

**KISH P & I LOSS PREVENTION**  
**CIRCULAR KPI-LP-159-2014**  
*(Risky Crossing of Traffic*  
**Separation Scheme & Lessons to be**  
**Learn)**

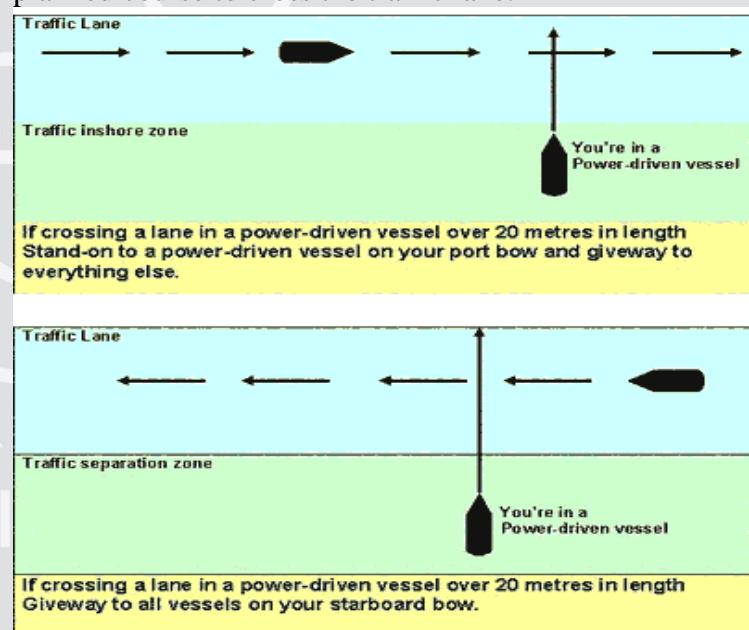
► **The Incident:**

A cargo vessel was on a regular service that required her to routinely cross a Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS). The passage plan required a close approach to the south-west traffic lane on a course of 192 degrees (T) and then, with a course alteration to port, cross the traffic lane at right angles. Although dark and windy (SW force 4), the visibility was good. The OOW was in charge of the bridge watch with the Master and a lookout in attendance. The vessel's speed over the ground was 9.5 knots. The OOW had been plotting the radar tracks of four vessels in the south-west lane, which he considered might be cause for concern once the cargo vessel reached the waypoint at the edge of the traffic lane. He briefed the Master on his observations, concluding that one of the vessels, a bulk carrier, would be a problem once the cargo vessel had altered course to port to cross the lane.

The Master assessed that if they altered course at the waypoint without significantly losing speed, they would pass safely ahead of three of the vessels and, if they continued to turn to port, would pass safely astern of the bulk carrier in question. He advised the OOW of his intentions and then took the con. At the waypoint, the Master ordered a slow alteration of course to port. During the turn, with their vessel heading 125 degrees

(T) and the bulk carrier bearing 082 degrees (T) at a range of 2.04 miles, the bulk carrier's OOW made several calls on VHF radio Channel 16 to clarify the crossing vessel's intentions. None was heard on board the cargo vessel.

The cargo vessel stopped turning on a heading of 093 degrees (T) with the bulk carrier fine on her starboard bow at a range of 1.4 miles. She then slowly turned to starboard, keeping the bulk carrier on her starboard bow, and finally steadied on her planned course to cross the traffic lane.



► **Lessons learned:**

- ✓ The cargo vessel passage plan had the vessel altering course by 60 degrees at the edge of the south-west traffic lane; little time remaining for the manoeuvre to be carried out before the vessel enters the traffic lane. This precludes other vessels in

the TSS from effectively assessing the situation and taking appropriate action. On the other hand, a waypoint located sufficiently outside the TSS would have enabled the cargo vessel to comply fully with Rule 10(c) of the Colregs. It would also have enabled the bulk carrier to properly determine if a risk of collision existed in accordance with Rule 7(a) and, if so, to take early, substantial and appropriate action as a give-way vessel in accordance with Rules 15 and 16.

- ✓ Passage planning requires precautionary thought. Precautionary thought declines with the onset of complacency, a recognized danger for vessels on a regular service.
- ✓ The Master's plan to continue turning to port to pass astern of the bulk carrier took no account of how the bulk carrier's OOW would interpret the manoeuvre. Effective collision avoidance requires an accurate perception of the circumstances, an understanding of the Colregs and, importantly, a projection of the consequences of any decided action. A preferred plan would have been to slow down and not attempt to cross the TSS until there was a sufficient gap in the traffic flow for the cargo vessel to proceed on her planned course without risk of collision. Such action would have been in

accordance with Rule 8(e) of the Colregs.

- ✓ Uncertainty might have been avoided if the cargo vessel's Master had effectively communicated his intended manoeuvre to the bulk carrier's OOW at a sufficiently early stage. In this case, the cargo vessel's Master made no attempt to convey his plan to the bulk carrier, and the VHF radio calls made by the bulk carrier's OOW were not received on board the cargo vessel owing to the speaker volume having been turned down. VHF radio transmissions are of no value unless they can be heard.

