



NEW ZEALAND COMPANY OF MASTER MARINERS

AUCKLAND BRANCH, P.O. Box 15184, New Lynn, Auckland

The Hon. Gerry Brownlee, MP,
Minister of Transport,
Parliament Office,
Private Bag 18888,
Parliament Buildings,
Wellington. 6160

Copy to
The Hon Amy Adams, MP,
Minister for the Environment,

The Hon Dr Nick Smith, MP,
Minister of Conservation,

The Director,
Maritime New Zealand,
PO Box 25620,
Wellington. 6146

4th, June, 2014

Dear Sir,

PLACES OF REFUGE

Should a ship request a 'Place of Refuge', what would be New Zealand's response?

Ships now carry significant volumes of fuel oil as shown in the M.V. *Rena* incident. In 2002, when the tanker *Prestige* was refused a Place of Refuge by Spain and Portugal, because of a fear that any Place of Refuge would be polluted, it was ordered off shore. There it broke up and sank. The subsequent spill polluted thousands of kilometres of coastline and more than one thousand Spanish, French and Portuguese beaches, as well as causing great harm to the local fishing industries. Five years after the cleanup activities a study of 800 Spanish Navy personnel who participated in the cleanup, found many suffering several health problems, such as pulmonary, cardiovascular, and chromosomal diseases. Here at home was the *Rena* which the Maritime industry will be paying for over years to come.

In November 2003, the International Maritime Organisation Assembly (The Maritime Sector of the United Nations) adopted two resolutions addressing the issue of places of refuge for ships in distress - an important step in assisting those involved in incidents that may lead to the need for a place of refuge to make the right decisions at the right time.

Resolution A.949(23) Guidelines on places of refuge for ships in need of assistance are intended for use when a ship is in need of assistance but the safety of life is not involved. Where the safety of life is involved, the provisions of the SAR Convention should continue to be followed.

A second resolution, A.950(23) Maritime Assistance Services (MAS), recommends that all coastal States should establish a maritime assistance service (MAS).

It is submitted that a site of a 'Place of Refuge' requires considerable planning, considering such subjects as:

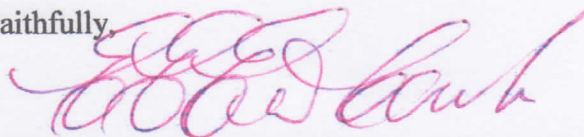
1. The nature of the ship's problem(s),
2. Present and future weather,
3. The threat to the environment,
4. Access to marine support.

The nature of the ship's problem(s) will most probably involve the vessel's structural integrity or propulsion system and will require an urgent response. The ship's ability to manoeuvre may be limited. The present and forecast weather may well dictate where that 'Place of Refuge' is. And then there is the environment to consider. It will certainly need consideration and on New Zealand's coast there will be a need for a protection plan, if one exists, to be activated. Finally, the casualty will need support possibly to get to the 'Place of Refuge' and certainly when it arrives there. A plan to get that support to the site will obviously be necessary.

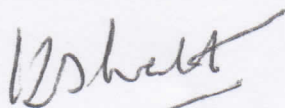
We note that the United Kingdom has a very satisfactory provision with a SOSREP so that there is prompt action and one person clearly nominated to act.

It is recommended that a plan of 'Places of Refuge' be developed. Even if a selected site were to be polluted, would that not be better, and cost less, than the pollution of a long stretch of our coastline?

Yours Faithfully,



(Capt E Ewbank) Auckland Warden Company of Master Mariners



(Capt K Watt) Master Company of Master Mariners