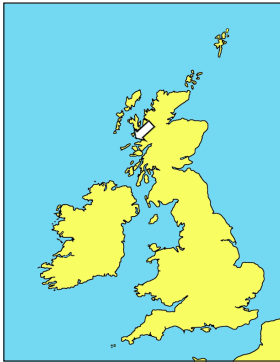


SYNOPSIS



At about 1540 UTC on 20 July 2009 the fishing vessel *Aquila*, with a crew of four, capsized while dredging for scallops to the east of the Isle of Muck, off the west coast of Scotland. Three of her crew lost their lives in the accident; their bodies were recovered from the sea after the sole survivor was rescued by a passing yacht.

Aquila was trawling on the Bo Faskadale reef when her starboard trawl warp became snagged on the seabed. She yawed and heeled to starboard in following seas. The skipper put the engine out of gear, but had no time to take further action before the vessel capsized as large waves broke over her starboard side. The speed of the capsize resulted in the vessel's liferaft and emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) becoming trapped in the superstructure. Therefore, although they had released from their stowage cradles, neither of these important safety items were able to operate as intended.

The accident was witnessed from the shoreline by a holidaymaker, who cycled to a nearby house and telephoned the emergency services. He was connected with the coastguard at Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) Clyde, who immediately tasked a Search and Rescue helicopter. However, when it was realised that the accident had occurred outside MRCC Clyde's area of operation, they transferred control to MRCC Stornoway, in whose area the accident had occurred, and stood the helicopter down.

The decision to transfer control of the incident and stand the helicopter down caused a delay of 23 minutes in a rescue helicopter reaching the accident site. However, while regrettable, it is considered unlikely that this delay affected the tragic outcome of the accident.

At the time of her build, *Aquila* met the stability standard for larger fishing vessels, there being no standard for vessels with a registered length of less than 12m. However, analysis undertaken by the MAIB found that, due to an increase in her displacement tonnage, at the time of the accident she no longer met this standard.

As a consequence of this accident, the following actions have been taken:

- The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has commenced a review of:
 - procedures for the handover of live incidents between MRCCs
 - the selection of Search and Rescue assets during an incident
 - its use of VHF radio procedures and the VHF radio coverage in the area of the accident.

- The UK Hydrographic Office has placed a warning on the chart and in the Sailing Directions regarding the possibility of dangerous waves being present in the area of the accident.
- The Sea Fish Industry Authority has agreed to highlight the safety issues identified in this report in the relevant fishing industry training courses.
- The MAIB has published a Safety Flyer for circulation to the fishing industry, which details the lessons learned from the accident.

In view of the actions already taken, no recommendations have been made.