

SYNOPSIS

On 1 March 2010, Edward Kay, the deckhand on board the UK registered workboat *Llanddwyn Island*, was struck by a towing hawser when it parted. He died at the scene.

The workboat was moving a dredger in Roscoff, France and Edward had moved into the 'snap-back' zone of the hawser while it was under tension. The failed element was a chain connected to the stern of the dredger. The chain had not been provided by the vessel's owner and its use in the hawser was not in accordance with best practice. There were no written procedures for towing and pushing operations provided on board, and the vessel's risk assessments had not been reviewed since 2006.

The MAIB investigation identified that the minimum qualification requirements for the skippers of UK workboats operating under the Brown and Harmonised Codes need review and also do not equip skippers to undertake towing activities. A voluntary towing endorsement is currently being developed which has the potential to improve the safety of towing operations in the future.

Recommendations have been made to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the National Workboat Association, the British Tugowners Association, and the UK Harbour Masters' Association aimed at improving the qualification and training requirements for workboat skippers, particularly workboats engaged in towing operations. A recommendation has also been made to the National Workboat Association, the British Tugowners Association, and the International Association of Dredging Companies, which is intended to encourage the exchange of information between parties arranging charter parties for vessels engaged in towing operations. A further recommendation has been made to the Holyhead Towing Company aimed at assisting the development of safe systems of work on board its vessels.