

Accident Report

Injury

Pacific Way

26 November 2005

Class A



SUMMARY

Pacific Way – Injury

A crewmember suffered an injury to his wrist when the handle connected to the manually powered windlass that he was using counter-rotated due to a heavy weight coming onto the anchor cable in the prevailing swell conditions.



Photograph 1
Pacific Way

REPORT NO.: 96 497

VESSEL NAME: *PACIFIC WAY*

Name of Vessel:	<i>Pacific Way</i>
Vessel Type:	Tug
Built:	1960
Construction Material:	Steel
Length Overall (m):	25.97
Gross Tonnage:	111
Accident Investigator:	Andrew Hayton

Owner Details

Heron Construction Co. Ltd

Skipper Details

Holds Certificate of Competency as Master Small Trade Ship, issued in 1984

Crew Details

The vessel was manned with a crew of five namely, the Master, Mate, two Engineers and a Deckhand. The injured crewmember was employed as a Deckhand and holds a New Zealand Offshore Master (STCW95) Certificate issued in 2004.

NARRATIVE

Pacific Way departed Tauranga on Wednesday 23 November 2005 bound for New Plymouth via Cook Strait. She was towing two barges. On Friday 25 November 2005, the prevailing weather conditions caused the Master to seek shelter in the lee of Young Nicks Head near Gisborne.

The anchor of one of the barges was dropped, thereby anchoring the two barges. The tug proceeded into the port of Gisborne to load stores. After being alongside for approximately one hour, **Pacific Way** returned to the anchorage.

The normal procedure on board **Pacific Way** was to moor the vessel alongside one of the anchored barges. However, on this occasion, the Master decided that due to the swell conditions, which made it uncomfortable to tie up alongside a barge, he would drop one of **Pacific Way's** own anchors.

The crew members gathered on the foredeck and tried to let go the starboard anchor but it would not run when the brake was released. The crew then let go the port anchor. The vessel brought up to her port anchor with two shackles of cable in the water.

After listening to the worsening weather forecast at 1330 hours on Saturday 26 November 2005, the Master decided to weigh anchor and bring the barges into the shelter of Gisborne port. The crewmembers commenced manually winding in the cable using two handles which they attached to the windlass. There was a crewmember on each handle, one flaking the anchor cable on deck and one looking over the bow. The Skipper was manoeuvring the vessel in an attempt to reduce the weight on the cable.

After one shackle had been heaved on deck, **Pacific Way** lifted on a two metre swell wave bringing considerable weight onto the cable. This caused the anchor to suddenly run out and the winding handles to counter-rotate. The starboard handle stuck a crewmember on the left wrist.

The Master broke out the anchor and steamed into the port of Gisborne dragging the anchor without the barges. The Harbour Master took the injured crewmember to Hospital where he was seen at 1720 hours.

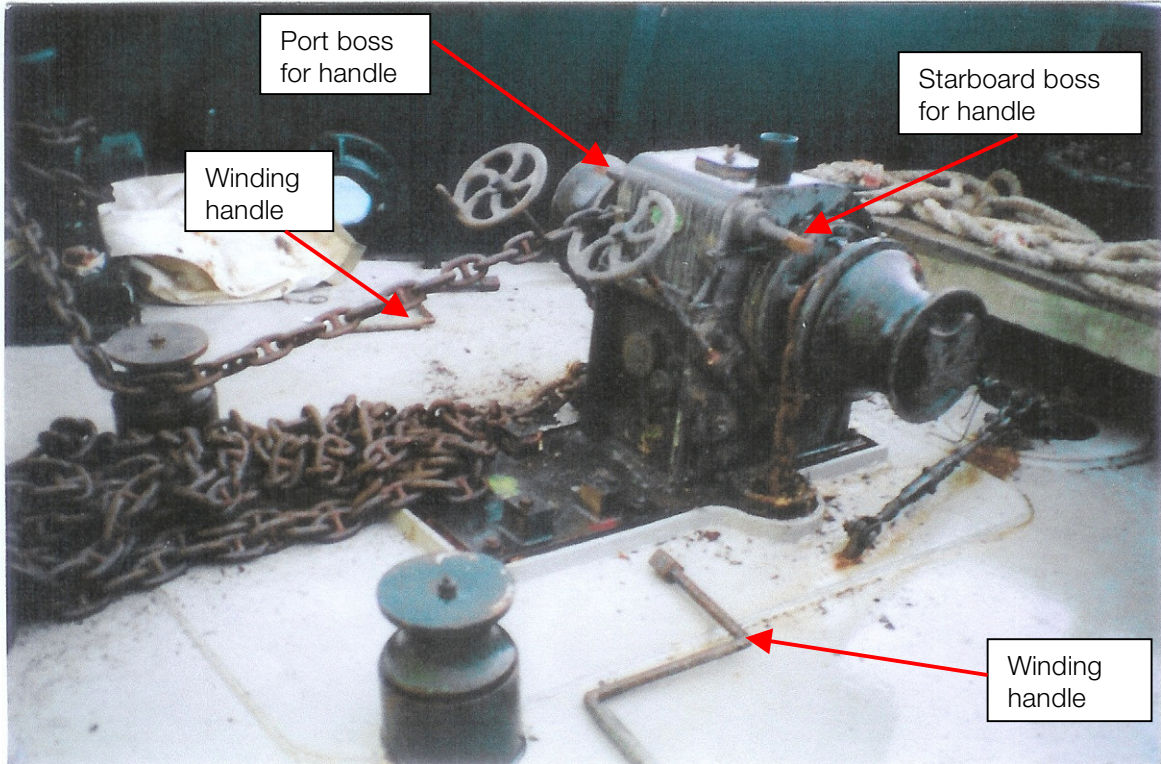
Once **Pacific Way's** anchor cable had been stowed, the vessel returned to the anchorage to retrieve the two barges. The tow was assisted into the port of Gisborne by a harbour tug.

Initially, the hospital staff were unsure if the crewmembers wrist was broken and did not want to x-ray it as a matter of urgency. After a medical examination, the crewmember returned to **Pacific Way** having been limited to light duties by the hospital.

The crewmember returned to hospital on Monday 28 November 2005 when x-rays confirmed that there was a crack to a bone in the left wrist. His wrist was set in a cast after which he returned to the vessel.

The crewmember took off the cast and expressed his desire to continue on the voyage; however the owners thought this unwise and paid the injured crewmember off.

Pacific Way resumed passage from Gisborne on Thursday 1 December and after sheltering for some time in the Marlborough Sounds, arrived in New Plymouth, the whole voyage taking three weeks.



Photograph 2
Windlass viewed from Starboard Quarter

FINDINGS

The last Flag State inspection was conducted by the Maritime Safety Authority on 7 April 2000. There were no deficiencies recorded.

The last Safe Ship Management inspection (mid term inspection) had been conducted on 28 October 2005. There were no recorded deficiencies.

The injured crewmember suffered a fracture to a bone in his left wrist.

The injured crewmember was employed on a voyage contract to bring the vessel from Tauranga to New Plymouth. He joined the vessel for the first time the day before she sailed from Tauranga. No employment contract was signed. The crewmember was paid a daily rate for his services.

At the time of the accident, the operation of retrieving an anchor had not been identified as a hazard in the vessel's hazard register, which was otherwise found to be robust.

The owners of **Pacific Way** rewired the vessel's electrical system when they purchased her in 1995. In the process of rewiring, all equipment powered by direct current, including the windlass motor, was removed from the vessel.

The starboard anchor has only minimal anchor cable attached (approximately three metres). As soon as the cable enters the chain locker, the bitter end is shackled.

The anchors on **Pacific Way** had not been used whilst at sea for more than six years; the only time the cable had been ranged was during routine surveys when the vessel was on the slip.

The windlass was manually driven by means of winding handles. There was no ratchet in place to prevent the cable running out when weight came on.

The accident was not reported to Maritime New Zealand by either the owners or skipper of the vessel until 16 December 2005. The injured crewmember reported the accident to Maritime New Zealand on 14 December 2005. The Skipper claims that he had never had a reportable accident in his career and thought that he needed to send the correct forms either via the post or fax via the project manager. The Skipper notified the owners Contracts Manager via phone on the day of the accident and signed the unsent accident report form on 28 November 2005.

The owners claim that it is their company's normal procedure for all accident reports to be sent to Maritime New Zealand by the Project Manager who is in charge of the current project. The vessels owned and operated by the owners are usually employed in construction and dredging operations within harbour limits. At the time of this incident, **Pacific Way** was on a coastal voyage between contracts and thus there was not a project manager on hand until the vessel reached New Plymouth.

Maritime Rule 40C.57 Windlass states:

- (1) *The owner and Master of a new ship must ensure that-*
 - (a) *a powered windlass or other powered mechanical lifting device is provided, except for new ships using an anchor of less than 50kgs, in which case the windlass or mechanical lifting device may be hand operated; and*
 - (b) *the windlass is of sufficient power 25 and suitable for the size of chain attached to the anchor; and*
 - (c) *the inboard end of the rope or chain is permanently made fast to the ship; and*
 - (d) *windlasses or other mechanical lifting devices are securely fitted to the deck of the ship.*

- (2) *Rule 40.57(l)(a) does not apply to a new ship using an anchor of less than 30kgs and using rope instead of anchor chain, in accordance with Tables 3A or 3B of Appendix 6 and the notes relating to Tables 3A or 3B.*

Maritime Rule 40C.58 Existing Ships states:

- (1) *An existing ship that was issued with a certificate of survey is not required to comply with Rules 40C.54 to 40C.57 inclusive, if the owner maintains its existing anchors and cables in a good condition that is satisfactory to a surveyor.*
- (2) *An existing ship that was not subject to survey under section 133 of the Maritime Transport Act 1994 is not required to comply with Rules 40C.54 to 40C.57 inclusive, if the owner retains its existing anchors and cables and a surveyor is satisfied that those anchor and cable arrangements do not compromise the safety of the ship and its crew, and remain in a condition satisfactory to a surveyor.*

There were no crew training records onboard **Pacific Way**, despite such training having been carried out.

The vessel was inspected by Maritime New Zealand staff on 11 January 2006. She was found to be in good condition and to be operated in a professional manner.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that the owners of ***Pacific Way*** install an alternative (mechanical, hydraulic or electrical) means of operating the windlass as soon as possible. Also, as the anchoring equipment is used infrequently, it is recommended that a planned maintenance regime be implemented for the windlass.
2. It is recommended that the owners of ***Pacific Way*** immediately ensure that crew training records be kept up to date and all relevant paperwork onboard ***Pacific Way*** is brought up to the required standard.
3. It is recommended that the owners of ***Pacific Way*** immediately issue written procedures to the Masters of their vessels reaffirming the need to inform Maritime New Zealand directly of any accident, incident or mishap involving serious harm, as soon as practicable.