

**Extracts 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.”

Regulation 16(1):

“The Chief Inspector may at any time make recommendations as to how future accidents may be prevented.”

Press Enquiries:

+44 (0)19 3244 0015

Out of hours:

+44 (0)30 0777 7878

Public Enquiries:

+44 (0)30 0330 3000

NOTE

This bulletin 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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For all enquiries:

Email: maib@dft.gov.uk

Tel: +44 (0)23 8039 5500

Safety issues on Egyptian liveaboard dive boats operating in the Red Sea

Image courtesy of Ali Aref, President of [Dive Pro Liveaboard](#)



Sea Story during modification

MAIB SAFETY BULLETIN 1/2025

This document, containing safety lessons, has been produced for marine safety purposes only, on the basis of information available to date.

The Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012 provide for the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents to make recommendations at any time during the course of an investigation if, in his opinion, it is necessary or desirable to do so.

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch has been made aware of several incidents and accidents involving Egyptian liveaboard dive boats operating in the Red Sea that have resulted in many fatalities, some of which have been UK nationals.

Currently, formal safety investigations into the loss of the vessels involved remains the responsibility of the Egyptian Authority for Maritime Safety.



Captain Andrew Moll OBE
Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

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Press Enquiries: 01932 440015 Out of hours: 0300 77 77 878

Public Enquiries: 0300 330 3000

BACKGROUND

The MAIB is aware that 16 Red Sea liveaboard dive boats have been lost over the last 5 years. Seven of these losses happened in the last 21 months, and three of these resulted in numerous fatalities including UK nationals. In line with the principles of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Casualty Investigation Code, the UK has been registered as a substantially interested state in the Egyptian safety investigations into these accidents.

FINDINGS

On 24 April 2023, dive boat *Carlton Queen* capsized and foundered (**Figure 1**) near Hurghada, Egypt with 33 people on board. All passengers and crew were rescued though several were injured, including UK nationals.

On 11 June 2023, dive boat *Hurricane* caught fire (**Figure 1**) and was abandoned near Elphinstone Reef in the Red Sea. Of the 29 people on board, three UK passengers remain unaccounted for and are believed to have perished.

On 25 November 2024, dive boat *Sea Story* capsized and foundered south of Port Ghalib, Egypt with 45 people on board. Four bodies have been recovered and 7 people, including two UK passengers, remain missing and are believed to have perished.

Images courtesy of Toby Meadows/Alexander Derhaag (left) and Mohammed Kaddah (right)



Figure 1: *Carlton Queen* capsized and *Hurricane* on fire

SAFETY ISSUES

The following safety issues have been identified:

- The dive boats involved were poorly constructed and often substantially modified/extended (**Figure 2**), which resulted in some vessels exhibiting inadequate stability.
- Essential lifesaving equipment was defective, out-of-date for service and, in some cases, missing.
- The rapid spread of fire is indicative of poor structural fire protection, and items of essential safety equipment, such as fire detection systems and fire extinguishers, were either missing or defective.

- Emergency escape routes were via lockable doors, had no emergency lighting and were unmarked.
- Safety briefings to passengers were of a poor standard or not conducted at all.
- Crews appeared poorly trained and were unfamiliar with their vessels.

Images courtesy of Ali Aref, President of [Dive Pro Liveaboard](#)



Figure 2: Sea Story before and after modification, including extension

SAFETY LESSONS

Liveaboard dive boat holidays are often marketed using ratings and reviews posted online that are not necessarily accurate and do not assure safety standards. Further, a number of consumers have found themselves switched to another boat on arrival in Egypt, which has negated their attempts to holiday on a safe vessel.

From the spate of recent fatal accidents and vessel losses, it is clear that the local safety standards of dive boats operating in the Red Sea can fall well below those routinely experienced in the UK and Europe. Prospective customers are advised only to book liveaboard dive holidays through recognised vendors who can provide assurance about the safety standards applicable to the dive boat. On arrival on board, customers should request that the crew provide a thorough safety briefing before departure. This should cover the emergency warning signal, emergency exits, muster stations, the location and use of safety equipment, and abandon ship procedures.

Safety recommendations shall in no case create a presumption of blame or liability

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