

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As the full investigation report will not be published within 12 months of the accident date, this interim report is published, pursuant to Regulation 14(2)(b) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and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 into the loss of propulsion in heavy weather of the passenger vessel *Spirit of Discovery* while crossing the Bay of Biscay, resulting in over 100 passenger injuries and leading to one fatality on 4 November 2023

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 1230 on 4 November 2023, the passenger vessel *Spirit of Discovery* lost propulsion in heavy weather while crossing the Bay of Biscay. This led to the vessel moving violently while the crew restarted the vessel's propulsion. The propulsion issues, storm force conditions and vessel motions continued until the following morning when *Spirit of Discovery* was able to continue its passage. During this period over 100 passengers were injured. Eight of the seriously injured passengers were taken directly to hospital on arrival at Portsmouth, England, one of whom later died from their injuries.

INVESTIGATION

The MAIB's investigation has considered all aspects of the accident to determine the causes and circumstances of *Spirit of Discovery*'s loss of propulsion in heavy weather and the on board response, including analysis of the vessel's intended passage; preparations for operating in heavy weather; the on board response to passenger injuries and damage; and the medical treatment of injured passengers.

ONGOING ACTION

The MAIB investigation is nearing completion, and a draft of the report is being prepared and will be distributed to stakeholders for a 30-day consultation period in due course.

Image courtesy of Andrew Sassoli-Walke



Spirit of Discovery

VESSEL PARTICULARS

Vessel's name	<i>Spirit of Discovery</i>
Flag	UK
Classification society	Lloyd's Register
IMO number	9802683
Type	Passenger ship
Registered owner	Saga Cruises Limited
Manager(s)	V.Ships Leisure UK Limited
Construction	Steel
Year of build	2019
Length overall	236.71m
Registered length	211.91m
Gross tonnage	58,119
Minimum safe manning	23
Authorised cargo	999 passengers

VOYAGE PARTICULARS

Port of departure	Puerto del Rosario, Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, Spain
Port of arrival	Portsmouth, England
Type of voyage	International
Cargo information	943 passengers
Manning	503 crew

MARINE CASUALTY INFORMATION

Date and time	4 November 2023 at about 1230
Type of marine casualty or incident	Very Serious Marine Casualty
Location of incident	Bay of Biscay
Place on board	Engine pod/ passenger areas
Injuries/fatalities	Over 100 passenger injuries and 1 fatality
Damage/environmental impact	Internal and external damage to the vessel, no environmental impact
Ship operation	Passenger/cruise
Voyage segment	Mid-water
External & internal environment	Force 11 winds, sea state 8 (very high); daylight; overcast; moderate visibility
Persons on board	1,446