

Extract from The United Kingdom Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 5:

“The sole objective of a safety investigation into an accident under these Regulations shall be the prevention of future accidents through the ascertainment of its causes and circumstances. It shall not be the purpose of such an investigation to determine liability nor, except so far as is necessary to achieve its objective, to apportion blame.”

As the full investigation report will not be published within 12 months of the accident date, this interim report is published, pursuant to Regulation 14(2)(b) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012.

NOTE

This report is not written with litigation in mind and, pursuant to Regulation 14(14) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012, shall be inadmissible in any judicial proceedings whose purpose, or one of whose purposes is to attribute or apportion liability or blame.

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Interim report on the investigation of the collapse of a mezzanine deck on board the roll-on roll-off passenger ferry *ST HELEN*

Fishbourne ferry terminal, Isle of Wight

on 18 July 2014

The information contained in this interim report is based on investigations to date. Readers are cautioned that there is the possibility new evidence may become available that might alter the circumstances as depicted in this report.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

On 18 July 2014, the starboard forward mezzanine deck on board the UK registered roll-on roll-off passenger ferry *St Helen* partially collapsed causing injuries to a crewman and several passengers.

St Helen was berthed at Wightlink’s Fishbourne ferry terminal, Isle of Wight, and the mezzanine deck was being lowered in preparation for the disembarkation of the cars parked on it. The mezzanine deck collapsed when its inboard lifting wire suddenly parted. This caused the forward inboard corner of the suspended deck to drop to the main deck.

The crewman, who was standing on the mezzanine deck at the time of the collapse, was rendered unconscious from a head injury, and three passengers, who had suffered a variety of impact related injuries while seated in their cars, were taken to hospital. None of the injured remained in hospital overnight.

The mezzanine deck suffered structural damage as a result of its collapse and was removed from the vessel before *St Helen* was returned to service. *St Helen* has since been sold and is no longer operated on the Solent.

INVESTIGATION

On 7 August 2014, as a result of the investigation’s initial findings, the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents wrote to Wightlink Ltd and recommended that it implement, with immediate effect:

- A formal mezzanine deck wire dressing routine, and
- Seek independent assurance that the mezzanine decks and their hoisting/support wires are of sound condition.

The subsequent investigation has covered all aspects of the accident, including: the failure mode of the lifting wire; the material condition of the vessel’s mezzanine decks; equipment specific maintenance and inspection routines; and the management of maintenance across the Wightlink fleet.

INTENDED ACTION

The draft of the investigation’s final report is in the final stages of completion and will shortly be sent to stakeholders for a period of consultation.

SHIP PARTICULARS

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Vessel's name | <i>St Helen</i> |
| Flag | UK |
| Classification society | N/A |
| IMO number/fishing numbers | 8120569 |
| Type | Ro-ro passenger ferry |
| Registered owner | MEIF Shipping Ltd (until 16/2/2015) |
| Manager(s) | Wightlink Limited |
| Construction | Steel welded |
| Year of build | 1983 Cochrane Shipbuilders Ltd, Leith |
| Length overall | 76.97m |
| Gross tonnage | 2983 |
| Minimum safe manning | 8 |
| Authorised cargo | Passengers, private and commercial vehicles |

VOYAGE PARTICULARS

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Port of departure | Portsmouth |
| Port of arrival | Fishbourne, Isle of Wight |
| Type of voyage | Internal waters |
| Cargo information | 181 passengers, 64 private and 5 commercial vehicles |
| Manning | 11 |

MARINE CASUALTY INFORMATION

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Date and time | 18 July 2014, 2221 |
| Type of marine casualty or incident | Serious Marine Casualty |
| Location of incident | Fishbourne ferry terminal |
| Place on board | Starboard mezzanine deck |
| Injuries/fatalities | 3 passengers and 1 crew member attended hospital. Several other passengers who reported suffering minor injuries and shock were treated on board. |
| Damage/environmental impact | Failure of a steel wire lifting rope and structural damage to a mezzanine deck structural beam. |
| Ship operation | In service |
| Voyage segment | Alongside |
| External & internal environment | External: Dry, 18°C, light airs, calm sea |
| Persons on board | 192 |