MAIB

MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH

SAFETY FLYER TO THE YACHTING INDUSTRY

Foundering of the sailing yacht *Bayesian* with, the loss of seven lives, 0.5 nautical miles south-east of Porticello, Italy on 19 August 2024

Image from British Marine



Narrative

At 0406 on 19 August 2024, the private yacht *Bayesian* was knocked down in hurricane force winds. 15 people survived the accident, although one crew member and six passengers lost their lives as the vessel capsized and sank in 50m of water.

Bayesian was at anchor for the night, 0.5 nautical miles from Porticello, Italy, when it was knocked down onto its starboard side by extreme winds. Unable to right itself, the yacht flooded, capsized and sank. The surviving crew assisted six of the passengers clear of *Bayesian* as it foundered and manually released a liferaft. They delivered first aid to those injured before assisting in a search for any other survivors. The crew of the sailing vessel *Sir Robert Baden Powell* had seen the distress flares and sent their tender to investigate. They recovered the survivors from their liferaft. Recovery efforts were terminated on 23 August 2024.

Safety lessons

1. Knockdown of sailing vessels is a recognised hazard. The risk is generally managed by changing the apparent wind angle or letting go, reefing or dropping the sails. On *Bayesian*, when under sail, the risk was managed automatically through a system that monitored the sail loading and eased the sheets as necessary. However, the risk of knockdown still existed when *Bayesian* was not under sail, and this risk had not been recognised and guidance was lacking.

2. Thunderstorms were forecast for the night of 18/19 August 2024, but none of the information available to the crew on board provided guidance on the possible severity of the winds that could accompany them.

3. The MAIB advises owners, managers and crew on board large yachts to fully examine the vulnerability of their vessels to the effects of extreme weather. They should ensure that measures are in place to both recognise the potential for such weather, and ensure that onboard procedures account for any risks presented.

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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