



EVERYWHERE

Clelia II in Distress

In December 2010, the Antarctic tourist ship Clelia II was on a two-day return to port in Ushauia, Argentina. Approximately 24-hours after departing from the Antarctic Peninsula, the cruise ship was battling heavy winds, and slowed in the Drake Passage - the body of water between the southern tip of South America at Cape Horn, Chile and the South Shetland Islands of Antarctica. The ship was experiencing 30-to-40 foot waves when the sea broke windows in its bridge, diminishing power. The ship's captain reported that in the 159 trips he'd made to the Peninsula, he'd "never seen such weather."

The Need

With 88 passengers onboard, the ship's communication was taken out by the storm, and it was unable to make contact with its crew except by VHF radio. Another ship, the National Geographic Explorer, passed the Clelia II roughly 500 miles south of the tip of South America. The Explorer changed course and traveled back 16 miles to attempt to aid the stricken ship.

The Response

The crew of the Explorer had an inactive Iridium 9555 satellite phone onboard, and called service provider and Iridium partner Stratos Global to activate the phone. The Explorer was able to pull close enough to the 290-foot vessel for the crew to toss the phone (wrapped for protection against water) onto the Clelia II via a small, "rocket propelled" canister.

Global Marine Networks, another Iridium partner, provides data services, satellite airtime and hardware to the maritime industry, including tracking services for commercial cruise ships traveling through Polar Regions. Global Marine Networks provides tour operators with Iridium transceivers (such as the Iridium 9601) and portals, to monitor vessels from their offices. In this specific case, operators were able to see that the Clelia II was in distress and that equipment was lost. Global Marine Network's Iridium tracking device was onboard both the Clelia II and the NG Explorer, helping the Explorer to locate the distressed vessel.

The Clelia II eventually made it through the rough seas with only one minor injury among its 88 passengers and 77 crewmembers.



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