

Victor Hugo - Preliminary Examination

<i>Category:</i>	<i>Merchant Vessel</i>
<i>Vessel name:</i>	<i>Victor Hugo</i>
<i>Registered owner:</i>	<i>Compagnie des Iles de la Manche</i>
<i>Operator:</i>	<i>Compagnie des Iles de la Manche</i>
<i>Port of Registry:</i>	<i>Cherbourg</i>
<i>Flag:</i>	<i>French</i>
<i>Classification Society:</i>	<i>Bureau Veritas</i>
<i>Type:</i>	<i>High Speed Passenger Ferry</i>
<i>Built:</i>	<i>1997</i>
<i>Construction:</i>	<i>Aluminium</i>
<i>Length overall:</i>	<i>35m</i>
<i>Gross tonnage:</i>	<i>387t</i>
<i>Date & Time:</i>	<i>13 September 2008 at 1905 UTC</i>
<i>Location of incident:</i>	<i>Braye Harbour Alderney</i>
<i>Incident Type:</i>	<i>Grounding</i>
<i>Persons on board:</i>	<i>8 crew and 47 passengers</i>
<i>Injuries/fatalities:</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Damage/pollution:</i>	<i>Minor damage, no pollution</i>

Synopsis

On 13 September 2009, 'Victor Hugo' was departing from No1 berth Braye, Alderney on passage to St Peter Port Guernsey. The weather conditions were fair with a moderate NE breeze. Three of the four main engines were running, the port aft engine (no.4) having failed on voyage from Dielette to Alderney. (There is no evidence to suggest that this event was further directly connected to the later grounding.)

The starboard side engines and propeller was used to cant the vessel away and astern from the quay. As the vessel cleared from the quay, an attempt was made to engage the port side engine and propeller. Although running, the engine would not engage or 'clutch in'. Accordingly, the vessel was almost unmanoeuvrable and unable to turn. She drifted down wind and grounded in an area known as 'The Blacksmith Shop' at 1905 hours. 'Victor Hugo' was refloated at 2007 hours.

There were no injuries to persons and no pollution.

Action taken:

The Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents has written to the vessel Operators, enclosing the Preliminary Report, concluding and recommending:

It is recommended that the Investigation be terminated at the present juncture. [At Preliminary Investigation stage].

The 'Victor Hugo' is not a Guernsey Ship. At no time were any lives in danger. No pollution occurred. The two incidents – the oil leak and the failure to engage the starboard engine - although not obviously or directly linked, were both caused by material or control failure. These are initially a matter for the Ship Owner/Operator to resolve.

Machinery standards and machinery maintenance are also a matter for Flag State and Classification Society. It is recommended that the Owners/Operators should investigate the faults, take appropriate action and confirm this to the Flag State and Classification Society.

The Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents has also written to the French Accident Investigation Branch (BEA-mer) with a copy of the Preliminary Report.