

SAFETY FLYER TO THE RECREATIONAL CRAFT INDUSTRY

Allision of the rigid inflatable boat *Peaky Blinder* with a navigation beacon resulting in two fatalities in Portsmouth Harbour, England on 14 August 2025



Peaky Blinder

Narrative

On 14 August 2025, two people died when they were thrown into the water after the rigid inflatable boat *Peaky Blinder* allided with a navigation beacon in Portsmouth Harbour. The accident occurred when *Peaky Blinder* was returning from a social excursion to various locations in and around the Solent and Isle of Wight. Alcohol consumption featured centrally throughout the day.

None of the three friends on board were wearing a personal flotation device (PFD). The owner and one of his friends were injured in the accident and possibly rendered unconscious before they entered the water. The friend was recovered in the immediate aftermath of the accident, but could not be resuscitated. The owner sank from view, and his body was found 5 days later.

Safety lessons

1. The consumption of alcohol and the speed of *Peaky Blinder* were found to significantly contribute to the accident. However, had the people on board been wearing PFDs their chances of survival would have been higher.
2. The MAIB's investigation into the accident highlighted that the provision and use of PFDs in the pleasure boating community remains low, placing people at risk of serious harm should they unintentionally end up in the water.
3. A PFD may provide buoyancy to help keep the wearer's airway clear of the water and reduce fatigue while awaiting rescue. Some PFDs are designed to turn a person face up in the water if they are unconscious.
4. The MAIB strongly recommends that anyone in a boat wears a PFD where there is a possibility they may enter the water.

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 2026 – Regulation 5:

The sole objective of a safety investigation into an accident under these Regulations is the prevention of future accidents through the ascertainment of its causes and circumstances. It is not the purpose of such an 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 19(1) of The Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2026, shall be inadmissible in any judicial proceedings concerning liability unless the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents or a court of law determine otherwise.

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