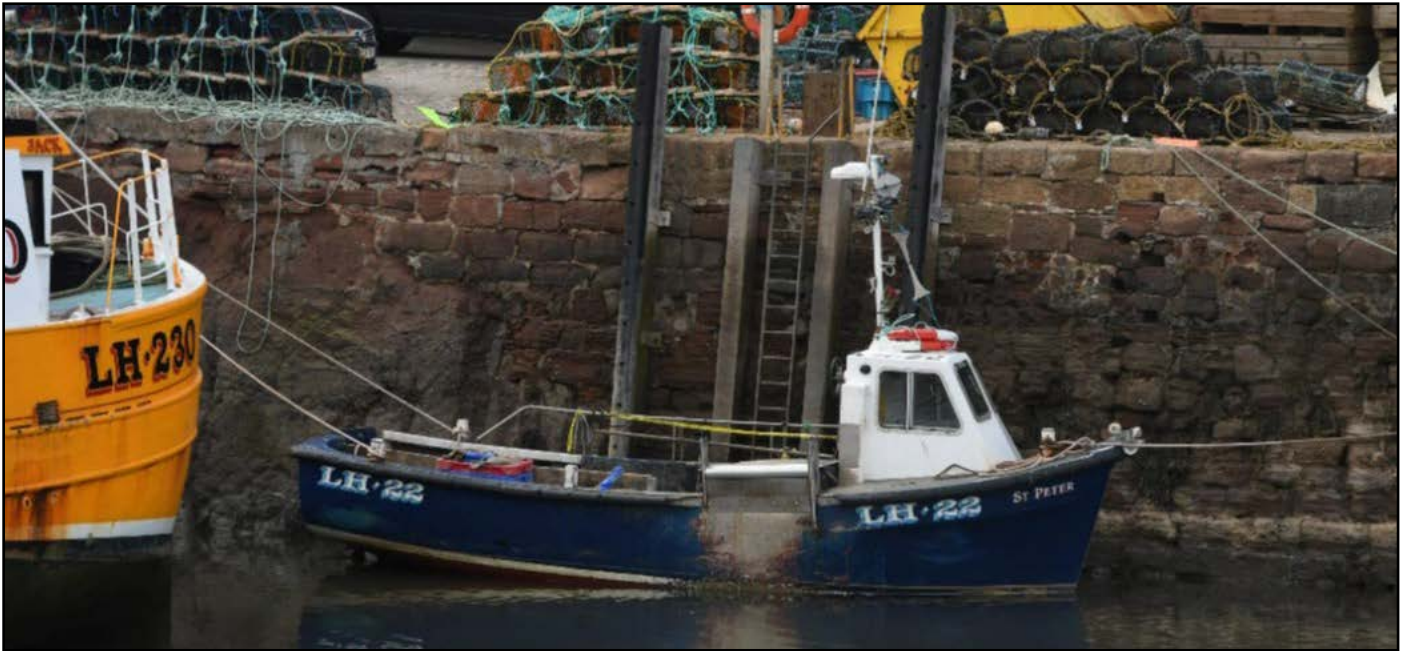


## SAFETY FLYER TO THE FISHING INDUSTRY

**Fatal man overboard from the single-handed creel fishing vessel,  
*Saint Peter* (LH22), 1.2 nautical miles, east of Torness Point, Scotland,  
on 2 May 2021**



*Saint Peter*

### Narrative

On 2 May 2021, the owner/skipper (the skipper) of the single-handed creel fishing vessel *Saint Peter* died from the effects of cold water immersion while working creels 1.2 nautical miles east of Torness Point, Scotland. There were no eyewitnesses to the accident, but evidence indicated that the skipper became caught in a bight of back rope while shooting a string of creels and was pulled overboard.

The skipper was wearing an automatic inflation personal flotation device (PFD), which kept his airways clear, but once in the water he had no means to reboard his vessel or send a distress signal. A concerned relative and a friend of the skipper searched for *Saint Peter* from another fishing vessel; they found *Saint Peter* stopped and unmanned with a string of creels streaming from its shooting door. They contacted the coastguard and a search and rescue operation was initiated. A coastguard helicopter located and recovered *Saint Peter*'s unresponsive skipper later that afternoon.

The MAIB investigation found that:

- The skipper was probably attempting to untangle a knotted section of creels and back rope when he became caught in a bight and was pulled overboard.
- There was an ever-present risk of entanglement while shooting as there was no physical barrier to separate the skipper from the fishing gear.

- It would have been difficult for the skipper to reboard *Saint Peter* as no means of self-recovery, such as a boarding ladder, had been rigged.
- The carrying of a personal locator beacon (PLB) or an automatic identification system (AIS) man overboard (MOB) alerting beacon might have enabled the skipper to send a distress signal from the water.
- The skipper's PFD automatically inflated and kept him afloat for about 9 hours with his face clear of the water.

## Safety lessons

1. Single-handed fishing is deemed to be a high-risk occupation, and fishermen are advised to follow industry guidelines to minimise the chance of being pulled or falling overboard; a barrier between the fisherman and the fishing gear during every phase of the fishing process and/or the wearing of a safety line is recommended.
2. It is important to consider what methods of reboarding the vessel from the water are available. Emergency measures, such as rigging a man overboard ladder or having an overside tyre arrangement in place, can improve the chances of survival.
3. Fishermen should wear a PFD at all times as this will help to maintain buoyancy after a fall overboard. It is vital that a distress message is sent if it is not possible to reboard quickly. Wearing a PLB or AIS MOB that can send a distress signal will improve the chances of survival and rescue.
4. Adherence to well-prepared risk assessments and realistic safety procedures offers single-handed skippers protection from the hazards they encounter at sea.

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

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

"The sole objective of the investigation of an accident under the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012 shall be the prevention of future accidents through the ascertainment of its causes and circumstances. It shall not be the purpose of an such investigation to determine liability nor, except so far as is necessary to achieve its objective, to apportion blame."

#### NOTE

This safety flyer 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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