

MAIB

MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH

SAFETY FLYER TO THE FISHING INDUSTRY

Collision between the crude oil tanker *Apache* and the stern trawler *Serinah* (GH 116) in the Firth of Clyde, Scotland on 25 April 2024

Image courtesy of [Nereus Shipping S.A.](#)



Image courtesy of Iain Cameron ([SmugMug](#))



Apache and *Serinah*

Narrative

On 25 April 2024, the 274m crude oil tanker *Apache* and the 9.9m stern trawler *Serinah* collided in the Firth of Clyde off the west coast of Scotland. *Serinah* was making circular clockwise tows while fishing a seabed depression and *Apache* was making preparations to board a pilot after a sea passage from Nigeria.

Serinah was visible on *Apache*'s radar and visibility was good, yet a collision occurred because the watchkeepers on both vessels had not appreciated the developing risk in time to take effective avoiding action.

The watchkeepers on *Apache* were used to small fishing vessels manoeuvring clear at the last minute, despite recognising that the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (IRPCS, also referred to as the COLREGs) required *Apache* to take action to avoid a collision as the give-way vessel. The crew member on watch on *Serinah* had not completed any formal navigation training.

Serinah was struck by the bow of *Apache* and sank rapidly. All three crew members ended up in the water, two of whom were able to quickly board the vessel's liferaft. The skipper was rescued after approximately 15 minutes. There were no injuries.

The actions taken on both vessels did not reflect an understanding of the IRPCS, particularly the requirements set out in Rule 7 (Risk of Collision) and Rule 18 (Responsibilities Between Vessels).

Safety lessons

1. The IRPCS provides a framework for safe navigation, but these rules are only effective if they are followed. There was plenty of unobstructed space at sea for early action to be taken to avoid this accident. The tanker initially held the responsibility to alter course but both vessels were ultimately responsible for taking action to prevent a collision.
2. Too often, those holding a navigational watch at sea on smaller fishing vessels have received limited, if any, formal navigation or IRPCS training. This investigation resulted in a recommendation to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to introduce a navigational training requirement for fishermen who stand a navigational watch on board commercial vessels between 7m and 16.5m. Fishing vessel operators should ensure all watchkeepers on their vessels are trained and have a good working knowledge of the IRPCS.
3. Marine Guidance Note 313 (F) – Keeping a Safe Navigational Watch on Fishing Vessels contains advice based on lessons learned from previous accidents, and all skippers should be aware of its content.

This flyer and the MAIB's investigation report are posted on our website: www.gov.uk/maib

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Extract from The United Kingdom Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 5:

"The sole objective of the investigation of an accident under the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012 shall be the prevention of future accidents through the ascertainment of its causes and circumstances. It shall not be the purpose of an such investigation to determine liability nor, except so far as is necessary to achieve its objective, to apportion blame."

NOTE

This safety flyer 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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