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## BUSINESS PLAN 2023-2024

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*working to improve marine safety*

## MISSION

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) is to:

- Contribute to improving safety at sea by conducting thorough, effective and impartial marine accident investigations.
- Fulfil the UK's statutory obligations to investigate marine casualties.

## OBJECTIVES

In complying with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) [Casualty Investigation Code](#) and the UK's [statutory obligations for the investigation of marine casualties](#) the MAIB will:

- respond promptly to marine casualties;
- lead and manage accident investigation teams to ensure their safety and wellbeing while deployed;
- conduct thorough, impartial and timely investigations;
- focus on identifying safety issues and promoting safety actions to address them;
- produce clear and informative reports, with well-founded analyses and conclusions that explain the circumstances and where possible identify the causal and contributing factors, without apportioning blame;
- make proportionate, well-founded safety recommendations;
- keep the survivors and the relatives of victims of marine accidents informed about investigation progress and always treat them with consideration, empathy and honesty;
- contribute to improving marine safety by promulgating the lessons learned from accident investigations; and
- encourage mutual assistance within the international marine accident investigation community to improve marine safety globally.

## VISION

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### To be world leaders in marine accident investigation

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The MAIB will achieve this by:

- continually developing its capability to investigate effectively, and delivering timely reports and information that will enhance marine safety;
- fostering good relationships with other stakeholders, while maintaining its independence;
- contributing to the continuous development and improvement of marine safety investigation capability, both nationally and internationally; and
- ensuring it maintains adequate resources and uses them effectively.



### INVESTIGATION PROCESS

The MAIB receives around 1,200 reports of accidents and incidents each year. The simplified schematic on this page shows the sequence of events involved in investigating an accident.

When the decision to conduct an investigation is made, a team of inspectors will be deployed to gather further evidence and conduct interviews to gain a full understanding of the circumstances and causes of the accident or incident. After initial analysis, the findings are presented to the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents for a decision about the scope of the investigation and to establish the need for any urgent safety recommendations. Further investigation and analysis will then be undertaken and reviewed before any recommendations are formulated and the report is written.

Draft investigation reports are subject to a statutory 30-day consultation process, and all comments received are reviewed and the report amended if appropriate before it is finally published.

Details of all accidents and incidents received are recorded on the branch's case management system and database (COMPASS). In addition, the findings and reports of all published investigations are uploaded to the IMO's Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) database.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS

In the interests of future safety, the MAIB's investigations usually result in the branch making recommendations to those stakeholders best placed to implement them. These can include vessel owners and operators, port and harbour authorities, and industry and regulatory bodies. Recommendations are made for the purpose of ensuring that action is taken that will help prevent a reoccurrence. Industry experts are consulted to ensure that recommendations are proportionate and achievable.

Recipients of MAIB recommendations are required to inform the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents whether or not they accept them and provide details of their plans for implementation.

A full summary of recommendations issued annually, recommendations remaining open from previous years and the status of each recommendation is made publicly available in the MAIB's annual report.

## PROMULGATION OF SAFETY LESSONS

A key facet of the MAIB's work is the promulgation to its stakeholders of safety lessons identified during its investigations. Importance is attached to identifying the optimum means for disseminating these messages most effectively.

### Online information

[MAIB's website](#) forms part of the wider UK government's website and features branch-related news and information, including the status of MAIB's ongoing investigations and access to all MAIB publications, including every investigation report the branch has published since it began operating in 1989.

The MAIB also shares branch news and/or information on its Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube channels. More information about how MAIB uses [social media is on the website](#).

### Types of publication

[Investigation reports](#) contain a factual account, analysis, conclusions and actions taken by the MAIB and other organisations. If the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents considers recommendations necessary, these are issued to the addressee(s) as part of the report's publication. If an earlier recommendation is required, it can be issued during the investigative stage, either with a published safety bulletin or by a chief inspector's letter direct to the addressee(s) and these will be accounted for as part of actions taken by the MAIB. If a recommendation addressee has taken appropriate action in response by the time of the investigation report's publication, this is also detailed in the report. All MAIB investigation reports are publicly available online or in print.

[Safety bulletins](#) are issued to communicate urgent safety lessons and recommendations that the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents considers must be brought to the industry's attention before the main investigation report is published.

[Safety flyers](#) provide short descriptions of accidents and the safety lessons that can be learned from them. Primarily produced to accompany publication of investigation reports involving fishing vessels, these 2-page documents aim to communicate the key information in a succinct way. On occasion, a flyer involving vessels from other sectors are produced, either with a related investigation report or as a stand-alone publication.

[Preliminary assessments](#) are occasionally published online to summarise the circumstances of an accident, the particulars of the vessel(s) involved and any actions taken by MAIB or the stakeholders.

[Safety digests](#) are published biannually and contain anonymised articles based on investigations and administrative enquiries, with an emphasis on the lessons to be learned. The three sections are introduced by selected stakeholders from the merchant, fishing and recreational industries and all safety bulletins or flyers issued between editions are reproduced as an annex. Specialised fishing vessel and recreational craft compilations are also produced on an occasional basis.

[Annual reports to the Secretary of State for Transport](#) contain an annual review of the year by the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, a breakdown of work undertaken by the branch, including numbers of incidents reported to the MAIB, investigations started and reports published. Annual reports also provide details on the current status of recommendations made by the MAIB during the year and any remaining open from previous years. A comprehensive set of accident statistics derived from the MAIB's database presents data derived from the reported incidents through the calendar year according to vessel categories. Tables containing historic data compare numbers across a 10-year period.

[Information leaflets](#) are carried on deployments by inspectors to inform stakeholders involved in an investigation about the role of the MAIB and its processes. Specific leaflets containing information for bereaved families and friends, witnesses and those accompanying witnesses to an MAIB interview are also distributed according to circumstance. All leaflets, including any translated versions, are available to view and download from the MAIB's website.

When appropriate, the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents will commission a [safety study](#) that focuses on a particular aspect of marine safety to identify and highlight wider lessons. Safety studies are usually conducted in response to identified accident rates and trends.

## Presentations and other external commitments

The branch will continue to support the advancement of marine safety through presentations and participation in industry-led safety seminars.

## Coroners' inquests and fatal accident inquiries

When the MAIB has investigated a fatality, inspectors will provide support to the subsequent Coroner's Inquest or Fatal Accident Inquiry (FAI) as appropriate. In practice, this usually involves MAIB inspectors attending the inquest or FAI to explain the findings and conclusions of the relevant investigation as outlined in the investigation report.

In England and Wales such support is defined in a [memorandum of understanding \(MOU\)](#) agreed between the Chief Coroner and the three transport accident investigation branches (AIBs). An MOU between the AIBs and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service is being developed for signature later this year.

## International

The Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents represents the UK at the [Marine Accident Investigators' International Forum \(MAIIF\)](#) and its European sub-forum E-MAIIF, which this year will be hosted by Denmark. MAIIF is an international non-profit organisation dedicated to the advancement of maritime safety and the prevention of marine pollution through the exchange of ideas, experiences and information acquired in marine accident investigation. Its purpose is to promote and improve marine accident investigation, and to foster cooperation and communication between marine accident investigators. MAIIF has Intergovernmental Organisation status at the IMO.

**The UK will host the 30th annual meeting of MAIIF from  
9 to 13 October 2023, at the IMO's headquarters in London**

The MAIB will continue to offer support to accident investigation practitioners from other countries' administrations. This includes the exchange of ideas and best practice, specific training on the recovery and analysis of evidence obtained from voyage data recorders (VDRs) and other electronic recording devices.

The MAIB is an active member of the UK delegation at the IMO's Sub-Committee on Implementation of IMO Instruments (III) and participates in the Casualty Analysis Working Group. This group distils lessons drawn from the analysis of accident investigations so that they can be recommended for consideration by the relevant IMO sub-committees. The committee meets annually but is active throughout the year via its Casualty Analysis Correspondence Group.

## TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Marine Accident Data Analysis Suite (MADAS) will continue to be developed in cooperation with the [USA's National Transportation Safety Board](#). This has become the industry-standard platform for marine electronic evidence analysis.

**In October, the MAIB will host the annual international marine  
technical forum and MADAS User Group meetings in Southampton**

Developments within the fields of autonomous shipping, electronic navigation, modern propulsion systems and other emerging maritime technologies will continue to be kept under review to ensure the MAIB inspectorate are sufficiently informed in these areas.

In cooperation with the other AIBs, the branch built a new case management system and database (COMPASS) to hold and manage its data when the UK left the European Union. The system currently holds nearly 48,000 records of accidents and incidents, with this figure increasing daily.

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**This year, and following a successful discovery phase, the branch intends to develop a system to allow public access to anonymised marine casualty data for research purposes**

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## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

MAIB inspectors are recruited from industry where they have already gained appropriate levels of qualification and experience. On joining the branch, they are required to develop and maintain an extensive range of investigative skills. The branch's inspector accreditation scheme comprises theoretical and practical modules covering all aspects of marine accident investigation and, in parallel, all inspectors are expected to achieve a post-graduate certificate (PGC) in marine accident investigation, awarded by Cranfield University. Accreditation and completion of the PGC is completed within 2 years of joining.

Following accreditation all inspectors receive continued professional development and training in core skills such as interview techniques, human factors in accident investigation and evidence handling, making full use of post-graduate courses where available.

The branch is continuing to maintain its training and development programme for all staff for job-specific skills as well as personal development. Training requirements are discussed with all line managers and their respective staff and then presented to the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents to review for approval.

The MAIB has held Investors in People accreditation since 1996 and was successfully reassessed in April 2022.



## OTHER INITIATIVES

The MAIB is in the process of refreshing the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012, as amended (the 2012 Regulations), the secondary legislation that governs its activities. The 2012 Regulations brought into force the IMO's Casualty Investigation Code and the European Union's Accident Investigation Directive, which became effective in 2010 and 2011, respectively. The current refresh will align the UK's regulations more closely with its obligations under SOLAS<sup>1</sup> and will make a number of updates to reflect operational experience over the last decade.

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**The branch will update the secondary legislation governing its activities and the regulations are expected to be laid before Parliament in the autumn**

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<sup>1</sup> International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended.

## JOINT ACTIVITIES AND OTHER INITIATIVES

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### COOPERATION WITH THE OTHER ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCHES

The chief inspectors of the three AIBs cooperate on matters of common interest through the [Accident Investigation Chiefs' Council \(AICC\)](#), which is chaired by a non-executive director. The AICC's Head of Joint Policy coordinates the development of tri-branch MOUs, protocols and other matters of common interest.

The AICC has agreed the following joint initiatives to take advantage of synergies between the three branches:

- continued development of common processes and practices for accident investigation;
- shared technical facilities, equipment and expertise where appropriate;
- cross-branch auditing of skills capability and processes, to improve efficiency and effectiveness;
- promotion of joint accident investigation training for new and existing staff where appropriate;
- shared resources and expertise in public relations, recruitment, career progression and personal development; and to
- update and establish joint-AIB memoranda of understanding as required with stakeholders.
- support the development of the Road Safety Investigation Branch.

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**The three branches are currently working together to understand whether they can collaborate better on the provision of IT support. This project is in the discovery phase**

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Oversight of the AIBs by the Department for Transport (DfT) for governance purposes is carried out by the Board of Accident Investigation Branches (BAIB), which is chaired by the DfT's Director General for Aviation, Maritime and Security (AMS) and meets biannually. BAIB meetings are attended by the chief inspectors of the AAIB, MAIB and RAIB, the non-executive chair of the AICC, the modal directors for air, rail and maritime, and other DfT personnel. The relationship between the AIBs and DfT is formalised in a protocol [and is available to read online](#).

## RED ENSIGN GROUP

In 2020, the MAIB assumed responsibility for the investigation of Very Serious Marine Casualties involving vessels on the [Red Ensign Group \(REG\) Category 1 registers of Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Gibraltar and the Isle of Man](#), which was extended to include the British Virgin Islands in August 2021. At the time of publishing this business plan, the branch was conducting three investigations on behalf of the Isle of Man and also investigating a non-SOLAS casualty on behalf of the British Virgin Islands under a separate arrangement.

## STAFF NUMBERS

Following development of both the Business Support section and the Technical team in recent years, the branch's headcount has remained steady at 37.2 FTE<sup>2</sup> and no enhancements are planned for the immediate future. However, outflow was higher than usual in 2022 due to a number of staff returning to industry and age-related retirements.

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**A priority for 2023 is to ensure that all new recruits and staff new to role receive the proper training and equipment to carry out their role effectively**

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<sup>2</sup> Full-time equivalent. The branch currently has 42 staff, including those working part-time.

## FINANCE

The MAIB is primarily funded from the DfT's programme budget. In 2022/23 an uplift of £75k on its small capital budget of £50k was used to cover discovery costs to test viability of developing the case management system and database to be outward facing. This is to be developed with a £240k uplift in 2023/24.

Where accident investigation services are provided to other countries or international organisations those costs are recovered. The budgets for the 3 years of this business plan are shown in the table below, together with the budget for 2022/23:

£k	2022/3	2023/4	2024/5
Pay	3,593	3,593	3,593
Non-pay	1,246	1,246	1,246
Total programme	4,839	4,839	4,839
Capital	290	50	50