

Port of London - River Thames



SAFETY BULLETIN No.5 of 2014

CLASS V SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Following the investigation of a number of recent incidents involving Class V passenger vessels, the PLA has identified some safety issues, which may be of relevance to all passenger boat owners and operators.

Wheelhouse Equipment and Ergonomics:



One incident highlighted the importance of a well laid out wheelhouse, as a Master reaching for a VHF Radio that was poorly positioned contributed towards an incident. It is important to ensure that regularly used equipment, such as the VHF Radio, are within easy reach from the normal conning position, so that when used, the control of the vessel is not compromised.

In addition, vital read-outs, such as rudder indicators and AIS displays should be clearly visible whilst navigating the vessel, without the need to move away from the controls. If

necessary, measures should also be implemented to prevent the effects of solar glare on display screens, to ensure their clear visibility in all conditions.

PA Systems

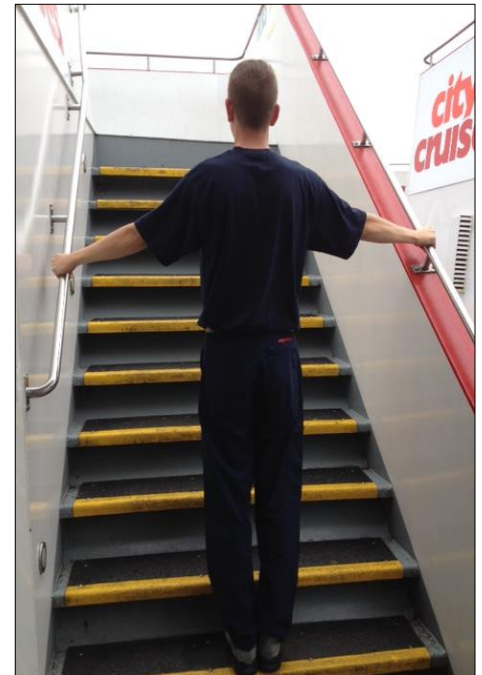
On-board PA systems, used to provide a commentary, whether automated or manual, often serve a secondary purpose to provide safety announcements. Another incident highlighted the need to ensure urgent safety announcements override the PA system when any music or automatic commentary is being played.

Stairwell Management

It can be dangerous for passengers to loiter on or around stairwells while vessels are underway, and particularly during vessel manoeuvres, such as berthing alongside a pier. The use of bar staff or other crew to monitor these areas should be considered at these times, along with the use of a Safety Announcement, advising passengers to remain seated whenever there is a risk of sudden movements to the vessel, or a heavy contact from coming alongside a pier and to use handrails at all times when using stairs.



The suggestions above echo the recommendations made in a safety alert issued by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) on July 8 2013, concerning falls in stairways after the passenger vessel 'Seastreak Wall Street' made heavy contact while berthing at a pier in New York. A number of passengers were injured, including one passenger who sustained serious injuries; including a broken neck. Further information can be found at the following link: <http://www.nts.gov/news/2014/140408c.html>



The construction of the stairwell can also help to reduce the likelihood and consequence of a person falling. Stairwells should ideally be of a suitable width so that both hand rails can be comfortably reached. Where this can't be achieved it is recommended that a centre rail is installed. Hand rails should also be of a suitable height, to allow passengers to adequately brace themselves while using the stairs, or in the event of an incident. Posters or notices in the stairwell should also indicate the requirement to use handrails at all times to guard against unexpected movement of the vessel.

**3rd December
2014**

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**DAVID PHILLIPS
CHIEF HARBOUR MASTER**



Telephone calls, VHF radio traffic, CCTV and radar traffic images may be recorded in the VTS Centres at Gravesend and Woolwich.

www.pla.co.uk

