

# MAIB

MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH

## FLYER TO THE FISHING INDUSTRY

### ***HOMELAND*: COLLISION WITH *SCOTTISH VIKING* RESULTING IN TOTAL LOSS OF THE VESSEL AND ONE FATALITY**



At 1946 on 5 August 2010, the UK registered fishing vessel *Homeland* was in collision with the Italian registered ro-ro passenger ferry *Scottish Viking* about 4 miles off St Abb's Head. As a result of the collision, the fishing vessel sank. The skipper was recovered from the sea, but his brother lost his life.

*Homeland* had left the port of Eyemouth at about 1845, accompanied by two other fishing vessels, *Achieve* and *Seren y Don*. They were all headed towards the northern coast of the Firth of Forth.

After clearing Eyemouth harbour and when heading in a northerly direction, the skipper engaged the autopilot, set the radar at 1.5 miles range, and handed over the watch to his brother; a young lad of 16. The skipper then went to the aft deck to mend a torn net. Soon afterwards, he called his brother to assist him. This left the wheelhouse unattended for short periods of time. The skipper periodically scanned the horizon, but his all-round view was restricted by the shelter, fitted aft of the wheelhouse.

About a minute after his brother returned from the wheelhouse, the skipper heard what he thought were two blasts on a whistle. He also heard a transmission by *Achieve* on VHF radio channel 6 warning of an imminent collision with a large vessel. The skipper ran into the wheelhouse from where he saw the side of *Scottish Viking*. He put the engine astern and the wheel hard to port. Both *Achieve* and *Seren y Don*, who were following *Homeland*, took avoiding action by altering course to port.

*Homeland's* starboard bow struck *Scottish Viking*, and she immediately started taking on water. The skipper and his brother climbed onto the wheelhouse roof to deploy the liferaft, but the vessel sank beneath them. They both entered the water without having had time to don a lifejacket. The skipper surfaced and called for his brother, but did not hear or see him. Although an extensive search and rescue operation followed, his brother was not found.

## Safety Lessons

*Scottish Viking* was the give-way vessel and although her watchkeeper had sighted the fishing vessels, he did not take early and sufficient action to avoid a collision. Nevertheless, a number of safety lessons relevant to the fishing industry are identified below:

1. One of the fundamental requirements of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (as amended) (COLREGS) is that vessels' crew maintain a proper lookout. If they do not, many of the regulations intended to avoid collisions in varying circumstances cannot be applied.
2. Marine Guidance Note (MGN) 313 (F) - Keeping a Safe Navigational Watch on Fishing Vessels provides essential guidance. It is important that crew standing a watch are experienced, capable and have been instructed in their duties. Above all, the wheelhouse should not be left unattended at any time.
3. The radar on *Homeland* was set on 1.5 miles range. This meant that *Scottish Viking's* radar echo would not have appeared on *Homeland's* radar display until about 3 minutes before impact. Watchkeepers need to use long-range scanning to provide an early warning of a risk of collision.
4. *Homeland* was the stand-on vessel in a crossing situation and was required to maintain her course and speed. Rule 17 (b) of the COLREGS requires action by a stand-on vessel when collision cannot be avoided by the give-way vessel alone. However, *Homeland's* avoiding action was too late to prevent a collision.
5. Deck shelters are commonly found on fishing vessels. They significantly restrict an all-round view, and therefore a proper lookout cannot be maintained from within. Too many accidents occur when the watchkeeper leaves the wheelhouse unattended to work outside and becomes distracted.
6. This case highlights the lack of time available to crew in an emergency to locate and don a lifejacket. Routine wearing of a lifejacket by fishermen when working on deck can significantly improve survivability and detection by the rescue services when a vessel sinks rapidly.

This flyer and the MAIB's investigation report are posted on our website:

[www.maib.gov.uk](http://www.maib.gov.uk)

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