

Extract from The United Kingdom Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 5:

“The sole objective of a safety investigation into an accident under these Regulations shall be the prevention of future accidents through the ascertainment of its causes and circumstances. It shall not be the purpose of such an investigation to determine liability nor, except so far as is necessary to achieve its objective, to apportion blame.”

As the full investigation report will not be published within 12 months of the accident date, this interim report is published, pursuant to Regulation 14(2)(b) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012.

NOTE

This report is not written with litigation in mind and, pursuant to Regulation 14(14) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012, shall be inadmissible in any judicial proceedings whose purpose, or one of whose purposes is to attribute or apportion liability or blame.

© Crown copyright, 2023

See <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence> for details.

All reports can be found on our website:

www.gov.uk/maib

For all enquiries:

Email: maib@dft.gov.uk
Tel: +44 (0)23 8039 5500

Interim report on the investigation of the foundering of the fishing vessel *Piedras* (FD 528) south-west of Mizen Head, the Republic of Ireland on 1 June 2022

The information contained in this interim report is based on the various aspects of the investigation completed to date. Readers are cautioned that there is the possibility new evidence may become available that might alter the circumstances as depicted in this report.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

At 1234 on 1 June 2022, the UK registered stern trawler *Piedras* capsized and sank about 78 nautical miles south-west of Mizen Head, the Republic of Ireland, following an uncontrolled ingress of sea water in the engine room that started while the vessel was fishing. The source of the flooding was not determined by the crew and their attempts to pump out the floodwater were unsuccessful.

During the incident, the skipper contacted a nearby fishing vessel *Armaven Uno* and sent an undesignated distress message via the Global Marine Distress and Safety System; a passing bulk carrier, *Venture Breeze*, did not respond to the distress message, which had been received at other locations. The skipper of *Piedras* gave the order to abandon ship, but the abandonment was hampered as one of its two liferafts failed to function correctly. However, the second liferaft was successfully deployed and used by the 11 crew members who, by 0949, had all been rescued uninjured by the crew of *Armaven Uno*.

Image courtesy of Irish Air Corps



Piedras before capsize

INVESTIGATION

The MAIB's investigation has considered various aspects of the accident to determine the causes and circumstances of the foundering. These include the potential causes of the flooding, the crew's preparedness and response to the flooding and the eventual capsize and foundering of the vessel. Although not contributory to this accident, the investigation has also investigated the performance and servicing of the liferafts carried on board *Piedras* and the actions taken by *Venture Breeze*.

ACTIONS TAKEN

The **MAIB** has:

- Written to the manufacturer of and servicing organisation for the liferafts, Survitec Group Limited, to raise concerns about the servicing of the vessel's liferafts, and issue two recommendations regarding its oversight of the authorised service station that certified the liferafts carried on board *Piedras*.
- Written to Su-Nav Group, the managers of *Venture Breeze*, regarding the vessel's watchkeeping standards and voyage data recorder performance.
- Prepared a safety bulletin to raise awareness of the issues around the certification of the liferafts carried on board *Piedras*.

Survitec Group Limited has:

- Conducted an audit of the servicing station that serviced the liferafts on *Piedras* and subsequently terminated its approval of the station to act as an authorised service provider.
- Undertaken an initial investigation of the issues identified by the MAIB by inspecting a sample of liferafts serviced in 2022 by the service station that serviced the liferafts on *Piedras* and rectifying the defects found.
- Issued an Alert Service Bulletin to its approved service stations in support of its immediate recall of liferafts that had been certified by the service station that serviced the liferafts on *Piedras*.
- Contacted the Capitanía Marítima de Vigo¹ to advise them of its alert service bulletin and inform them that the service station that serviced the liferafts on *Piedras* is no longer an authorised Survitec service agent.

ONGOING ACTION

The MAIB investigation is complete, and a draft of the report is being prepared and will be distributed to stakeholders for a 30-day consultation period in due course.

¹ The Capitanía Marítima de Vigo is the Ministerio de Transportes, Movilidad y Agenda Urbana (the Spanish government's ministry for transport) empowered local harbourmaster with authority to approve local service stations.

VESSEL PARTICULARS

Vessel's name	<i>Piedras</i>
Flag	United Kingdom
Classification society	Not applicable
Fishing number	FD528
Type	Stern trawler
Registered owner	Nia Limited
Manager(s)	Nia Limited
Year of build	1976
Construction	Steel
Length overall	35.5m
Registered length	32.45m
Gross tonnage	295
Minimum safe manning	Not applicable
Authorised cargo	Fish

VOYAGE PARTICULARS

Port of departure	Castletownbere, the Republic of Ireland
Port of arrival	Castletownbere, the Republic of Ireland (intended)
Type of voyage	Deep-sea
Cargo information	Fish
Manning	11

MARINE CASUALTY INFORMATION

Date and time	1 June 2022 at 1234
Type of marine casualty or incident	Very Serious Marine Casualty
Location of incident	78nm south-west of Mizen Head, the Republic of Ireland
Place on board	Engine room
Injuries/fatalities	None
Damage/environmental impact	Vessel lost, negligible harm to the environment.
Ship operation	Fishing
Voyage segment	Mid-water
External & internal environment	Wind Beaufort force 3; sea state 2; good visibility
Persons on board	11