

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As the full investigation report will not be published within 12 months of the accident date, this interim report is published, pursuant to Regulation 14(2)(b) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and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

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Interim report on the investigation of the failure and snapback of the towline of *Svitzer Mercurius*, resulting in damage to wheelhouse windows and injury to the crew, Southampton Container Terminal, England on 22 December 2019

The information contained in this interim report is based on investigations to date. Readers are cautioned that there is the possibility new evidence will become available that may alter the circumstances as depicted in this report.

Factual information

On Sunday 22 December 2019, the tug *Svitzer Mercurius* was secured to the stern of *CMA CGM Marco Polo* for berthing at Southampton Container Terminal. As the containership approached the berth starboard side to, the pilot instructed *Svitzer Mercurius*'s master to provide 100% astern thrust. As *Svitzer Mercurius*'s master applied full thrust the tug's towing winch brake began to slip and the pennant, securing the tug's towline to the ship, parted.



The towline recoiled and struck the tug's starboard forward wheelhouse window, shattering it. All of the crew in the wheelhouse were struck by flying glass. Fortunately, all the crew were wearing either sunglasses or spectacles, which prevented eye injuries. Some particles of glass also impacted with two aft wheelhouse windows, causing them to crack but not shatter.

The tug continued to assist with berthing *CMA CGM Marco Polo* by pushing on, before returning to its berth, where the crew disembarked and attended hospital. All injured crew were released the same day.

Investigation

The MAIB's investigation has considered all aspects of the accident to determine the causes and circumstances, including the condition of the towline pennant that failed and the towing winch, the operation of the tug, and why the wheelhouse window glass shattered in such a manner.

The tug owner, Svitzer, has conducted its own investigation, which included a detailed examination of the parted pennant.

Ongoing action

The MAIB investigation is now complete and a draft of the report is being prepared. This will soon be distributed to stakeholders for a 30-day consultation period.

SHIP PARTICULARS

Vessel's name	<i>Svitzer Mercurius</i>
Flag	United Kingdom
Classification society	DNV-GL
IMO number	9695523
Type	Tug (Class IX)
Registered owner	Svitzer Euromed B.V.
Manager(s)	Svitzer (Middlesbrough)
Construction	Steel
Year of build	2014
Length overall	32.7m
Registered length	32.7m
Gross tonnage	447
Minimum safe manning	3
Authorised cargo	None

VOYAGE PARTICULARS

Port of departure	Southampton
Port of arrival	Southampton
Type of voyage	Internal waters
Cargo information	Not applicable
Manning	7

MARINE CASUALTY INFORMATION

Date and time	22 December 2019, 1231
Type of marine casualty or incident	Less Serious Marine Casualty
Location of incident	Southampton Container Terminal, berth 5
Place on board	Wheelhouse
Injuries/fatalities	Minor injuries to 5 crew
Damage/environmental impact	Failure of pennant line. Several wheelhouse windows damaged
Ship operation	Towing/pushing
Voyage segment	Arrival
External & internal environment	Calm bright conditions
Persons on board	7