

Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 14-33

Issued: 31st August 2014

Subject: Stowaway

An AHTS boat was loading chain and wire alongside a busy UK Port.

Following a port stay of 24 hours, the vessel proceeded to sea to start anchor handling operations.

36 hours later an unknown person was discovered on the main deck outside the Active Heave Compensation Crane by the bridge crew.

A full search of the vessel was undertaken, no more stowaways were found.

The stowaway was calm and cooperative after being discovered.

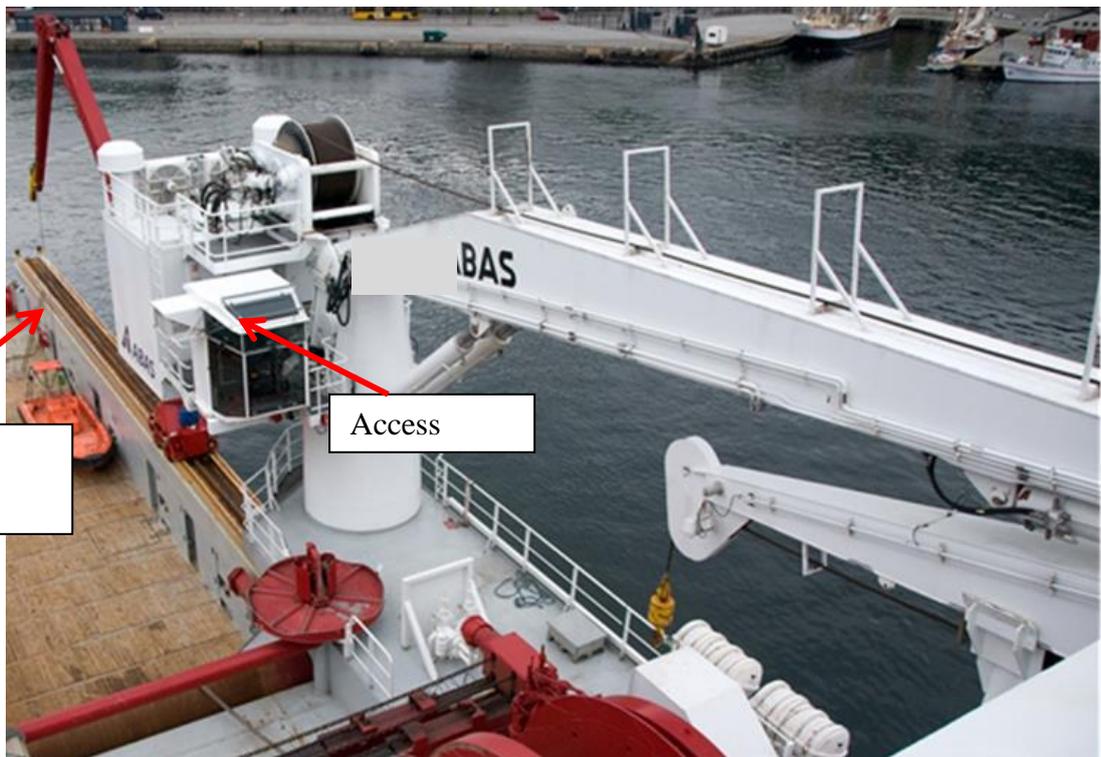
A cabin was cleared of all potentially harmful objects. The stowaway was secured in this cabin and provided with food and water.

The stowaway and the hiding place were searched, identification papers were found. No suspicious items were found.

Vessel informed the Company's shore side emergency response team.

Upon an exchange with Police, Client and Company it was decided that the stowaway would remain on board until the anchor operations were completed.

3 days later the stowaway was handed over to Police Scotland.



Stowaway hid in AHC
crane machinery room.

Access

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On board investigation and findings

- ISPS Port of call information; Level 1 stated, but no further information requested or volunteered on arrival – the crew were unaware that the UK Port has uncontrolled access at Level 1.
- There are several places a stowaway can enter the vessel from the quayside dependant on tidal conditions.
 - The stowaway entered the vessel at the cargo rail one deck below the gangway access.
- Vessel was following Ship Security Plan for a Level 1 Port.
- There were no personnel at the gangway on Level 1. The gangway was watched intermittently via CCTV.
- There are several places a stowaway can access and hide outside the accommodation.
- The hatches on the AHC crane were open at all times allowing access to the machinery space via the internal ladder in the pedestal.
- The handling of the stowaway situation was highly professional from the Master and his crew after discovering the stowaway onboard.
- On this occasion it was fortunate that:
 - The stowaway did not have any harmful intent
 - The Charterers were content that the stowaway could remain onboard. There would have been significant commercial consequences had the AHTS been required to return to port.
- The Owners have not been held liable by the UK Border Force or Police Scotland; however they will be involved in forthcoming legal action as witnesses.

Suggestions

- Do not rely solely on port security to prevent uncontrolled access to the vessel.
- The crew has to actively focus on preventing stowaways from gaining access to the ship regardless of the geographical location and perceived security.
- Revise Ship Security Plans to account for non-secure ISPS compliant ports.

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