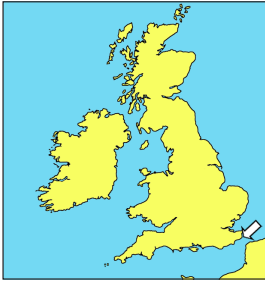


## SYNOPSIS



At 1126 on 3 November 2008, an engine room fitter was found trapped in a hydraulically operated steel watertight door in a machinery space on board the ro-ro passenger ferry *Eurovoyager*. The fitter was released from the door by the duty motorman and was airlifted to hospital at 1315 after the ferry arrived in Ramsgate. He was treated for crush injuries and was not expected to be able to return to work for at least 6 months.

A number of factors contributed to the fitter's entrapment. In particular:

- The door's rate of closure was almost three times faster than allowed on board newer vessels.
- The fitter could not have followed the recommended transit procedure when passing through the watertight door.
- Contrary to SOLAS requirements, the watertight door was in 'remote' and closed automatically as soon as its operating handle was released.
- There was no indication at the door to show that remote operation was selected.
- On board procedures for the operation of watertight doors were poorly promulgated and were not monitored or enforced.

It was the usual practice on board for the watertight doors to be in local control. However, VDR data showed that many of the doors were routinely left open at sea, which potentially compromised the vessel's watertight integrity. Remote control had been selected on this occasion to ensure that the doors remained closed while a Belgium Maritime Inspector was on board conducting an EU ferry inspection.

A recommendation has been made to the Department for Transport, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Belgium Federal Public Service, Mobility and Transport aimed at harmonising EU guidance and SOLAS requirements for the operation of powered watertight doors. Further recommendations have been made to the Cyprus Maritime Administration, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Belgium Federal Public Service, Mobility and Transport to propose amendments to current international regulation to make the operation of powered watertight doors safer on all vessels, and to improve the effectiveness of EU inspections. A recommendation has also been made to Transeuropa Shipping Lines Ltd aimed at improving its crews' compliance with the procedures for the operation of watertight doors within its fleet.