

SYNOPSIS

On 28 July 2007, *Lady Candida* was cruising 3 miles off the south west coast of Corsica. On board were a crew of 6 and 11 passengers, 4 of whom were young children. At about 1630, a fire was detected in the yacht's laundry. Despite efforts to extinguish the fire using portable extinguishers, it quickly spread out of control and the passengers and two of the crew were evacuated to the shore in the vessel's open tender. At 1640 the captain broadcast a "Mayday" and soon afterwards he and the remaining crew abandoned the vessel into a liferaft. They were soon recovered by a nearby vessel. The fire was later extinguished by shore-based rescue boats, but *Lady Candida* sank when being towed clear of the Bonifacio nature reserve. There were no casualties. The investigation identified that:

- The fire was almost certainly caused by the ignition of accumulated lint in the air outlet of a tumble dryer.
- The fire detection system did not function correctly.
- The growth of the fire was assisted by the airflow over the deck.
- No water was applied to the fire because the fixed fire pump could not be started and the emergency fire pump was difficult to access.
- There was no regular testing of the fire alarms or the emergency fire pump, and no fire drills were carried out on board.
- No engineer was carried and the captain had not completed mandatory fire-fighting training.
- The captain was probably fatigued.
- There were many departures from the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Safety of Large Commercial Sailing and Motor Vessels (LY1).
- The management of the vessel was left almost entirely to the captain and no safety management system was in place.
- The yacht foundered as a result of the large amount of water that accumulated in her hull during the fire-fighting effort.

To try to prevent a similar accident in the future, Safehaven International Ltd has introduced measures to provide shore-based support for all its clients' vessels and to monitor compliance with applicable codes and regulation. Additionally, the MAIB has circulated a synopsis of this accident, including the lessons learned, to the large yacht industry and media. Recommendations have been made to the MCA with the aim of ensuring that key safety equipment such as fire detection systems are properly maintained and operated, and the effectiveness of its survey regime is improved.