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**Date: 6 November 2014**

# House-keeping on deck

**Good house-keeping around the ship has always been considered a feature of good seamanship. Untidy store rooms, paint lockers and other spaces can slow down work processes, but can also result in serious accidents.**

Inspectors continue to report during ship inspections that heavy items are kept on deck in a poorly secured manner or even unsecured.

The personal injury aspect of loose items on deck in heavy weather can be easily imagined. However, if we look back to the winter of 1993, we can learn from the loss of the M/T Braer in the Shetland Islands as an example of how poor house-keeping on deck contributed to a very high-profile casualty and oil spill.

The Braer lost power partly because of sea water ingress to bunker tanks via air vents which had been broken by loose pipes sliding across the poop deck in heavy weather. The ship, which was on a passage from Norway to Canada, lost propulsion south of the Shetland Islands, and eventually found herself ground resulting in a significant pollution incident.

The Club would remind readers to consider in sufficient detail the chosen location for storage of steel and other heavy items on deck in the context of the effect of heavy weather. While the case is more than 20 years old, the lessons learned on the subject of house-keeping remain valid today.

A full incident report is available at: http://www.maib.gov.uk/cms_resources.cfm?file=/braer-text.pdf

Source of Information: London P&I Club

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