

41224 3 2 1 Cold weather is on hold, but chilly weather is here friends and today we finish our series of five segments on winter safety afloat.

Today, we put it all together. Winter brings predictable changes and winter safety afloat must meet these changes. Often winter brings freezing temperatures, fewer daylight hours, and poor weather and sea conditions. Proper clothing and adequate safety and survival equipment is an appropriate response to lower temperatures. Proper running and working lights are essential to safety for vessel movements at night. Slower speeds, enhanced lookouts, and increased caution at the helm may all be appropriate in deteriorating weather or in restricted visibility.

The West of England Ship Owners Mutual Insurance Association (Luxembourg) recently concluded a study of over 1,000 P&I claims involving its covered ships and found that the primary causes of all major claims (over \$100,000) between 1987 and 1992 were, as follows: Equipment failure 10%; Structural failure 7%; Mechanical failure 3%; Under investigation 8%; Human error 65%; Other 7%.

Even on merchant vessels, where well paid and well trained officers and crew are involved, 65% of all major claims reviewed were primarily caused by human error.

Take responsibility for your own safety. Before you ship out. Be sure enough proper pfd's are aboard and easily available. Be sure safety and survival equipment appropriate to the voyage is available. Be sure operators of the vessel are not impaired by alcohol or other substances. Be careful, and be sure others are careful. Be sure adequate lookouts are posted. Assure safe speed at

all times. Be sure that the vessel is staunch, tight, well equipped, and in all respects reasonably fit for the service intended. The time to begin to take these matters seriously is before commencing the voyage. Remember, one extra precaution can be worth many pumps, helicopters, and a whole fleet of deck barges and ocean salvage tugs.

More next week on The Admiralty Docket. Until then, remember your rights and responsibilities may change as you approach the shore and may God Almighty grant you pleasant sailing. 41224
