

Circular From London**Date: 25 April 2018****Anchor dragging: Master's authority and responsibility**

Under the ISM Code, the Master has an overriding authority to make command decisions of this nature and in many other situations. The Club asks all Owners to consider their own procedures and whether these fully support the Master when the decision is made to vacate the anchorage.

The Club has experienced a case where a solitary ship, left in an anchorage one nautical mile off the coast in an onshore gale, dragged her anchor and was unable to start her engines in time and found herself grounded with ruptured bunker tanks.

The Master can only make such a decision to depart an anchorage if the weather information provided to the ship by various means is properly assimilated and acted upon. It is not uncommon for ships to drag their anchor and ground, with published weather information warning of impending bad weather properly filed but never read.

The provision of the 'storm anchorage' remains an issue, where a false sense of security can result. An entered ship recently grounded during Typhoon Hato after anchoring in a designated 'storm anchorage'. Ultimately, the 'storm anchorage' did not offer sufficient protection to prevent the ship from dragging her anchor and being exposed to the subsequent high severity claim.

The Master's responsibility to monitor the weather conditions by all forecasting means available remains paramount, so that good decisions can be made over the conduct of the ship.

Source of Information: London P&I Club