

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As the full investigation report will not be published within 12 months of the accident date, this interim report is published, pursuant to Regulation 14(2)(b) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and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 the fishing vessel *Argos Georgia* approximately 190 nautical miles east of Port Stanley, Falkland Islands with the loss of 13 lives on 22 July 2024

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.

BACKGROUND

This investigation is being conducted by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) on behalf of the St Helena Government in accordance with the Category 2 Red Ensign Group Memorandum of Understanding.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

At about 1800¹ on 22 July 2024, the St Helena registered longline fishing vessel *Argos Georgia* capsized and sank while on passage from Port Stanley, Falkland Islands, to fishing grounds near the island of South Georgia (190 nautical miles east of Port Stanley). Of the 27 people on board, 13 perished and 14 were recovered during the search and rescue (SAR) operation. A shell door had failed and opened while at sea enabling water to enter and progressively flood through *Argos Georgia*'s main deck. The vessel listed, lost propulsion and drifted in heavy seas. Some crew members were lost during the abandonment and others perished in liferafts during the ongoing long-range SAR mission. The survivors were rescued by a fishery protection vessel and another fishing vessel and taken back to Port Stanley.

Image courtesy of [UK Ministry of Defence](#)



Argos Georgia

¹ All times used in this interim report are universal time coordinated (UTC) -4 unless otherwise stated.

INVESTIGATION

The MAIB's investigation has considered various aspects of the accident to determine the causes and circumstances of the water ingress and foundering of *Argos Georgia*, and the large loss of life. These include the vessel design and stability, applicable regulatory regime and oversight, vessel operational management, lifesaving apparatus, and SAR.

INITIAL FINDINGS

The investigation has found that, before the accident, the shell door in the hauling compartment on the starboard side of *Argos Georgia* was raised in the closed position. At the time of the accident the door was observed on closed-circuit television to descend slowly into the fully open position. This allowed significant quantities of water to enter the vessel. The crew were unable to close the shell door once it had opened.

Internal doors leading from the hauling compartment were open. This allowed water to flow unhindered into other areas of the vessel, causing a significant list that progressively increased as more water entered. The crew were unable to control the passage of water into other spaces in the vessel, which increased the list still further until the vessel foundered.

ACTIONS TAKEN

The MAIB issued a safety bulletin (SB4/2024²) in October 2024 recommending all owners, operators and skippers of fishing vessels fitted with side shell doors to:

- risk assess and mitigate the effect of a shell door failure;
- mitigate the risk of consequential flooding, from a shell door failure, between compartments and ensure internal doors are closed; and, to
- inform the crew of these risk assessments and mitigations.

In July 2025, the MAIB sent letters to the vessel's operator and shell door designer that included the result of a study of the shell door opening/closing mechanism using Finite Element Analysis techniques. This indicated an unacceptable level of stress and potential failure of the shell door drive shaft, coupling and key while in operation. A failure of the opening/closing mechanism could enable the shell door to lower to the open position under gravity, and disable the normal closing method. The letters included a recommendation to appraise the design of shell door operating mechanisms, modify as appropriate, and propagate any design changes to other vessel operators that have similar shell door designs installed.

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.

² <https://www.gov.uk/maib-reports/safety-warning-issued-following-the-foundering-of-fishing-vessel-argos-georgia-with-the-loss-of-13-lives>

VESSEL PARTICULARS

Vessel's name	Argos Georgia
Flag	St Helena
Classification society	Det Norske Veritas
IMO number/fishing numbers	9812690/ZHHJ
Type	Longliner MT1112
Registered owner	Ervik Ocean AS
Manager	Argos Froyanes Limited
Construction	Steel
Year of build	2018
Length overall	53.85m
Registered length	49.48m
Gross tonnage	2004
Minimum safe manning	Not applicable
Authorised cargo	Patagonian toothfish

VOYAGE PARTICULARS

Port of departure	Port Stanley, Falkland Islands
Port of arrival	Port Stanley, Falkland Islands (intended)
Type of voyage	On passage
Cargo information	Patagonian toothfish
Manning	25

MARINE CASUALTY INFORMATION

Date and time	22 July 2024 at about 1800
Type of marine casualty or incident	Very Serious Marine Casualty
Location of incident	190nm east of Port Stanley, Falkland Islands
Place on board	Not applicable
Injuries/fatalities	13 fatalities
Damage/environmental impact	Vessel loss
Vessel operation	On passage
Voyage segment	Mid-water
External & internal environment	7m waves; 50-knot easterly wind; water temperature 3.5°C
Persons on board	27