STEERING GEAR FAILURE

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	ACTION TO BE TAKEN (NOT NECESSARILY IN ORDER)
☐	Inform the Engine Room and the Master.
☐	Engage the emergency local steering control.
☐	Steer the vessel away from any danger.
☐	Take way off the ship. (To ease the strain on the emergency steering system).
☐	Prepare engines for manoeuvring. • To avoid collision stop the vessel using the main engine astern and anchors if appropriate.
☐	Exhibit 'not under command' shapes/lights if unable to maintain steerage.
☐	Sound signals to be made if appropriate.
☐	Broadcast URGENCY message to Port Control, VTIS, and/or ships in the vicinity, as appropriate.
☐	Assess when steering gear will be ready for use.
☐	Consider anchoring if water shallow enough or lower anchors in deep water to hold ships head to wind while repairs being effected. The bowthruster may be used for this purpose as well.
☐	Assess the dangers to which to ship is exposed and the urgency with which assistance may be required.
☐	Advise authorities as appropriate.
	Implement necessary action to mitigate the hazards.

	CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR STEERING GEAR FAILURE
1.	A dangerous situation can develop quickly following a steering gear failure depending on the position of the vessel at the time; e.g. under pilotage; in congested or confined waters etc.
2.	It is necessary therefore to speedily engage the emergency steering gear to regain steerage.
3.	The Master shall ensure that: • The emergency steering changeover procedures are clear and posted; • All officers are intimately familiar with the changeover procedures and operation of the emergency steering; • The emergency steering system is tested at appropriate intervals.
4.	Modern steering gear systems do not have an 'emergency mode' – only an emergency power supply and local steering from the steering flat. All officers are to be intimately familiar with the changeover procedure so as to allow immediate transfer of control in case of emergency. If the vessel is in a close quarter situation or takes a sheer towards a hazard the emergency steering system should be engaged without delay. Once normal power is restored, the steering system must be switched back to wheelhouse control.
5.	The ships way should be reduced because on full speed the emergency steering is more difficult to operate and the gear is subjected to excessive strain and could suffer damage. Similarly the main engine can easily be overloaded through excessive helm movements. If difficulty is experienced with maintaining steering then speed should be reduced and the rudder placed hard over. The main engine should then be used full ahead in short bursts to provide the necessary thrust to turn the vessel. This manoeuvre should not increase the speed of the vessel through the water.
6.	The vessels passage plan should be consulted regarding; • Abort positions • Alternative routes • Safe anchorages or emergency berths to effect repairs.
7.	The Master must use his judgement and the authority given him to implement the necessary action and assistance to ensure the safety of life, the safety of the ship and its cargo, and the protection of the environment which are paramount.
8.	It is acknowledged that it is better to over act on the side of safety and pollution prevention than to delay action in the hope that the situation may improve.
9.	Calls to the vessel's mobile and satellite telephones during the emergency may provide a major distraction to the Master, and consideration should be given to posting a dedicated officer on the bridge to handle and filter all communications.
10.	Reference should be made to the guidance provided by the following publication on board; • BRIDGE TEAM MANAGEMENT • Chapter 3 Passage Planning (see Aborts; Contingencies)