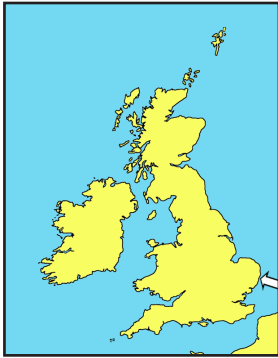


SYNOPSIS



On 10 August 2009, the Greek registered tanker *Saetta* and the Marshall Islands' registered tanker *Conger* collided when completing a ship to ship (STS) transfer operation off Southwold, Suffolk. *Saetta*'s starboard lifeboat and davit were damaged. *Conger* was undamaged and there were no injuries and no pollution.

The collision occurred at very slow speed, and resulted from the failure of *Conger*'s main engine to start as the vessels separated. Both manoeuvred to try and avoid a collision, but they were very close when the engine failed and the action taken was not effective. The response to the engine failure, and poor communications, were also contributory factors.

The number of STS operations off Southwold had increased considerably in 2009 and this was the third collision between ships involved in transfers in the area within a 6-week period. A further two collisions have occurred since. Although STS operations worldwide are reported to have a good safety record and the accidents off Southwold have been relatively minor, their frequency is cause for concern.

The Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) has initiated the development of operational standards for STS service providers and occupational standards for STS superintendents, which will be published by mid 2010. In co-operation with the International Chamber of Shipping, OCIMF also intends to revise the STS Transfer Guide, to include operations between gas and chemical tankers, and advice on risk assessment and manpower requirements. In view of this action and the action taken by Fender Care Marine (FCM) and the operators of *Saetta* and *Conger*, no recommendations are considered necessary.