbour pilots regarding the effects of prevailing winds, tidal streams, traffic patterns, and the use of tug assistance can offer valuable support to Masters, especially during challenging conditions or when manoeuvring near other anchored vessels.

It is likely that pilot advice and tug assistance would have supported the manoeuvre, particularly given the adverse weather conditions, and may have mitigated the associated risks and preventing the collision.

2.7 Actions following the collision

Gibraltar VTS observed *SM Kestrel* departing the anchorage in close proximity to the anchored *Diamond Star II* and issued warnings to keep clear. Shortly afterwards, the Master of *Diamond Star II* reported damage to the stern. VTS instructed the vessel to stop bunkering and to cast off the bunker barge *Fortuna I*.

The Senior Port Officer was informed, and a pilot was dispatched to *SM Kestrel* to assist with re-anchoring and to assess the condition of both vessels.

Subsequently, *Diamond Star II* reported damage to the lifeboat and railing but no injuries or water ingress, while *Fortuna I* confirmed no contact with the barge. Due to weather conditions the pilot was unable to board *SM Kestrel* and instead anchored the vessel remotely from the pilot boat. A hole was later reported in a ballast tank above the waterline, and *SM Kestrel* was successfully anchored.

2.8 Previous Accidents

The frequency of collisions on departure from the anchorage is low. However, the potential consequences of a collision are high, particularly with respect to the risk of serious oil pollution. No significant collisions involving a pilot on board, out of in excess of 9,500 pilotage acts conducted each year, have been formally investigated over the same 15-year period.

Nevertheless, the potential impact remains elevated due to the high volume of vessels arriving at and departing from Gibraltar and nearby Spanish ports.

SECTION 3 – CONCLUSIONS

1. The collision occurred as SM Kestrel departed the Western Anchorage in deteriorating weather conditions, with strong winds limiting the vessels manoeuvrability. The vessel experienced significant drift to port during heaving and once the anchor was aweigh which reduced the effectiveness of steering and manoeuvring orders and led to contact with the anchored vessel Diamond Star II.
2. The master and bridge team's assessment of the prevailing environmental conditions and the associated risks was insufficient to mitigate the hazards and the effects on the anchor heaving manoeuvre.
3. SMS Procedure Preparation and Action for Heavy Weather at Berth and Anchor, contained a checklist addressing heavy weather conditions both at berth and at anchor. The use of the checklist was not sighted to have been used. This procedure / checklist should include preparations and actions for departure from berth and at anchor in heavy weather, assessing all the associated risks and consider pilot and tug assistance.
4. A specific passage plan for departure from Gibraltar was not sighted, as the vessel had been scheduled to depart on 18 March at 1300 LT. Had the departure taken place as originally scheduled, it is likely that, as part of the passage planning process, the Master and bridge team would have carried out a more comprehensive assessment of the prevailing weather and environmental conditions and the potential impact these could have on the anchor heaving manoeuvre. Such considerations would typically form part of the bridge team toolbox meeting and associated risk assessment prior to departure.
5. No evidence was sighted to confirm that a bridge team toolbox meeting and associated risk assessment prior to departure was carried out. as would have in likelihood been the case should a passage plan have been prepared prior to a normal scheduled departure.
6. The ship handling experience and local knowledge of pilots, regarding winds, tidal streams, traffic, and tug use represents a valuable resource, particularly in adverse weather or when manoeuvring near other vessels.
7. It is likely that pilot advice and tug assistance would have supported the manoeuvre, particularly given the adverse weather conditions. This may have reduced the associated risks and hence the collision could have been prevented. The availability clear operational guidance (including advice on the availability of pilots and tug assistance) would assist in preventing similar accidents occurring in the future.
8. The frequency of collisions on departure from the anchorage is low. However, the potential impact of vessel collisions is high, with the associated risk of serious oil pollution. No significant collisions, with a pilot on board - with around 9,500 pilotage acts carried out each year - have been formally investigated during the same 15-year period.

SECTION 4 – SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Safety recommendations shall in no case create a presumption of blame or responsibility.

The owner / operator of ‘SM Kestrel’ is recommended to:

- Review and enhance manoeuvring procedures and bridge team risk assessment processes for departures conducted without pilotage, particularly in adverse weather conditions. Pre-departure checklists should include additional guidance to ensure that prevailing and forecast weather conditions are properly evaluated and the associated operational risks adequately assessed prior to departure.
- Review and amend the SMS Procedure “Preparation and Action for Heavy Weather at Berth and Anchor” to include guidance, preparations, and actions for departures from berth and anchor during heavy weather conditions. The procedure should require that all associated risks are assessed and documented as part of the vessel’s passage planning process.
- The above procedure should further include specific consideration of the availability, suitability, and use of pilotage and tug assistance when undertaking departures in adverse weather conditions.
- Ensure that the lessons identified from this accident investigation are disseminated throughout the fleet and incorporated into future safety meetings, training programmes, and operational guidance.

Office of the Maritime Accident Investigation Compliance Officer
HM Government of Gibraltar