

## SYNOPSIS



Times are UTC

At about 0115 on the morning of 11 November 2006, the Norwegian registered *Aqua-boy* ran aground about 20m from Ardtornish Point Lighthouse in the Sound of Mull. She remained aground until 0645 when she refloated on the rising tide. *Aqua-boy* was then able to make her way to Oban, where an underwater survey of the damage was carried out.

*Aqua-boy* had been operating on the west coast of Scotland for over 15 years. Designed to carry live fish, she was engaged in the fish farming industry, transporting fish at various stages in their development between fish farms. At the time of the accident, the vessel was on passage from Gigha towards the Kyle of Lochalsh with the master alone on watch.

As *Aqua-boy* turned into the Sound of Mull, she entered comparative shelter, and vessel movement reduced. The effect of this, combined with the master's already fatigued state, was enough to cause him to fall asleep.

The master woke with the impact of the vessel running aground. The mate, who was awake in the mess room, went to the bridge to see what had happened. After checking that the remaining crew member was awake, he then went forward to assess the damage.

The master made a brief effort to refloat the vessel by running the engines astern. When this was unsuccessful, he contacted the Coastguard, who then transmitted a "Mayday Relay". This was acknowledged by *Ronja Commander*, a vessel of similar size to *Aqua-boy*. However, at 0246, the Coastguard was informed that *Skán Viking*, another vessel of similar size, was already in position and attempting to tow *Aqua-boy* off the rocks.

*Skán Viking* made two unsuccessful attempts and was then released when *Ronja Commander* arrived on scene at about 0400. *Ronja Commander* made her first attempt to tow *Aqua-boy* at 0408. This failed when the towline broke, and a second unsuccessful attempt was made at 0414.

*Aqua-boy* refloated on the rising tide at 0645 without further assistance. She proceeded directly to Oban for an underwater survey, and remained there until a repair port was organised.

The accident occurred following the master's failure to take avoiding action on account of his having fallen asleep and then remaining asleep on watch. The following safety issues were identified:

- The master's hours of rest did not meet the statutory minimum.
- In choosing to work more hours than were necessary, and restricting his intake of food, the master exacerbated his level of fatigue without taking full account of the probable consequences.
- Although a watch alarm was fitted, the alarm system was turned off.
- No lookout was posted and so the master was alone on watch.
- The vessel was operating below her minimum safe manning level.

Actions have since been taken by the MCA and the vessel's owners. A recommendation has been made to the owners of *Aqua Boy* on the provision of formal instruction to the vessel's master on action to be taken if it becomes apparent to him/her that the statutory minimum hours of rest requirements may not be achieved.