

INFORMATION LEAFLET

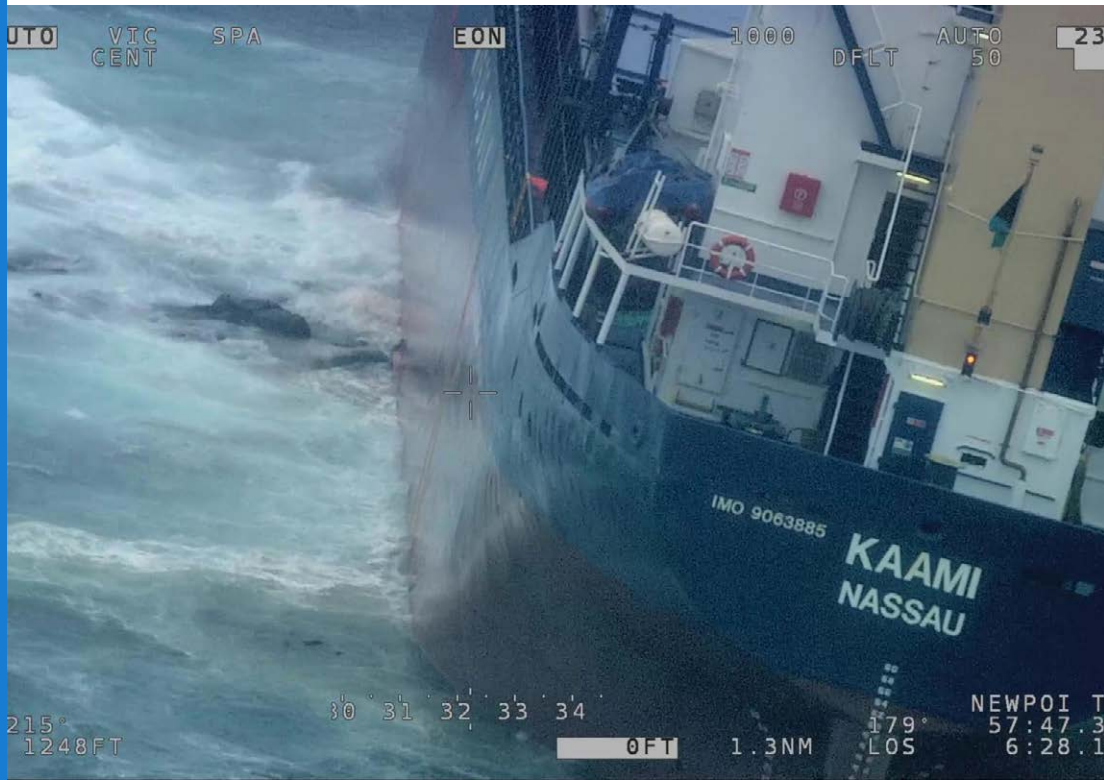
01 About us

Who we are

Located in offices in Southampton, the MAIB is a branch of the Department for Transport. The Branch has four teams of experienced accident investigators, each comprising a principal inspector and three inspectors drawn from the nautical, engineering, naval architecture or fishing disciplines. The inspectors are supported by an administrative team who also deal with finance, contracts, data analysis and publications.

What we do

The role of the MAIB is to contribute to safety at sea by determining the causes and circumstances of marine accidents and working with others to reduce the likelihood of such accidents recurring in the future. Accident investigations are conducted solely in the interest of future safety. The Branch does not apportion blame and it does not establish liability, enforce laws or carry out prosecutions.



02 MARINE ACCIDENTS

What is an accident?

The full definition of an accident is contained in the MAIB's enabling regulations. In summary, an accident is an undesired event that has occurred directly by, or in connection with the operation of a ship, that has resulted in:

- ▶ *the loss or abandonment of the ship;*
- ▶ *death, serious injury, or the loss of a person from a ship;*
- ▶ *stranding or disabling of a ship;*
- ▶ *material damage to the ship, another ship or marine structure; and/or*
- ▶ *serious pollution.*

Accidents, including serious injuries, should be reported to the MAIB by the quickest possible means to enable inspectors to start an investigation before vital evidence decays, is removed or is lost. The MAIB has a dedicated reporting line for this purpose, and this line is staffed 24 hours a day.

The MAIB's reporting line is: 023 8023 2527

Outside the UK, call: +44 23 8023 2527



03 NEXT STEPS

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN ACCIDENT HAS BEEN REPORTED?

Following the notification of an accident, MAIB inspectors gather as much evidence as possible so that a decision can be reached about how to proceed. In very serious cases a safety investigation will begin immediately. For other casualties, it may be necessary to conduct a Preliminary Assessment during which further details are obtained to establish whether or not further investigation is warranted. This decision will usually be made within 2 weeks of the accident, and all involved parties will be informed.



04 INVESTIGATION

AN MAIB INVESTIGATION

All accident investigations seek answers to four basic questions:

- ▶ *what happened?*
- ▶ *how did it happen?*
- ▶ *why did it happen?*
- ▶ *what can be done to prevent it happening again?*

Field work and initial enquiries

In the early stages of an investigation inspectors will gather as much information as possible relating to the accident. This will usually involve visiting the vessel(s) concerned, interviewing crew, passengers, shore staff, and other witnesses or survivors, and collecting physical and electronic evidence. At the scene of the accident, the inspector may take photographs or videos of pertinent areas and items of equipment, or may examine logbooks, other records, crew qualifications and certificates. If the vessel is fitted with a voyage data recorder, the data will be removed and examined at the MAIB offices. If a vessel has sunk, remotely-operated vehicle surveys and/or divers may be contracted to assist in the investigation. Failed items of equipment may be independently analysed to determine the mode of failure. The inspector will then analyse the evidence and will use this to try to determine the causal and contributory factors that led to the accident.



Investigation report

Once the active investigation phase is completed, a report is produced, including recommendations where appropriate. Each investigation report is circulated for consultation to stakeholders and anyone whose reputation could be affected by its contents. If a person has died in the accident the report is sent to their next of kin. A 30-day consultation period enables involved parties to check the facts and analysis in the report, and put forward suggestions or corrections. All submissions will be taken into account, and the report amended if necessary, before it is finally published and made publicly available.

Recommendations

Investigation reports may contain recommendations aimed at preventing similar accidents in the future. Recommendations are published in the investigation report and in the Chief Inspector's Annual Report to the Secretary of State. Although the recommendations carry no force of law, there is a requirement for recipients to report whether or not they accept the recommendation and, if accepted, how it will be taken forward. Comments received from recipients of recommendations that have been rejected or are partially accepted will normally be placed in the public domain via the Chief Inspector's Annual Report to the Secretary of State.





15 SAFETY MESSAGE

Spreading the safety message

Safety Bulletin

From time to time, urgent safety issues and recommendations need to be disseminated quickly to prevent a further similar accident. Such safety messages are promulgated via a Safety Bulletin.

Safety Flyer

The MAIB also produces safety flyers, which are published at the same time as an investigation report but which highlight the safety lessons specifically to the relevant sectors of the marine community.

Safety Digest

Twice a year, the MAIB publishes its Safety Digest. This is a free publication, available to all, but produced primarily for the maritime professional. The Safety Digest comprises a collection of short accounts of accidents and incidents but with the identifying details removed to make them anonymous. The articles are written in a concise style designed to highlight the safety issues and lessons learned from each event.

All the MAIB's publications can be viewed and downloaded in pdf format from the Branch's website. Printed copies are available free of charge from the Branch.

Presentations

MAIB personnel regularly give presentations at maritime colleges and to maritime related associations, institutes and clubs with the aim of spreading the safety message across the industry and, in particular, to the next generation of seafarers.

STATISTICS

The MAIB maintains a database of reportable accidents which have occurred since 1991. This provides an overview of trends in marine accidents and forms a comprehensive and readily accessible store of information. Statistics are published in the Chief Inspector's Annual Report to the Secretary of State.

CONTACT DETAILS

For further information about the MAIB, and for access to investigation reports and information go to our website or contact us at the address below:

Marine Accident Investigation Branch

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United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0)23 8039 5500

Email: iso@maib.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/maib

Data Protection

The MAIB carries out its work under the provisions of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2026. These Regulations, and Sections 259, 260 and 267 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 under which the Regulations were made, allow the MAIB to obtain any information that is necessary to carry out its investigation.

The MAIB's power to process personal data is compliant with the provisions of Article 6 1.(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) whereby "*processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller*". This is explained in more detail in Section 8 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

The MAIB uses the personal information described above for the purposes of the efficient conduct of its investigations. This information is protected from release by section 259(12) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 and the provisions of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2026 Regulation 15.

To read more on how GDPR affects the way we use and store your data go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/marine-accident-investigation-branch/about/personal-information-charter>

