

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As the full investigation report will not be published within 12 months of the accident date, this interim report is published, pursuant to Regulation 14(2)(b) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and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 foundering of an inflatable migrant boat, resulting in the loss of at least 8 lives in the English Channel on 14 December 2022

The information contained in this interim report is based on the various aspects of the investigation completed 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

At about 0300 on 14 December 2022, an inflatable migrant boat lost structural integrity and flooded during an attempt to cross the Dover Strait from France to the UK. An estimated forty-seven migrants entered the water, eight of whom lost their lives. The watchkeeper on a UK registered fishing vessel heard shouting and saw the stricken inflatable boat with some occupants still on it and others in the water around it. At 0304, the skipper of the fishing vessel alerted the Dover Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) and then initiated the recovery of migrants from the water. The subsequent search and rescue operation involved a Royal Navy vessel, fishing boats, lifeboats and aircraft and remained ongoing until 2100 that night. The bodies of four migrants were recovered to the UK and at least four migrants were tragically lost at sea.

INVESTIGATION

The MAIB's investigation has considered various aspects of the accident to determine the causes and circumstances of the foundering and the conduct of the subsequent search and rescue operation. These include the role of charitable organisations in facilitating migrant recovery at sea; migrant inflatable boat construction; the availability and employment of air surveillance assets; the Dover MRCC response to the alert; and the recovery of the migrants from the water

ONGOING ACTION

The MAIB investigation is complete, and a draft of the report is being prepared and will be distributed to stakeholders for a 30-day consultation period in due course. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency has opened a priority telephone helpline for charities to use when reporting migrant incidents.



The inflatable migrant boat, with its flooring missing and tubing collapsed together

VESSEL PARTICULARS

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Vessel's name | Unnamed |
| Flag | Not applicable |
| Classification society | Not applicable |
| IMO number/fishing numbers | Not applicable |
| Type | Unknown |
| Registered owner | Not applicable |
| Manager(s) | Not applicable |
| Year of build | Unknown |
| Construction | Rubber inflatable |
| Length overall | Unknown |
| Registered length | Unknown |
| Gross tonnage | Unknown |
| Minimum safe manning | Unknown |
| Authorised cargo | Unknown |

VOYAGE PARTICULARS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Port of departure | Near Dunkirk, France |
| Port of arrival | UK coastline (intended) |
| Type of voyage | International (intended passage for immigration purposes) |
| Cargo information | Not applicable |
| Manning | About 47 (not seafarers) |

MARINE CASUALTY INFORMATION

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Date and time | 14 December 2022 at about 0300 |
| Type of marine casualty or incident | Very Serious Marine Casualty |
| Location of incident | The English Channel |
| Place on board | Unknown |
| Injuries/fatalities | At least 8 fatalities |
| Damage/environmental impact | Loss of structural integrity of the vessel; no environmental damage |
| Ship operation | Unknown |
| Voyage segment | Mid-water |
| External/internal environment | Air temperature 1°C; wind northerly with light airs; wave height less than 0.5m; sea state slight; sea surface temperature 11°C. |
| Persons on board | About 47 migrants, planning to reach the UK |