

SAFETY FLYER TO FISHING INDUSTRY

Fishing vessel *Saint Christophe 1*, accident leading to flooding of a vessel at its berth, 10 March 2016



Narrative

At about 2300 on 9 March 2016, the French fishing vessels *Saint Christophe 1* and *Sagittaire* grounded and started to list on the falling tide while they were berthed alongside in Dartmouth harbour, where they had taken refuge from bad weather. *Sagittaire*'s crew raised the alarm and rigged chains to support the vessel as the tide fell, but *Saint Christophe 1* rolled onto its side and started to flood. *Sagittaire* re-floated as the tide rose, but *Saint Christophe 1* continued to flood and was almost fully submerged at high water. Both crews were evacuated from their vessels without incident, and there was minimal pollution.

Saint Christophe 1 was salvaged on 2 April but was declared a constructive total loss by its insurance company.

The investigation concluded that the South Embankment Quay was unsuitable for both *Saint Christophe 1* and *Sagittaire* to berth at over low water. The investigation also identified that the Harbour Authority was fully aware that *Saint Christophe 1* would ground on the falling tide. However, despite the efforts of its staff, the fishing vessel skippers did not understand this.

Safety Lessons

This was the first of two accidents investigated by the MAIB in a 6-week period where a fishing vessel was lost due to flooding after listing heavily away from the quay while taking the ground in a UK port.

Fishing vessel owners and skippers should always ensure that they are fully aware of the tidal range and the amount of water that will be under their vessel's keel at low water. If they intend their vessel to take the ground, procedures should be in place, and actions taken, to ensure their vessel remains upright or leans onto the quay wall when aground. When intending to take the ground at an unfamiliar berth the fishing vessel crew should:

- Consult with the harbour authority when assessing the suitability of the berth for taking the ground.
- Be aware of the condition of the ground their vessel will sit on.
- Ensure the vessel lists towards the quay prior to taking the ground.
- Close all watertight openings and monitor bilge levels and alarms.
- Tend the vessel's mooring lines and monitor its attitude and position as the tide falls.
- Where necessary, rig extra lines (possibly from outboard cleats) or beaching legs, to arrest the vessel's roll as the berth dries out.

This flyer and the MAIB's investigation report are posted on our website: www.gov.uk/maib

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