



**SHIPOWNERS**

SECURITY FOR SMALL & SPECIALIST VESSELS

## ▶ CASE STUDY

# Mass evacuation after the grounding of a vessel

**An incident involving a passenger excursion resulted in the evacuation of 71 passengers and crew when a vessel ran aground. Findings from the Canadian Transport Safety Board (TSB) incident investigation identified the need for all small passenger vessel operators to develop a Safety Management System (SMS), even when the vessel is not required to under SOLAS.**

### The Incident

A passenger vessel, reportedly carrying 71 people, ran aground whilst navigating a river. Following an unsuccessful attempt to refloat the vessel, 63 passengers and 6 members of crew were evacuated by the coast guard.

Three of the crew, including the Master who had joined the vessel after it had grounded, remained on board to monitor the vessel but eventually disembarked later that day. The vessel was refloated one week later. There were no injuries, damage to the vessel or pollution.

The cause of the incident was found to be a navigational error resulting from the absence of fully certified crew on board at the commencement of the voyage and the time of the incident. This was despite the present safety issues regarding the inability to place navigational marks in the river, due to an increase of current caused by an open dam further up stream.

### Canadian Transport Safety Board findings

As part of the report, one of the *Finding as to Risk* highlighted by the TSB was that *“Without a Safety Management System (SMS) requirement for domestic passenger vessels, there is an increased probability that risks will go unidentified and vessels will be operated in an unsafe manner.”*

The causative factors identified in the report follow similar incidents in which the TSB issued the recommendation that *“The Department of Transport*

*take steps to ensure that small passenger vessel enterprises have a Safety Management System.”* This recommendation is still assessed by TSB as Unsatisfactory<sup>1</sup>, as the requirement for a SMS is not yet mandatory for all vessel of this type.

### The Club

The Club issued advice on the *Benefits of adopting ship-specific procedural systems on vessels where ISM does not apply*, which reinforces the recommendation of the TSB and highlights the potential benefits of adopting a practical procedural system on board. Unfortunately, the Club continues to be informed of incidents involving small craft where, upon investigation, procedures have been found to be unfit for purpose or missing. The effect of adopting practical and efficient procedures can not be underestimated as it assists in encouraging an on board safety culture which in turn assists our Members to raise the safety standards throughout their organisation.

<sup>1</sup> An Unsatisfactory rating is assigned if no action has been taken or proposed that will reduce or eliminate the deficiency. This rating may also be assigned when recommendations have been issued and outstanding for more than 5 years and there is no precise action plan or timeline provided to complete the required safety actions. This rating applies to situations where, in the Board's view, the safety deficiency will continue to put persons, property or the environment at risk. In such a situation, the TSB will reassess the statement of the deficiency and pursue the issue with the respondent, in the hope of acquiring additional convincing information. The TSB will reassess the deficiency on an annual basis or when otherwise warranted.