



Incident: Merrillyn's loss of steering	Location: Near No Man's Land Fort	Date: October 2022
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Summary of incident:

Wind SW6/7 Sea State; moderate visibility; good; tide ebbing

Heading south close hauled on starboard, on a southerly course in a SW wind when the steering failed.

Commenced tack and lost steering. Sails were used to maintain directional control. Deployed emergency steering (within 90 seconds) Regained steerage, started engine, tacked, issued a Pan Pan without request for assistance. Proceed to Osborne Bay to anchor to wait for wind to ease off before making way towards Universal Marina.

Merrilyn came alongside that evening without any problems, and Jason fix it the following morning so that they were able to go out again.

What lead to the incident?

Vibration over time made a bolt in the bevel box fall out and gears de-meshed

Was it avoidable?

No as it is not an area of the gear that is easily accessible.

Key lessons learned:

Emergency Tiller Drill on STVs: Retrieving, fitting and using the emergency tiller and as an exercise at beginning of an STV is now in my view as important as an MOB drill (there was no undue strain or slamming on the helm during our STV, who knows what it's been through by previous crews, and failures happen)

Lee Shore and leeward obstruction: Important to leave conservative room to leeward where possible if something is going to go wrong it will be in this situation

There was effective communication between the vessel and the Coastguard, the vessel, and the office. Coastguard supported the Pan Pan with frequent notifications to all vessels until vessel reached and anchored in Osbourne Bay. VTS offered their support particularly to help manage vessel movements around us and monitored our situation until we arrived safely to Universal - very reassuring.

Key recommendations:

Deploy emergency steering gear at initial stages of STVs

Make sure items in the Lazarette are stowed correctly and is kept tidy.

Follow on actions:

None.

Incident Report #11 Merrillyn's loss of steering

Office called the MAIB however they advised that this was not a reportable incident, considered a 'routine breakdown.' It would have been reportable in this instance if the vessel had grounded, hit something or the anchor had not paid out in Osborne Bay.