

While berthing alongside the pier at Mui Wo, the passenger ferry Xin Xing (新興) rammed the seawall adjacent to the pier

A. The Incident

1. At about 0923 on 27 November 2003, the locally licensed passenger ferry Xin Xing (新興), while berthing alongside the pier at Mui Wo, rammed the seawall adjacent to the pier.
2. At the time of the incident, the weather conditions were fine with northerly wind at force 5 occasionally gusting to a maximum wind speed of 54 km per hour.
3. The contact resulted in minor damage to the ferry's stem. The concrete structure of the seawall was also smashed. 9 passengers suffered minor injuries as a result of the contact.

B. Findings

1. The investigation identifies the most probable cause of Xin Xing ramming the seawall was that while approaching to the pier under strong wind condition, the master had given a kick ahead on the engine in order to gain headway for counteracting the wind force setting the vessel towards the pier. Due to the close proximity to the pier, once the vessel had gained headway there was insufficient time for the astern engine to be effective to halt the vessel's forward movement. As a result, the vessel was unable to stop in time and it rammed the seawall in front.
2. Some passengers had stood up and were waiting to get off when the ferry collided with the seawall. The sudden ramming impact had caused some of them losing their balance and falling down on the deck, thus sustaining minor injuries.

C. Lessons

1. The masters of all conventional ferries should exercise utmost caution when berthing their vessels during adverse weather conditions
2. The masters should also make special verbal announcement emphasizing the need for passengers to remain seated instead of using routine taped announcement under such situations.

Figure 1 Damage sustained to the stem of Xin Xing (新興)



Figure 2 Damage sustained to the seawall

