

SAFETY BULLETIN No.2 of 2013

DANGEROUS

NOT DEPLOYING ANCHORS

WHEN BROKEN DOWN

On the 27th July 2013 a recreational motor boat was inward bound approaching the Thames Barrier when they experienced engine failure approximately 200m downriver of the closed Foxtrot span of the Thames Barrier.

As the vessel did not deploy an anchor it was quickly swept by the strong tidal flows onto the closed span and came to rest against the closed gate in Foxtrot span.

Fortunately a commercial RIB was in the vicinity and the vessel was safely towed free of the Thames Barrier, without injury to the crew or damage to the vessel. This incident could have had a very different outcome and it was fortunate that the vessel was not capsized and sunk.



Safety Lessons:

Following this incident the PLA undertook an investigation, which identified a number of safety lessons that would like recreational users to consider:

1. The PLA recommends that all sailing and powered vessels navigating the tidal Thames are equipped with an anchor, suitable for the size of vessel; with a sufficient length of chain and rope with a suggested minimum of 5m and 25m respectively.
2. Before venturing on the tidal Thames please ensure your anchor is in good working order, ready to be deployed in an emergency and the bitter end of the rope is securely made fast to your vessel.

If you suffer an engine failure or get into difficulty on the tidal Thames, deploy your anchor as soon as it is safe to do so, having due regard to your chart of the area. Subsequently call London VTS on VHF Channel 14 (Tel: 020 8855 0315) to advise them of your situation.

02 September 2013

Port of London Authority
London River House
Royal Pier Road
Gravesend, Kent DA12 2BG

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

