# Radio Communication – Maritime Safety Fatality File

## Lack of coordination between Master and Pilot led to contact with the pier.

Poor communication has been a main contributing factor in numerous maritime casualties, varying from groundings and collisions to entire ship losses and even worse, fatalities.

**Case #1: Lack of coordination between Master and Pilot led to contact with the pier.**

The 329-meter-long cruise ship was to dock at the pier when its port bow contacted two of the pier's mooring dolphins. None of the 6,023 persons onboard was injured, but damage to the mooring dolphins and connecting catwalks was estimated at $3.5 million, and damage to the vessel at $200,000.

The official investigation report identified a lack of communication and coordination between the master and pilot, which resulted in a poorly executed docking maneuver, as a key cause of the accident. The master and pilot did coordinate the docking maneuver, but the following communicative weaknesses were identified:

1. Although they discussed the use of tugs, they did not discuss how the tugs would be controlled or who would control them.
2. The master was only heard giving one verbal order regarding the tugs.
3. Many of the pilot's orders to the tugs and the tug captains' replies were in Spanish.
4. The master also used gestures instead of verbal orders.