

SYNOPSIS

Mfv *Betty James* landed her catch in Mallaig, Scotland, on the evening of 9 July 2000, then sailed at 0015 the following day to return to the fishing grounds. At 0230 she ran aground. The person on watch had fallen asleep and a planned alteration of course to take the vessel between the isles of Rhum and Eigg was missed. A watch alarm was fitted and working, but it failed to wake either the watchkeeper or the crew asleep below in the accommodation.

Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre (MRSC) Oban reported the accident to the MAIB by telex at 0243 UTC 10 July, and an investigation started later that day.

It is considered that several factors caused the watchkeeper to fall asleep.

- He had experienced a disrupted sleeping pattern since the vessel sailed on 3 July.
- He probably had no more than 6 hours sleep in the previous 24.
- He had consumed three bottles of beer while in Mallaig.
- He was alone in the wheelhouse.
- Wheelhouse practices and ergonomics allowed him to conduct his watch while seated, and kept him inactive.
- The presence of a television, video recorder and domestic radio in the wheelhouse encouraged a recreational, rather than working, environment.

Acknowledging that disrupted sleep is an unavoidable aspect of a fisherman's life at sea, the recommendations in this report are aimed at eliminating the factors that in this case turned fatigue into sleep.