

Head injury when crew member fell over in bathroom during heavy weather

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A member of the crew fell over in the bathroom of his cabin while the vessel was rolling violently, and suffered a minor head injury as a result.

What happened?

The incident occurred when the vessel was steaming at full speed during moderate weather conditions, and was rolling in consequence.

When the vessel rolled suddenly, the person lost balance, tripped and hit his head against a towel rail.

Five stitches were required to close the wound.



Reconstruction!

What was the cause?

- The vessel was transiting at full speed across a heavy swell, on instructions of the client. The high speed was causing the vessel to roll up to 17 degrees.
- The injured person was caught off-balance in a narrow space in the bathroom.

Lessons learned

- Vessel Master should discuss with the Client the best and safest options for transit across rough seas or during heavy weather.
- Officer of the Watch should warn vessel crew to remain aware and be more vigilant of sudden vessel movements, particularly on the stairs, in the galley, in bathrooms, on the open deck, in the engine room and

anywhere else where there is risk of injury from overbalancing and falling or tripping over.

- An old saying from the days of sailing ships is: “*One hand for yourself, one hand for the ship*”.

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