



Forth Fisher Avoids Environmental Disaster



Summary:

Coastguards and anti-pollution teams were put on high alert when the MSC Napoli was deliberately run- aground at Branscombe, off the Devon coast. En-route to South Africa, the huge container ship suffered serious structural failure during storm conditions 40 miles off Cornwall. Fearing for his men the Napoli's captain gave the command that any ships mater dreads, when he ordered his crew to 'abandon ship'. In spite of heavy seas a helicopter, from the Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, rescued all 26 crewmen.

Background:

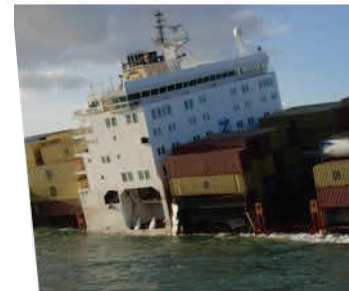
An on-the-scene assessment of the stricken ship concluded that the least environmentally risky option was to tow it to a place of refuge in shallow UK waters. The need for a 'place of refuge' and its location are always driven by the circumstances of an incident, by the type of threat posed by the vessel in question and also it's cargo. Portland Harbour was selected and a tow attached. Severe weather continued however and, in the early hours of January 20 2007, the expansion of large cracks on each side of the rear hull caused concern to the rescuers. It became clear that the 275 metre, 62,000 tonne vessel would not reach Portland.

A beaching site in Lime Bay was chosen, yet even though the shallower waters offered more shelter, eventually 200 of the containers were swept overboard, 57 being washed ashore. This latter event created a bizarre scene reminiscent of

the 1949 film 'Whiskey Galore' as treasure seekers scavenged Branscombe beach for booty. Anything from barrels to BMW's, cosmetics to camcorders were taken, while Devon police were forced to invoke maritime laws dating from 1854 to restore order.

Services Provided:

Called 'Jurassic Coast', this part of the Devon and Dorset coastline is a World Heritage Site. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) were quick to act and Chris Lawson of the Environmental Agency said the "greatest urgency" was to remove the 3,300 tonnes of fuel oil still remaining on board the Napoli. At this time over 200 tonnes of fuel had spilled and dolphins, fish and hundreds of sea birds had already perished. Smith Salvage asked James Fisher if they could provide a tanker capable of heating and unloading the Napoli's tank fuel oil as quickly as possible. Having completed tank cleaning and being gas free, mt Forth Fisher was heading for dry dock in Falmouth when she was diverted by the Company to off-load the beached ship's bunkers. "It was just a matter of being in the right place at the right time" explained Marine Tanker Manager, Colin Thomson.





With the MSC Napoli listing heavily, night falls as mt Forth Fisher continues to unload fuel oil from the stricken ship. A French coastguard vessel assists the operation.

With Devon's beached only metres away, it was imperative that the Forth Fisher began unloading the huge vessel's oil stores without delay.

Customer Testimonials:

Forth Fisher's intervention was vital to the aversion of a virtually certain environmental disaster, thanks to the swift response of the tankship team and the professionalism of Captain Denis Smith and his crew.



Successful Delivery:

De-bunking is arduous work and Forth Fisher was not offsite until February 6. Even so, MCA spokes-woman Julia Gosling confirmed: "We are very pleased with the rate of removal of oil. It has been exceptional". She added "it's been a precarious job for those on board".

