

## SYNOPSIS

This accident was notified to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) by the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) Solent at 0600 on Sunday 6 June 1999. The investigation started later that day.

The tug *Willem-B sr*, together with bottom dump barges *R8* and *R9*, had been engaged in dredging operations in Emsworth Harbour. The usual operation is for the barge to be loaded with dredging spoil in the yacht harbour, moved into the outer harbour, and then “hipped” on to *Willem-B sr*. The tug and barge then move out of the harbour into the Solent where the barge is released from the hipped position and towed astern of the tug. During the tow, no personnel are on board the barge. On arrival at the dumping ground, the tug moves alongside the barge and the bargeman transfers to the barge. Once on board, he makes preparations to open the bottom doors and dump the spoil.

With the barge empty, the tug comes alongside and the bargeman transfers back on to the tug for the passage back to harbour.

On this occasion, the force 3 wind and a 1½ metre swell were causing both tug and barge to roll. At about 0115 the bargeman, while waiting for a suitable opportunity to step from the rubbing strake of the tug on to the barge, was crushed between the tug and the barge. The tug deckhand immediately placed the bargeman on the deck of the barge, and shouted to the tug master what had happened. The tug master, after confirming what had happened, called the coastguard, telling them of the accident and asked for assistance.

The coastguards, after discussing with the tug master the probable extent of the injuries and the tug’s position, advised the tug to make for Bembridge where they would arrange for the lifeboat to meet them. At about 0220, the lifeboat crew boarded the barge and, after examining the casualty, arranged for a helicopter lift to hospital. The helicopter arrived on scene at about 0300, the casualty was lifted off at 0330 to Haslar Hospital in Gosport.

Once the casualty had been air lifted, the lifeboat returned to Bembridge and the tug and barge to Emsworth where they arrived at about 0530.

Despite considerable attention by both lifeboat crew and helicopter winchman; a paramedic, the casualty died on the way to hospital.