

IIMS News Bulletin



JANUARY 2026

Welcome

to this month's news bulletin compiled by IIMS, the leading worldwide professional body for professional marine surveyors. Back editions of the news bulletins are available in PDF and eReader format at <https://bit.ly/3LQdDow>.

This monthly publication aims to keep members, non-members, and those who touch the surveying profession up to date with relevant industry news, the latest marine innovations and essential information for surveyors. For more information about the Institute, visit: www.iims.org.uk to discover a mine of valuable information - it is the most comprehensive online resource of its kind.

BROADCAST FROM THE BOW

- celebrating 35 years of excellence in marine surveying -



Dear member and fellow maritime professionals

Welcome to 2026 and a Happy New Year to you and your family. In a turbulent world, may it be a good one for you.

IIMS celebrates its 35th anniversary later this year. That's something to be proud of, and as an Institute we have come a long way in a little over a third of a century. I was curious to research and discover what a 35th wedding anniversary is known as. To my surprise and delight, I discovered it is referred to as a coral anniversary! The nautical connotations made it seem very appropriate indeed.

Last month leading up to the Christmas break flew by. But before the festive period well and truly took hold, IIMS delivered some meaningful training which attracted huge interest and many attendees. I have written a short report about this flurry of activity in this News Bulletin for those who were unable to participate.

Last year proved to be the busiest travel year for me, and we delivered some excellent conferences and seminars globally. This year offers far fewer long-haul airplane flights for me thankfully, but no lesser commitment to continuing to offer some excellent training opportunities. We will share a more detailed event plan in next month's News Bulletin. So, having said I have no plans for extensive travel, there is one exception, early in 2026. I am making the trip to co-host the annual IIMS Baltimore Conference to be held at the usual MITAGS facility on the city's outskirts on Friday 30th and Saturday 31st January.

As ever, James 'Randy' Renn and Ray Bracken have mined and assembled a great collection of speakers for your benefit. Join us face-to-face or remotely by Zoom. I look forward to seeing some of you there. For more details about the programme head to <https://bit.ly/4aykN8H>

In last month's News Bulletin, I referenced a number of new international maritime regulations coming into force from January 2026. The list is extensive. Forgive me for particularly highlighting the UK commercial under 24-metre small craft sector for a moment. The MCA's new Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code officially came into force on 12th December 2025. I have devoted some space to this fresh set of regulations because it marks the biggest shake-up in twenty-five years in this sector and replaces the long-established document MGN 280 (amongst others). The learning curve for the IIMS Certifying Authority is steep, just as it will be for coding scrutineers, examiners and, of course, vessel owners and operators too. The new code applies immediately to new coded vessels, but existing boats have up to 3 years to become compliant.

And finally, I wanted to point you towards Edition V of the Safety & Loss Prevention Briefings Compendium, which IIMS has published today. I had rather hoped this year's edition might be considerably smaller than previous years, but sadly we have noticed what seems to have been an unwelcome, sharp increase in the number of incidents and accidents at sea, on rivers and inland waterways in 2025. This publication brings it altogether in one place and is available to download now in PDF format at <https://bit.ly/4pKqd5n>. It really is a sobering read, but it has a place on every marine surveyor's electronic bookshelf, and I recommend it to you.



Survey well in 2026.

Mike Schwarz
Chief Executive Officer

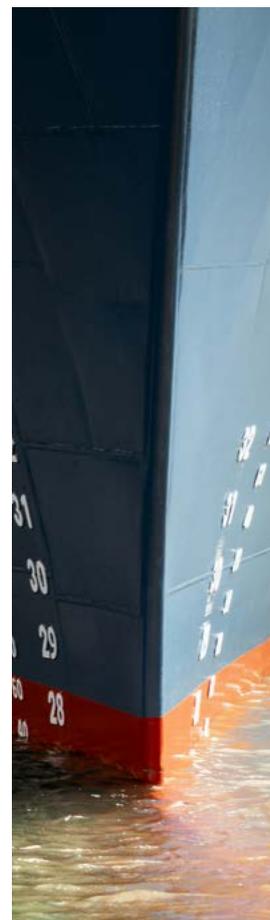
IIMS December training round-up

IIMS ended its training output last month with a busy spell in the run up to the Christmas holidays.

At the start of December, we held the third iteration of our Practical Surveying Course at the Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis. The event was sold out, and the 12 delegates made the most of the three and a half days, hands on surveying training, despite the best efforts of the weather to disrupt proceedings! Over the first three days, the group was given a walk-through of a surveyor's toolbox, courtesy of David Pestrige. The learners then had the opportunity to inspect three different vessel material types with aluminium, wooden and GRP hulls being available for survey under the watchful guidance of David, Geoff Waddington and Oli Byles. On the final morning, I popped down to talk through report writing structure with the group. Judging by the positive early feedback provided, it seems those who attended found the hands-on training of great value.

Later that month, Karen Brain, Matrix Insurance Services Ltd, hosted a lively session which attracted over 100 delegates entitled 'Report Discussion Seminar', not to be confused with the quarterly online Report Writing Seminars hosted by IIMS. Karen had taken a series of statements made in real reports for review and discussion. It provided considerable food for thought too.

And finally, I headed down to Plymouth in the Southwest UK to support local IIMS member, Nick Healey. He had gathered a sizeable group of local IIMS members and others for an evening seminar themed around the hot topic of lithium-ion batteries. I was pleased to present a non-technical overview of what we now know about this rapidly growing technology, which is the subject of much angst amongst surveyors. I was joined by Simon Firth from Pantaenius Insurance, who gave a very clear and concise overview from an insurer's perspective. The event was rounded off with a very pleasant supper, enjoyed by all.



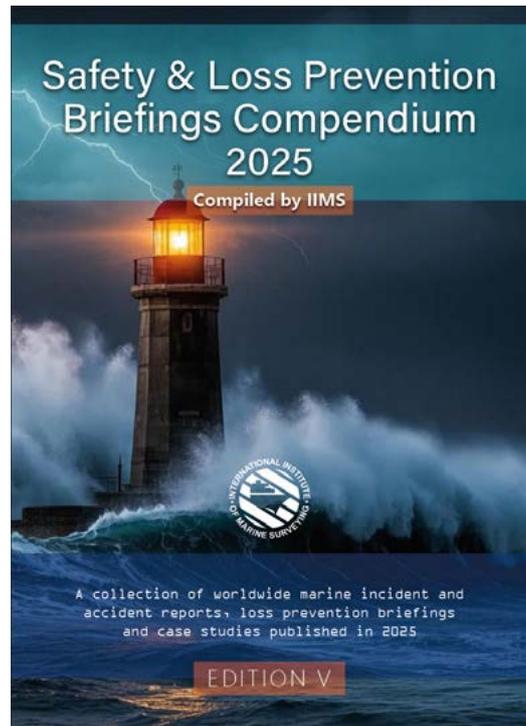
Mike Schwarz

IIMS releases Safety & Loss Prevention Briefings Compendium 2025

Edition V of the popular and informative IIMS Safety & Loss Prevention Briefings Compendium is now available to read.

The purpose of the Compendium is to bring together a collection of incident and accident reports that have emerged over the year and to share the learnings. This is coupled with vital loss prevention and safety information published by P&L Clubs and other relevant parties.

Karley Smith, Managing Master Mariner, Brookes Bell, who introduced the Compendium, said, "With the nature of modern cargoes constantly evolving and the volume of cargoes shipped increasing, it is important to share and combine our knowledge so that future incidents become more preventable. We look forward to continuing supporting and working with the IIMS, as we work towards a safer future together."



This year, the publication, out of necessity, includes a reduced Accident Calendar highlighting some of the most significant maritime accidents of the year. A separate Accident Calendar supplement, curated by Frances Birkett, has also been published featuring more than 500 incidents.

Of the fifth edition, Editor Mike Schwarz said, "The Compendium is a sad, sobering, yet essential read. As you browse and study the content, it will become apparent that many of the incidents and accidents were the result of human error and thus avoidable. It is important that we learn from the causes of these events. The seas and inland waterways continue to present significant dangers when complacency sets in.

"I never thought this Compendium would become such an important document which is much sought after judging by the comments I receive and the many thousands of resulting downloads."

In his introduction, IIMS President Capt Ruchin Dayal said, "The past year has once again reminded us that, despite the advances in technology and regulation, shipping remains a sector where risk is ever-present and must be respected. Fires linked to lithium-ion batteries and mis-declared cargoes, structural failures, navigational mishaps, and the continuing tragedy of enclosed space fatalities have all featured prominently in maritime incident reports. These events reinforce an uncomfortable but necessary truth: written procedures alone do not prevent accidents - the culture that surrounds their implementation does."

You can read this edition either by downloading the PDF:

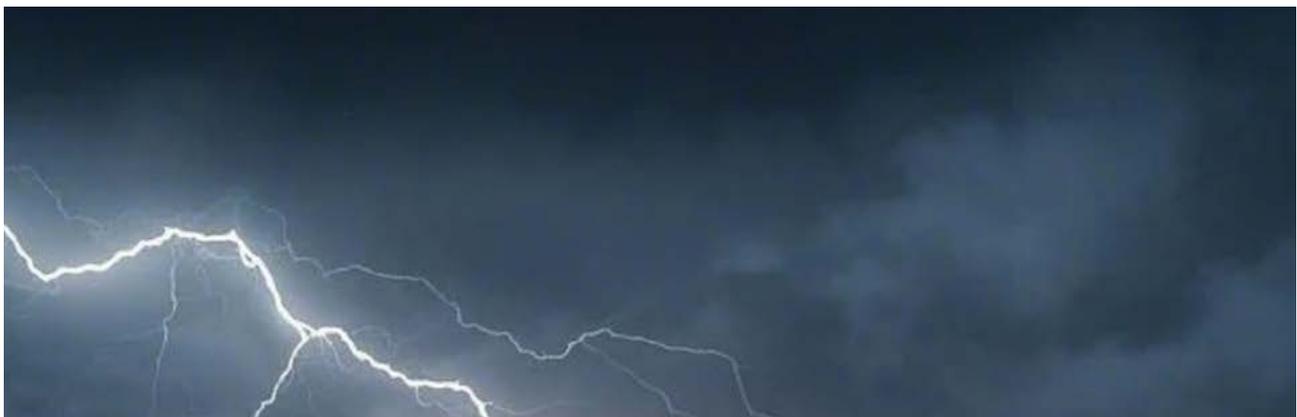
<https://bit.ly/4pKqd5n>

Or via eReader format here:

<https://bit.ly/4p8e74W>

Download the accident calendar supplement:

<https://bit.ly/4pP9Xjp>



Member news from Australia

By
Peter
Pope
MIIMS

In the run up to the Christmas festivities, Brisbane based IIMS member, Peter Pope, submitted a photo of their Christmas lunch. Three of the surveyors are graduates who Peter has trained himself and now mentors.

From left to right they are Peter Lewis (AIMS) and his partner Cindy, Dom O'Donnell (IIMS) and his wife Leah, Sarah and Tim Grant (IIMS), Peter and his wife Jan Pope.



Peter said, "I have assisted these three people to become marine surveyors through training and mentoring. They now work independently but can always rely on me for ongoing support and advice. It has been a pleasure to watch these three men become marine surveyors and they are the new, younger faces in the industry."

Andrew Moll (OBE) set to retire in February 2026

News has reached IIMS that Captain Andrew Moll has announced his retirement as Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents with the (Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) after nearly half a century of unbroken public service. He will formally leave the organisation in February 2026.

Andrew Moll joined the MAIB in 2005 as a Principal Inspector and was Deputy Chief Inspector from 2010 until he took up post as the Chief Inspector in 2018. He obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology through distance learning while working at the Branch in order to improve his understanding of human factors in marine accidents.

Prior to joining the MAIB, Andrew served 27 years as a deck officer in the Royal Navy. His career was largely sea-going, spent on destroyers and aircraft carriers. His commands included: the fast patrol boat SNV AL FULK, while on loan to the Omani Navy during the later stages of the Iran-Iraq war; the Type 42 destroyer, HMS YORK; and, the Type 22 frigate, HMS CHATHAM.

Andrew is one of the Younger Brethren of Trinity House, a Member of the Nautical Institute, and he is the Chairman of Trustees for Southampton Sea Cadets.

In a personal statement posted on LinkedIn, Andrew said, "After nearly 49 years of unbroken public service, 21 of those at the MAIB, I have decided it is time to retire. It has been a hard decision to take as I firmly believe that my job is one of the best and most rewarding in the marine industry. Further, it has been a real pleasure to work with so many talented people over the years, and I will definitely miss that. With every door that closes, another opens, and my plan for retirement is to commence a 40-week course at the Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis learning, unsurprisingly, to build boats!"

Andrew is regarded as a friend of IIMS, and we are grateful for the help he has given us and the interest he has shown in the Institute over many years. He will be a hard act to follow.





MCA publishes new Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code

Safety and innovation are at the heart of updated regulations for small commercial vessels used for sport or pleasure that was laid before Parliament on 20 November 2025 with application to be phased in from 12 December 2025 by the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), starting only with new vessels entering either code for the first time.

The new Merchant Shipping (Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure) Regulations 2025 will set clear, pragmatic standards across the sector by underpinning two codes of practice for vessels below and above 24 metres in length. The changes will apply gradually to more vessels as their certificates come up for renewal or within three years, whichever is longer. Some of the standards under which existing vessels have been assessed will continue to be accepted under the new code.

The Sport or Pleasure regulations provide a consistent framework that better reflects the commercial sector's growing variety of craft and activities – ranging from sailing vessels, including those engaged in racing activities and race support boats, to high-speed craft carrying passengers on sightseeing trips.

Important updates to the Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code include:

- responses to relevant safety recommendations by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch, including those relating to fatal incidents;
- an enabling regulatory framework for vessels using alternative fuels and propulsion, to help keep the UK at the forefront of decarbonising the shipping industry;
- support for technological innovation and further clarity of survey and inspection requirements for commercial owners and operators.

The changes follow at least two years of discussion between the MCA and commercial operators, manufacturers and industry bodies, including a 12-week consultation that concluded on 25 February and a stakeholders' conference on 15 May.

On behalf of IIMS, CEO, Mike Schwarz, said, "This is the most significant piece of new regulation to affect the under 24 metre commercially used sport and pleasure vessels for a quarter of a century. Whilst we broadly welcome the new Code, it will impose a significant step change for all those involved, from code examiners to vessel owners and operators."

Rob Taylor, MCA Code Vessel Lead, said, "This update is long overdue and will support commercial owners and operators by adding relevance and clarity to safety requirements for survey and inspection and innovation.

"These pragmatic changes recognise the development of standards and the significant shift in use of technology and the growing variety of craft and activities in the commercial sector since the Colour Codes and MGN 280 were first published, providing for all types of vessels: from racing sailing yachts to those used for high-speed passenger rides.

"The new code also critically addresses recommendations issued to the MCA by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch.

"We have spent several years engaging with stakeholders across the small commercial vessel sector. Conversations have shaped the new regulations, reflecting the growth, variety and new technology of vessels, which we want to help keep safe and thrive."

Download the code: <https://bit.ly/4pISQVU>

And here are some frequently asked questions about the new Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code prepared by the MCA



Safer lives,
safer ships,
cleaner seas

The Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code consolidates previous regulations into a single, clear framework, ensuring safer operations at sea while supporting innovation in vessel design and propulsion.

Application of the new requirements will be phased in from 12 December 2025.

To help owners and operators prepare, here are some frequently asked questions answered by a range of MCA policy experts.

The Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code

The Safety of Small Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure - A Code of Practice



1. What is the Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code?

The Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code is a comprehensive set of safety and compliance requirements for small vessels under 24 metres in commercial use for sport or pleasure, operating at sea, carrying no cargo and no more than 12 passengers.

It is enabled by the new Merchant Shipping (Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure) Regulations 2025, which also underpins a second, existing Code of Practice for Yachts over 24 metres (the REG Yacht Code).

2. Why was a new Code introduced?

The technology and practices of vessels in commercial use for sport or pleasure have changed considerably over the years. The new Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code provides a single, modernised standard aligned with current technology, safety practices and environmental considerations.

It consolidates and replaces previous Codes (Yellow, Blue, Red, and Intended Pleasure Vessel Codes) and Marine Guidance Note (MGN) 280 for sport or pleasure vessels.

3. Who does the Code apply to?

The Code applies to UK-registered small vessels in commercial use for sport or pleasure, and to non-UK vessels operating from UK ports while in UK waters.

The regulations define what a 'pleasure vessel' is but do not specifically define 'commercial'. "Commercial use" doesn't solely mean profit-making business operations. A vessel is considered to be operated commercially if it does not meet the definition of a pleasure vessel.

4. What types of vessels are excluded?

The Code does not apply to vessels operating underwater, hovercraft or vessels carrying cargo – even if they are in commercial use for sport or pleasure.

Other codes cover these types of vessels. For example, rescue boats follow the Rescue Boat Code and work boats follow the Work Boat Code.

5. When does the new Code come into force?

The Code enters into force on 12 December 2025. It applies to vessels whose keels are laid, or which are at a similar stage of construction, on or after that date.

Existing vessels will transition at their next scheduled renewal examination or within three years, whichever is longer. It means owners and operators have time to familiarise themselves with requirements.

6. What are the main changes compared to previous Codes?

- Changes include:
- a single consolidated Code for all vessels in commercial use for sport or pleasure.
 - updated technical standards for construction, stability and equipment.
 - provisions for hybrid and electric propulsion systems.
 - clearer requirements for examinations and certification.
 - enhanced safety management and risk assessment obligations.



7. How does the Code affect existing vessels?

Existing vessels with valid certificates can continue operating under transitional arrangements but must comply with updated requirements at renewal of certification, modification or within three years, whichever is longer.

8. Has the MCA consulted with owners and operators about the new Code?

The changes follow at least two years of discussion between the MCA and commercial operators, manufacturers and industry bodies. The regulations were subject to a 12-week consultation, whose launch was rescheduled to 4 December 2024 to ensure stakeholders were able to contribute further to the consultation documents. A post-consultation stakeholders' conference was hosted by the MCA on 15 May 2025.

9. What are the Code's area categories of operation?

The Code defines six area categories of operation, with different certification requirements for vessel design and equipment depending on the distance from a safe haven.

The greater the distance from a safe haven the vessel is operating, the more self-sufficient and resilient the vessel is required to be:

Category 6: within 3 miles of land and not more than 3 miles radius from either the point of departure to sea or the seaward boundary of categorised waters, in favourable weather and daylight.

Category 5: within 3 miles of land and not more than 3 miles radius from either the point of departure to sea or the seaward boundary of categorised waters in favourable weather.

Category 4: up to 20 miles from a safe haven, in favourable weather and in daylight.

Category 3: up to 20 miles from a safe haven.

Category 2: up to 60 miles from a safe haven.

Category 1: up to 150 miles from a safe haven.

Category 0: unrestricted service.

10. How is compliance enforced?

Compliance is verified through surveys and certification by the MCA or authorised Certifying Authorities. Certificates are valid for up to five years, subject to annual and intermediate examinations.

11. What happens if a vessel operates outside UK waters?

UK certificates may not be recognised abroad. Owners must check local requirements and may need additional certification. Guidance is available in MGN 416 (M) Amendment 1: Small commercial vessels operating in foreign waters.

12. Does the Code cover sports activities like diving or angling?

The Code focuses on vessel safety, not the specific sport or activity. Operators must also comply with any additional safety requirements set by relevant sporting bodies.

The Code sets out requirements to ensure the safety of a vessel and its occupants but does not specifically prescribe requirements relating to the sport or pleasure activities carried out on or undertaken from that vessel. Such activities may be subject to additional specific safety requirements, prescribed by the relevant water-based recreational organisation.

Activities which are in scope of the Code include:

- vessels engaged in racing and as race support boats.
- high-speed craft carrying passengers on sightseeing trips.
- vessels operating as beachcraft in commercial use i.e. personal watercraft.

13. Are operators and owners now banned from light-duties work boat opportunities? No.

Although the draft regulations did not specify small vessels in commercial use for sport or pleasure being able to carry out light duties as work boats, the Code now reflects the correct legal position of requiring certification under The Merchant Shipping (Small Workboats and Pilot Boats) Regulations 2023 and the applicable parts of Workboat Code Edition 3 where the rules are properly laid out.

14. Where can vessel owners find more information?

The full Code, supporting guidance, and related Merchant Shipping Notices are available on the MCA website.



NTSB: loose wire on containership Dali led to Scott Key Bridge collision

The US National Transportation Safety Board said a single loose wire on the Dali containership caused an electrical blackout that led to the vessel hitting the Francis Scott Key Bridge, which then collapsed, killing six highway workers.

At a public meeting, investigators said the loose wire in the ship's electrical system caused a breaker to unexpectedly open - beginning a sequence of events that led to two vessel blackouts and a loss of both propulsion and steering near the 2.37-mile-long Key Bridge on March 26, 2024. Investigators found that wire-label banding prevented the wire from being fully inserted into a terminal block spring-clamp gate, causing an inadequate connection.

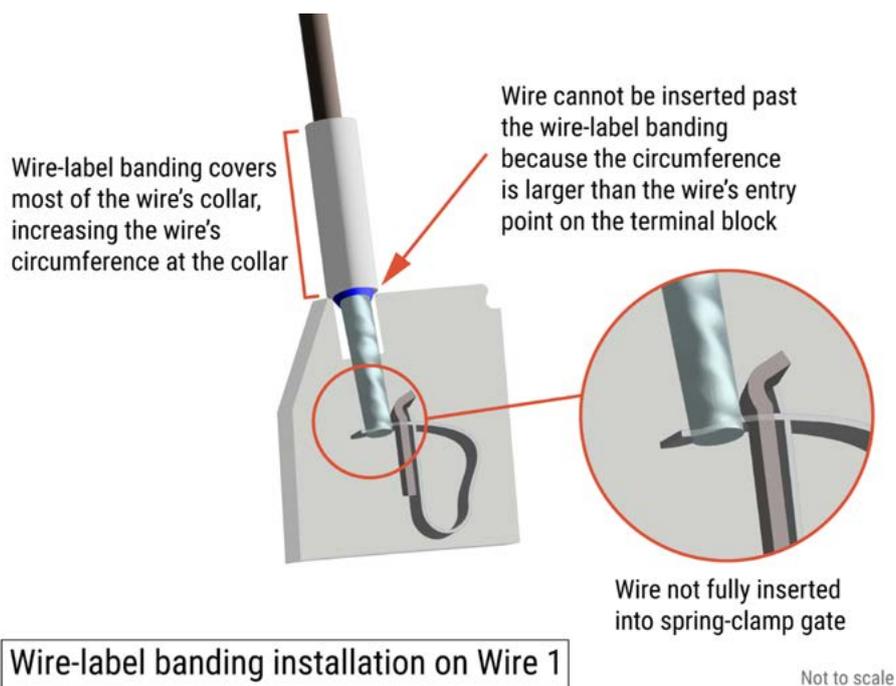
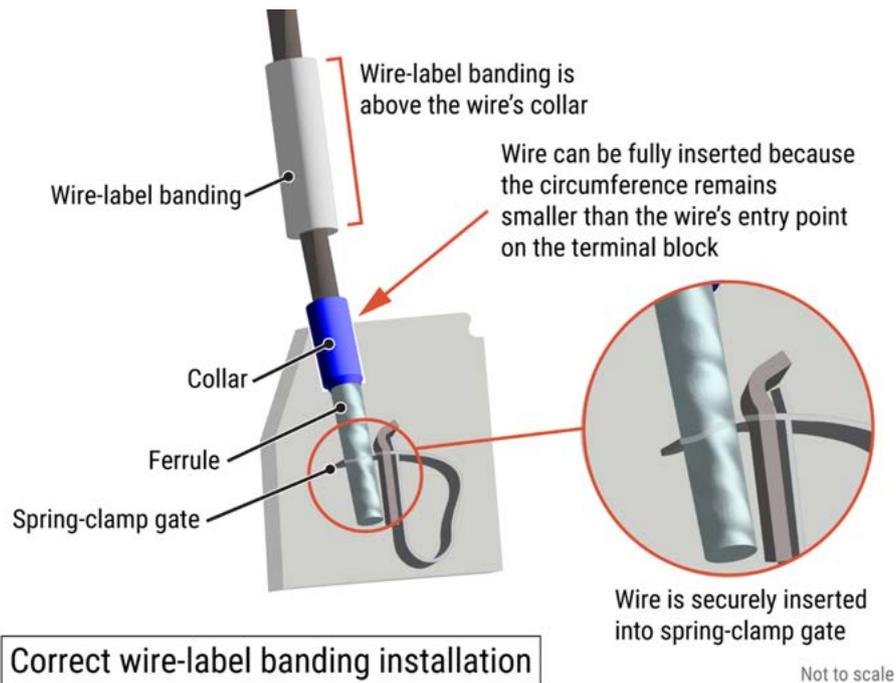


Illustration showing how placement of wire-label banding affects the way wires are seated in their terminal blocks. (Source: NTSB)

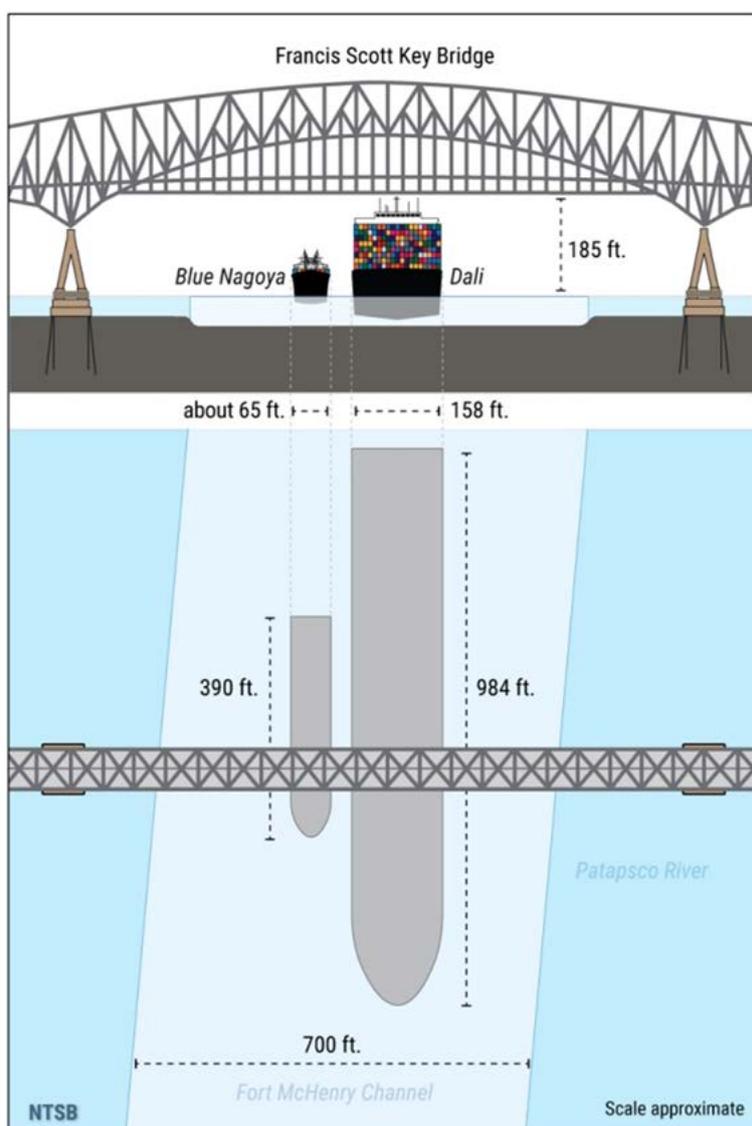
After the initial blackout, the Dali's heading began swinging to starboard toward Pier 17 of the Key Bridge. Investigators found that the pilots and the bridge team attempted to change the vessel's trajectory, but the loss of propulsion so close to the bridge rendered their actions ineffective. A substantial portion of the bridge subsequently collapsed into the river, and portions of the pier, deck and truss spans collapsed onto the vessel's bow and forwardmost container bays.

A seven-person road maintenance crew and one inspector were on the bridge when the vessel struck. Six of the highway workers died. The NTSB found that the quick actions of the Dali pilots, shoreside dispatchers and the Maryland Transportation Authority to stop bridge traffic prevented greater loss of life.

"Our investigators routinely accomplish the impossible, and this investigation is no different," said NTSB Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy. "The Dali, at almost 1,000 feet, is as long as the Eiffel Tower is high, with miles of wiring and thousands of electrical connections. Finding this single wire was like hunting for a loose rivet on the Eiffel Tower.

"But like all of the accidents we investigate, this was preventable," Homendy said. "Implementing NTSB recommendations in this investigation will prevent similar tragedies in the future."

Contributing to the collapse of the Key Bridge and the loss of life was the lack of countermeasures to reduce the bridge's vulnerability to collapse due to impact by ocean-going vessels, which have only grown larger since the Key Bridge's opening in 1977. When the Japan-flagged containership Blue Nagoya contacted the Key Bridge after losing propulsion in 1980, the 390-foot-long vessel caused only minor damage. The Dali, however, is 10 times the size of the Blue Nagoya.



Source: NTSB

As part of the investigation, the NTSB in March released an initial report on the vulnerability of bridges nationwide to large vessel strikes. The report found that the Maryland Transportation Authority—and many other owners of bridges spanning navigable waterways used by ocean-going vessels—were likely unaware of the potential risk that a vessel collision could pose to their structures. This was despite longstanding guidance from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials recommending that bridge owners perform these assessments.

The NTSB sent letters to 30 bridge owners identified in the report, urging them to evaluate their bridges and, if needed, develop plans to reduce risks. All recipients have since responded, and the status of each recommendation is available on the NTSB's website.

As a result of the investigation, the NTSB issued new safety recommendations to the US Coast Guard; US Federal Highway Administration; the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials; the Nippon Kaiji Kyokai (ClassNK); the American National Standards Institute; the American National Standards Institute Accredited Standards Committee on Safety in Construction and Demolitions Operations A10; HD Hyundai Heavy Industries; Synergy Marine Pte. Ltd; and WAGO Corporation, the electrical component manufacturer; and multiple bridge owners across the nation.

MCA certifying authority updates

Please see below for amendments, guidance, and advice from the UK Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) published October/November 2025.

The Hovercraft (Application of Enactments) (Amendment) Order 2025 | UK Statutory Instruments 2025 No. 1094

This Order amends the Hovercraft (Application of Enactments) Order 1989 so as to extend the application of certain provisions in or made under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 which apply in relation to ships and to hovercraft. [Find out more](#)

MIN 727 (M+F) - Marine Office and Customer Service - Telephone Number Changes

Some Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) customer-facing telephone numbers are changing. All new phone numbers are operational as of the date of this notice, for local marine offices and some other MCA services.

[Find out more](#)

AN1039 - Guidance on the Use of Sodium-Ion Batteries

This notice provides guidance and advice to MCA surveyors and colleagues on the use of sodium-ion batteries for use as a source of power for propulsion or house loads.

MGN 669 (M+F) - The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 2010 as Amended (Amendment 3)

Guidance to interpret the Asbestos Regulations and subsequent amendment on legal responsibilities and duties of employers for the health and safety of workers. [Find out more](#)

MGN 410 (M+F) - The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) (Work at Height) Regulations 2010 (Amendment 4)

This notice concerns the protection of maritime workers from the risks associated with working at height. [Find out more](#)

MSN 1838 (M) Amendment 2 MLC, 2006 Minimum Age

Information on the minimum age for seafarers and the protection of young seafarers (under 18 years) working on board UK ships. [Find out more](#)



ABS and Persona AI partnership to bring humanoid robotics to shipyards



Conceptual image courtesy of Persona AI

A collaboration to develop inspection technologies for Persona AI's humanoid robot platform was formalized with the signing of an MOU between ABS and Persona AI.

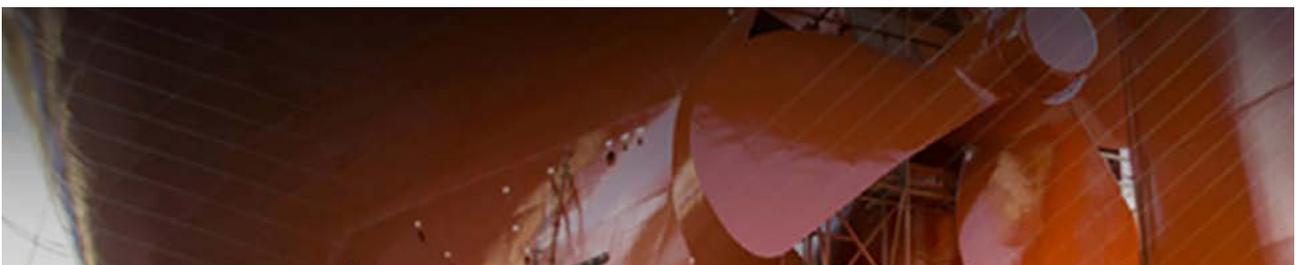
The initiative will focus on adapting Persona AI's humanoid robots, based in part on NASA's robotic hand technology, for a range of shipyard tasks. Unlike traditional industrial robots, humanoid robots are uniquely suited to operate in shipyards designed for human workers, offering flexibility and mobility in complex, confined, or ergonomically challenging spaces.

Under the MOU, ABS and Persona AI will collaborate on a series of joint development projects, collecting data to support classification during ship construction.

Ultimately, it will support development of new ABS standards for the types and quality of data required to support digital and remote survey techniques. These standards will not only guide future robot design but also help understand how to collect, evaluate, and apply robotic data for certification and compliance purposes.

"ABS is proud to lead the way in advancing the safe integration of emerging technologies into the maritime industry," said John McDonald, ABS President and Chief Operating Officer. "This collaboration with Persona AI reflects our commitment to innovation and safety, as we work to establish the standards and protocols that will enable humanoid robots to perform complex tasks reliably and securely in shipyard environments. By combining cutting-edge robotics with ABS's deep expertise in certification and safety, we're helping shape a smarter, safer future for shipbuilding."

Nic Radford, CEO and Co-Founder of Persona AI said, "This marks a defining moment for the shipbuilding industry. Partnering with ABS, the global authority on maritime standards, demonstrates that humanoid robotics are no longer a distant concept but on a path toward certified reality, set to transform how this industry builds, innovates, and competes."



ATSB investigation into serious fall injury in engine room of Spirit of Tasmania 1



Gopal Vijayaraghavan (via Wikimedia Commons) CC BY 2.0

Safety management system procedures were not effectively implemented when the Spirit of Tasmania I's second engineer was seriously injured in a fall during engine maintenance earlier this year, said the final report from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

What happened

At about 0600 on 6 March 2025, the second engineer of Spirit of Tasmania I began a routine oil change on one of the ship's main engine turbochargers. Problems were encountered during the oil change, and it was decided to replace the turbocharger's bearing housing cover plate. This significant change to the scope of work required access to the top of the engine.

The second engineer and another engineer on duty then carried out the work, which took longer than expected and required both to climb on and off the engine top several times. At 0815, while climbing off the engine, the second engineer slipped and fell heavily, resulting in serious injury.

What the ATSB found

The ATSB investigation found that, while access to the top of the engine was regularly required, there was no access ladder or platform nor was a standard safe route defined or used. Consequently, the injured second engineer used an unsafe access route along the engine rocker covers at the time of the accident.

The investigation also identified that although the shipboard safety management system required that the change of work scope necessitated a review of the Job Safety Analysis (JSA) and/or completing a new prestart safety checklist (Take 5), neither was undertaken due to perceived time pressure and a perception that the work was low risk, resulting in the risk of a fall not being properly considered.

In addition, the ATSB found that the JSA procedure was not effectively implemented on board. This resulted in there being no JSA in place for the work being done at the time of the incident. Further, the JSAs covering other work on top of the engine did not address the risks involved in accessing the engine top.

What has been done as a result

The ship's managers, TT-Line Company (TT-Line), reacted proactively to the accident and put in place several engineering and procedural measures to reduce the risk of falls from the engine top and general access risks. TT-line has provided a removable work platform for safe access to the top of the engines for both sister ships, Spirit of Tasmania I and II. The JSAs related to work on turbochargers and the exhaust manifold have been updated to include the access risk. The updated JSA also includes a restriction on routine maintenance



of critical equipment during short duration port calls, reducing time pressure constraints in case of unforeseen problems.

Additionally, modifications have been made to the bearing housing cover plates, reducing the need for personnel to access the engine top for ad hoc repairs.

Safety message

The ATSB has investigated numerous occurrences involving unsafe working practices on board ships. Many of these resulted in serious or fatal injury(s) due to falls from height, machinery or equipment falling, explosions and other hazardous occurrences. A recurring factor in such incidents is the people involved in the work not recognising the hazards involved and/or they considered the work routine and low risk. In addition, risk assessment and mitigation are often not done or ineffective.

This investigation highlights the importance of effective risk controls, which requires staff at all levels on board and ashore to contribute towards the effective implementation of the shipboard safety management system.

Download the full report: <https://bit.ly/3MtaFnQ>

AMSA survey on fire safety standards now open

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is still asking for feedback on proposed changes to the National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV) Part C4 – Fire safety.

The consultation focuses on a range of proposed changes that aim to make the standard clearer, more practical, and better suited to today's risks and technologies.

Surveyors, designers, vessel DCV owners and operators have until Friday 6 February 2026 to read the draft and to give their feedback on the proposed changes.

Key changes include:

- Fire safety requirements for lithium battery technology
- Introduction of a "medium machinery space" category for machinery spaces over 10 m³.
- Expanding vessel spaces to explicitly include toys, tenders and equipment with petrol engines and lithium batteries
- Requiring interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms in accommodation and other relevant spaces on some vessels
- Providing alternative replacements for selected fire extinguishers
- Clarify fire resisting division standards and fuel tank boundary requirements
- Fire performance benchmarks for certain vessel fittings
- Clarify regulation of wood-fired heaters
- Editorial amendments resolving outdated references and providing clarity where required.

Have your say: <https://bit.ly/4pqyWcG>



ITIC Year Book celebrates 100 years

ITIC's focus remains firmly on the future as it rounds out its centenary anniversary with the 100th edition of the ITIC Year Book.

The Year Book provides a complete overview of ITIC for members and insurance brokers. It includes the financial highlights, details on the claims trends and the underwriting response, along with a summary of the publications issued.

Download the PDF: <https://bit.ly/490qUkY>

MARINE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY INVESTIGATION REPORT M23C0257

Fatal Silver Condor sinking reflects long-standing safety issues in commercial fishing

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) has published its final investigation report into the sinking of the fishing vessel Silver Condor, which resulted in the deaths of three crew members near La Tabatière, Quebec.

What happened

On 24 September 2023, the fishing vessel Silver Condor, with 6 people on board, began its return trip to port after fishing for redfish. Around midnight on 25 September, the vessel started listing to port and sinking by the stern; as the vessel sank, all people on board entered the water.

At 0230, search and rescue authorities received a signal from the Silver Condor's emergency position-indicating radio beacon. After trying to contact the vessel without success, a search was launched using several vessels and aircraft. All the people were eventually recovered from the water and brought to the hospital in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador. Three of the people were treated for hypothermia and other injuries, and the other 3 were declared dead. The vessel was not recovered.

Findings

These are the factors that were found to have caused or contributed to the occurrence:

- The vessel was likely operated beyond its stability limits, reducing its freeboard and its reserve buoyancy, which contributed to its sinking when the sea state degraded.
- Not all of the vessel's immersion suits were accessible as the vessel sank; consequently, a crew member donned only a life jacket and, after being exposed to the cold water environment, he became hypothermic and died.
- The way the life raft was stored likely prevented it from floating freely when the vessel sank by the stern. Consequently, the life raft was inaccessible to the complement as they abandoned ship, and they were then exposed to the elements.
- Crew members had to don their immersion suits quickly because the vessel was rapidly sinking; consequently, 2 crew members did not don their suits properly and were exposed to cold water without adequate protection, which contributed to their deaths.
- The master was acutely fatigued, which likely reduced his ability to recognize and respond to the unfolding emergency.

These are the factors in the occurrence that were found to pose a risk to the transportation system. These factors may or may not have been causal or contributing to the occurrence but could pose a risk in the future:

- If the maximum weight of catch for safe loading of a fishing vessel is not readily available and shared among all crew members on board, there is a risk that the vessel will be overloaded and that its stability will be compromised.
- If operational decisions are made according to a perception of vessel safety rather than validated limits, there is a risk that the vessel will be operated in a manner that may compromise its safety.
- If personnel working on board a vessel do not regularly practise responding to emergencies with drills that include realistic scenarios, there is a risk that they will not respond effectively in an actual emergency.
- If personnel on board a vessel have not been familiarized with activating the vessel's distress alerting devices, the personnel might not be able to transmit an emergency signal, creating a risk that the emergency response will not be timely.
- If there are gaps in actual radio coverage from coast stations in sea area A1, there is a risk that mariners will not be able to communicate with those stations, which could impede or delay response in an emergency.
- If the regulatory oversight of radio equipment installation and maintenance is ineffective, equipment deficiencies can remain unidentified, creating a risk that emergency communications will be impacted.
- If the complement of a fishing vessel works without sufficient periods of rest, there is a risk that they will not be able to respond effectively to an emergency.

These findings resolve an issue of controversy, identify a mitigating circumstance, or acknowledge a noteworthy element of the occurrence:

- At the time of the occurrence, the vessel's safety inspection certificate issued by Transport Canada was expired. The certificate was not valid when the Department of Fisheries and Oceans granted an experimental fishing licence to the vessel.
- The master had been medically restricted from performing watchkeeping duties. However, during the occurrence voyage, he kept watch alone during the day and at night when the Marine Personnel Regulations required a certified watchkeeper and 1 other crew member to be on watch during periods of darkness.

In a news release, TSB added commercial fishing continues to rank among the most dangerous occupations in Canada and remains on the TSB's Watchlist due to persistent risks. This accident reflects long-standing safety issues in the industry and reinforces the need for improved day-to-day safety practices, such as operating within validated stability limits, ensuring ready access to lifesaving equipment, and conducting realistic drills to improve survivability when things go wrong at sea.

Download the full report: <https://bit.ly/4o1smYC>



BoatUS Foundation launches first national database to track abandoned boats across US

The non-profit BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water has developed a database that will identify and track the locations of abandoned and derelict vessels (ADV) across the US, its territories and freely associated.

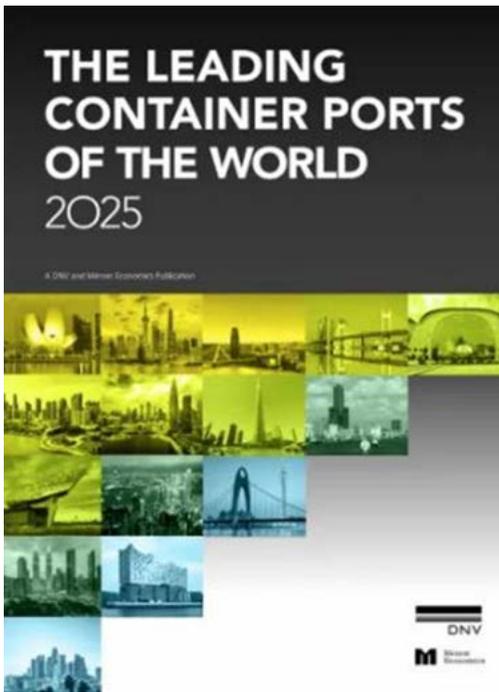
Created in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program, this national database will allow visitors to report abandoned and derelict vessels on their coastlines, allowing the issue to be better understood on a national scale with the support of the public. Eventually, this database will be able to track the impacts of removal and prevention efforts by showing how the number of ADVs across the country may one day decrease.

Abandoned and derelict vessels can crush or smother sensitive plants and corals, leach fuel and other pollutants into the water, threaten safe navigation, and contribute to economic losses. Removing ADVs is a costly effort, often averaging more than \$24,000 to remove a single boat, according to BoatUS.

BoatUS Foundation Director of Outreach Alanna Keating said, "When we finally understand the scope of the problem, communities all over the country will be better able to remove abandoned and derelict vessels on their local coastlines.

"With the information the database provides, they will be able to know exactly where they need to dedicate resources, whether that be towards removing vessels or preventing them from becoming abandoned in the first place. This database is just one part of our critical work that could help make ADVs a thing of the past."

Along with the database, the BoatUS Foundation awarded grants this year to support ADV removal efforts across Alaska, Guam, Louisiana, Maine, North Carolina, Oregon, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Washington.



DNV highlights leading container ports of the world

Singapore is the world's leading container port according to a new report published by DNV and Menon Economics.

The first edition of the Leading Container Ports of the World (LCP) report also showed that Shanghai and Ningbo-Zhoushan in second and third place, with Rotterdam and Busan completing the global top five.

Maritime transport carries close to 90 percent of global trade by volume, and container ports alone handle more than 80 percent of non-bulk merchandise. Today, these ports are undergoing a profound transformation, driven by rising trade flows, rapid advances in technology, and mounting pressure to meet climate targets.

Against this backdrop, DNV and Menon Economics have introduced the industry's first global container port ranking.

The LCP report compares leading practices of 160 ports against 35 indicators grouped into five pillars: enablers, connectivity and customer value, productivity, sustainability, and overall impact. These indicators are based on objective data, such as throughput volumes, berth productivity, emissions per Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit (TEU), and alternative fuel availability, and are complemented by expert assessments from leading shipping stakeholders. The LCP ranking complements other reports, such as the Leading Maritime Cities of the World (LMC) report, by providing a focused assessment of container port performance.

Knut Ørbeck-Nilssen, CEO Maritime at DNV, commented, "Container ports quietly underpin much of the global economy. Every year, they move more than 930 million TEUs, supporting the flow of goods that keep businesses running and communities supplied. As global trade patterns shift and the industry faces new pressures, ports that are able to adapt, communicate clear strategies, and invest in future-proofing their operations will continue to lead and set the pace for the sector's evolution. This report aims to provide trusted insights that help ports and stakeholders navigate these changes with confidence."

The report recommends that ports invest in scalable infrastructure, accelerate digitalization, and lead on sustainability while maintaining strong customer relationships and building resilience against disruptions. Clear strategic planning and transparent communication are essential for ports aiming to secure long-term competitiveness.

Port Authorities play a critical role in shaping the future of container ports. Forward-thinking strategies that prioritize productivity, service quality, digitalization and sustainability are essential for long-term competitiveness. While some ports did not rank among the top due to overall performance indicators, many port authorities across regions demonstrate a forward leaning mindset and are actively investing to close these gaps, a trend clearly reflected in the report.

Dr. Erik Jakobsen, Partner and Chair of Menon Economics, added: "The top-performing container ports are both expanding capacity and rethinking how technology shapes daily operations. We see ports where automation and digital tools are woven into every process, from vessel scheduling to cargo handling. Investments in cleaner energy and integrated transport links are also making a difference, helping ports operate more efficiently and adapt to new demands."

Download the report: <https://bit.ly/4oJIZbN>

Global top five container ports:

1. Singapore 2. Shanghai (China) 3. Ningbo-Zhoushan (China) 4. Busan (South Korea) 5. Rotterdam (Europe)



MAIB publishes preliminary report on scrap metal fire on bulk carrier Altay



Noxious cloud caused by cargo fire. Image courtesy of Humberside Fire & Rescue Service

A report regarding a scrap metal fire in the cargo hold of bulk carrier Altay has highlighted the importance of cargo loading monitoring and cargo pre-loading inspection.

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has released a preliminary assessment of the incident which took place in 2025. Nearby residents and business owners had been advised to keep their doors and windows securely closed while firefighters tackled the blaze.

What happened

On the morning of 27 June 2025, the Marshall Islands registered bulk carrier Altay was loading scrap metal into its aft cargo hold at Albert Dock, Hull, England.

At 0948, the master observed smoke rising from the cargo and immediately activated the general alarm and called for the shore grab operator to discharge cargo to remove or expose the source of the fire. Meanwhile, the crew mustered and prepared firefighting equipment.

By 0958, two firefighting teams had proceeded to the aft cargo hold to apply water from the port and starboard sides. Additionally, other crew members cleaned the hatch coamings ready for the hatch covers to be closed if necessary. Ashore, the terminal supervisor called the emergency services.

At 1030, several shore fire and rescue service appliances arrived and, after coordinating with Altay's master, started firefighting. Altay's crew evacuated the vessel and, from the quayside, the master and chief officer monitored the vessel's draught and checked the vessel's stability was not compromised by water from the firefighting.

The smoke and continuously evaporating water created a noxious cloud that drifted over the local area. At 1215, the fire and rescue service issued a safety alert advising nearby residents and businesses to close windows and doors and remain inside. Consequently, several businesses and two main roads were temporarily closed. The fire was extinguished in the early hours of 28 June. There were no injuries and there was no loss of life. Over several days, Altay discharged the contaminated firefighting water from the hold into road tankers for disposal. The scrap cargo was discharged and surveyed to check its composition. On 14 July 2025, the ship was surveyed for damage. Significant heat damage was found to structural steelwork in the aft cargo hold. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency attended and permitted Altay to leave port on 27 July and proceed to a drydock in Turkey for repairs.

Findings

The fire was likely caused by an undischarged battery or other ignition source, causing a spark during loading that ignited combustible material in the scrap cargo.

The scrap cargo had been collected from several sources and the recipient company, The Griffiths Group Limited, expected its suppliers to screen their product to remove hazardous material such as combustibles and batteries.

Deliveries of scrap cargo to Hull were visually checked on arrival. There was no additional sorting and screening facility to ensure that contaminants were not present.

The cargo had been classified as group C scrap metal under the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code, which did not require the shipper to declare hazard identification and cargo composition. However, the scrap cargo contained hazardous impurities, including batteries, oil drums, and oily residues, which posed a fire risk.

Actions taken

Altay's operator, Beyaz Denizcilik Ltd Şti, has:

- arranged repairs to the vessel
- highlighted to its crews the importance of cargo loading monitoring and cargo pre-loading inspection.

The owner of the cargo loading facility, The Griffiths Group Limited, ceased trading following the incident.



ClassNK publishes third edition of Guidelines for Ships Using Alternative Fuels

ClassNK has released Part A Guidelines for Ships Using Alternative Fuels (Edition 3.0.1).

This edition includes supplementary explanations about interpretations of safety requirements for methyl/ethyl alcohol-fueled ships, as well as compiled key points on required plans and documents, and class survey items specifically for such vessels.

Part A (Edition 3.0.1) added supplementary explanations for key design topics that have attracted particular attention in shipbuilding, through utilizing the knowledge and experience gained from design review activities and further clarifying the interpretation of safety requirements for methyl/ethyl alcohol-fueled ships.

As part of the recent trends in methyl/ethyl alcohol-fueled ships, discussions on the revision of the IMO Interim Guidelines, which form the basis of Part A, are scheduled to take place at the 12th session of the IMO Subcommittee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers in September 2026.

You can download the guidelines via ClassNK's website: https://www.classnk.or.jp/hp/en/press_release.aspx



RETROFITS for ENERGY AND EMISSIONS IMPROVEMENT



ABS releases report on retrofitting for alternative fuel use and energy efficiency

ABS' new Retrofits for Energy and Emissions Improvement publication provides insights into best practices, incentive scenarios, and a market update on energy efficiency technologies (EETs) and retrofits.

The report identifies the classification and statutory requirements shipowners and managers must understand before considering retrofitting vessels to use alternative fuels and energy efficiency technologies (EETs).

This comes in light of regulations from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the European Union (EU) are shaping how the maritime industry tackles greenhouse gas emissions.

Retrofitting for alternative fuels and EETs offers the maritime industry a crucial pathway to extending the life of existing and near-term newbuild vessels in the face of increasingly stringent regulations.

This publication provides the industry with a clear understanding of classification and statutory requirements for retrofitting, explores options for improving efficiency, and offers best practices and market insights to support informed decision-making.

When considering retrofits, shipowners must:

- Never compromise on safety.
- Understand the applicability of current regulations and those coming into force.
- Assess the present performance of shipboard systems and identify energy savings from specific improvements based on a vessel's operational characteristics.
- Predict the savings of additional EETs for anticipated operating conditions through modeling and simulation (route and AIS-based simulations).
- Identify and address potential hazards for the vessel and crew through HAZID and HAZOP workshops.
- Evaluate the savings based on in-service measurements through vessel performance modeling and analysis.
- Optimize the energy demand by deploying mathematical techniques ranging from CFD (e.g., bulbous bow optimization study) to non-heuristic optimization algorithms (e.g., voyage optimization study).

Download the PDF: <https://bit.ly/4a0Kvmb>



Gas carrier's blackout due to generator issue in port of Brisbane



A gas tanker had just left its berth at the Port of Brisbane when it lost propulsion for two minutes as two of its three electrical generators were not properly configured, according to an Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) final report.

What happened

At 1100 local time on 15 March 2025, Gaschem Homer was departing for sea from its berth in the port of Brisbane, Queensland, under the conduct of a harbour pilot. At 1104, while the ship was being turned towards the port's entrance, it experienced an electrical blackout, resulting in the total loss of propulsion and steering control. About two minutes later, the crew restored the electrical power. The incident did not result in damage or injury.

What the ATSB found

The ATSB found that, during departure preparations, the crew had forgotten to switch two of the ship's three generators to automatic mode. As a result, the ship's power management system was unable to automatically distribute electrical load across all generators, restricting generating capacity to only one generator. The increased power demand when the bow thruster was operated during departure manoeuvring could not be supported by the single generator and it tripped on overload, causing the blackout.

The investigation also identified a safety issue relating to the shipboard safety management system, which had not identified operational risks associated with Gaschem Homer's electrical installations and implemented effective controls. Procedures were generic and non-informative and there were no other controls in place to prevent such operational lapses resulting in a power failure.

What has been done as a result

The ship manager, Hartmann Gas Carriers, risk-assessed potential failure modes associated with its ships' power management systems and established additional controls to prevent total power failures. The shipboard safety management system(s) has been amended to include guidelines for blackout prevention and procedures requiring generators to be set for automatic load sharing before manoeuvring.

Pre-departure and arrival checklists for the engine room and bridge were amended to include verification of generator mode status. To supplement these updates, a power demand matrix has been developed to specify the minimum number of generators required to be online for each operational mode.

In addition, the company has introduced targeted training for watchkeeping engineers on critical power management and monitoring tasks, along with enhanced bridge and engine room information exchange protocols, as further controls against power failures.

The ATSB considers that the safety action adequately addresses the safety issue.

Safety message

This incident highlights the importance of ensuring all risks associated with shipboard operations and critical equipment are identified, assessed and effectively controlled. The safety management system should encompass up-to-date and useable ship-specific procedures, as well as any additional technical controls if procedural barriers alone are insufficient to mitigate risk.

Download the full report: <https://bit.ly/4iL7y6R>



8-10 October 2024 – Med MoU 26th PSC Committee – Online meeting



3rd – 4th July 2024 – Med MoU MAB33 meeting – Lija, Malta

Mediterranean MoU Annual Report 2024

The Mediterranean MoU has published its Annual Report on Port State Control in the Mediterranean region for 2024.

In the report, it said its 11 member states carried out 5,993 inspections on 4,907 individual ships, and the number of detentions increased by 20% to record 196 detentions in 2024.

Out of these inspections, 61% of the inspections (3,661) recorded with deficiencies, the total number of detainable deficiencies recorded was 1,290 deficiencies—16% of those deficiencies were related to Recognised Organisations.

Inspections

With a total number of 5,993 inspections performed in 2024, the inspection figures showed an increase of 17 inspections (0.3%) compared with the figures of 2023. The greatest contribution for inspections was from Türkiye with 2,483 inspections then from Egypt with 1,287 inspections.

The greatest percentage of inspections was in the "General cargo/multipurpose ship" with 2,207 inspections (36.8% of all inspections) and "Bulk carrier" recorded 1,948 inspections (32.5%).

Detentions

The detention figures showed a significant increase in the number of detentions in 2024 compared with 2023. The average detention rate in 2024 is 3.3%, which is higher than 2023, which showed a detention rate of 2.6%. The greatest percentage of detentions was on "General cargo/multipurpose ship" with 135 detentions (69% of total number of detentions) and the "Bulk carrier" recorded 25 detentions (13%).

Deficiencies

The number of deficiencies recorded was 15,156 deficiencies; in 2024, this number decreased by (17%) compared with 2023. The greatest number of deficiencies recorded was on "General cargo/multipurpose ship" which recorded 8,694 deficiencies, and "Bulk carrier" recorded 2,933 deficiencies. The number of inspections with deficiencies came to 3,661.

The most unfavorable deficiency area is "Certificate & Documentation" which recorded 2,327 times during 5,993 inspections in 2024, and the "safety of navigation" which was recorded 1,961 times.

6% of inspections with deficiencies (222 inspection) were recorded on ships with age less than 10 years, 34% (1,250) inspection with deficiencies on ships with age between 10 to 20 years, and 60% (2,189) inspections with deficiencies on ship with age greater than 20 years.

Flag performance

The most inspected flag was Panama with 967 inspections—602 inspections recorded with deficiencies and detentions rate was 3%. Liberia inspected 800 times and 400 inspections recorded with deficiencies and detentions rate was 1%.

Download the PDF: <https://bit.ly/3MxUyFs>

TSB Canada highlights importance of safeguards to prevent accidental lifeboat releases

The free-fall lifeboat stowed on the launching structure and the lifeboat access platform. Source: TSB
The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) is urging stronger safety measures after a crew member was seriously injured aboard the bulk carrier Golden Zhejiang's lifeboat in 2023. The TSB highlights the need for proper procedures for risk assessments, equipment-specific training, and a safety management system supported by a mature safety culture with a trusted process for communication between crew and shore personnel.

What happened

On September 2, 2023, the second and fourth engineers were carrying out a weekly safety check of the Golden Zhejiang's free-fall lifeboat, while the vessel was anchored in Trincomali Channel, British Columbia. During the check, the second engineer encountered an issue while testing the steering from inside the lifeboat and attempted to troubleshoot the problem. In the process, the main release mechanism was inadvertently activated. The sudden drop caused the securing cables to fail, sending the lifeboat into the water with the second engineer inside. As he was not secured in a seat, the second engineer sustained serious injuries.

Findings

These are conditions, acts or safety deficiencies that were found to have caused or contributed to this occurrence:

- The Golden Zhejiang's safety management system did not explicitly require a risk assessment before entering the free-fall lifeboat to conduct a safety check. Consequently, the fourth engineer and the second engineer began the weekly safety check without assessing the risks of the boat inadvertently being released.
- The cables securing the lifeboat to the launching structure were not engineered and certified as load-bearing cables. Consequently, they were not safe for the intended use.
- When the lifeboat was inadvertently released, the securing cables failed, causing the lifeboat to fall into the water with the second engineer inside. The second engineer was not secured in a seat and was seriously injured during the impact.

Following the incident, the vessel operator, Columbia Shipmanagement Ltd., implemented safety enhancements, including updated lifeboat labelling, revised familiarization checklists and work instructions, and installation of securing turnbuckles. This occurrence was also used as a case study in crew training seminars, and the scope of ship visits by shore management personnel was extended to include crew awareness of free-fall lifeboat safety.

Download the full report: <https://bit.ly/4oVzZB9>

The bulk carrier Golden Zhejiang (Source: TSB)





Two persons overboard from the standby safety vessel Vos Tracker during maintenance of the fast rescue craft

What happened

At 0800 on 25 August 2025, the deck crew of the offshore emergency rescue and response vessel Vos Tracker conducted a toolbox talk to discuss the day's maintenance tasks. Planned work included the replacement of the lifting strops for the two fast rescue craft (FRC). The weather was good, with a low swell and light winds from the south-south-east.

Although the planned work was initially scheduled for the afternoon, the crew decided to change the FRC lifting strops before midday. A second toolbox talk was held to discuss the strop change. By 1125, the starboard side FRC strop change was completed without issue.

Coxswain A then boarded the port side FRC and disconnected the lifting stops after the bosun had lowered the davit hook. The FRC was now secured to its cradle only by two bowing in pennants forward and aft. Coxswain A then progressed changing the aft lifting strops.

At about 1125, coxswain B boarded the port FRC to change the forward strops. Coxswain B found that the lifting strop's shackle pin was tight and moved aft and outboard in the FRC to collect some tools. In doing so, the combined weight of the two coxswains unbalanced the FRC on its narrow cradle. The FRC tilted, then slipped overboard at 1135. The carabiner connecting the aft bowing in pennant parted as the FRC skewed and fell. The coxswains jumped into the water and their personal flotation devices automatically inflated. Both narrowly missed being struck by the FRC as it hit the water.

The bosun immediately sounded the general alarm, and the master announced "Man overboard" over Vos Tracker's public address system. The crew mustered, lifebuoys were deployed and the starboard side FRC was launched. Meanwhile, coxswain B climbed aboard the port side FRC and it was brought alongside Vos Tracker by the vessel's crew. By 1144, coxswain A had been recovered from the water into the starboard FRC. Both FRCs were subsequently recovered. The port side FRC had sustained hull damage that required a replacement when Vos Tracker berthed 2 days later. Both coxswains were unharmed in the accident.

Findings

- The FRC cradle had a narrow outboard arm, which did not adequately support the FRC when there was the combined weight of two people standing on the outboard side of the FRC.
- The FRCs were unsecured once the davit hook lifting strops were removed.
- No risk assessment was in place for the lifting strop change and no permit to work for working at height had been raised as required by the vessel's safety management system.

- Neither coxswain A nor coxswain B was wearing a safety harness and either a fall arrest or fall restraint tether while working in the FRC.
- The toolbox talks for the FRC strop change were ineffective, and evidence suggested that these were a compliance exercise.
- The successful change of the strops on the starboard side FRC, and previous strop changes in the same manner, had led the crew to believe that their methodology was safe.
- There was no effective supervision of the task due to distraction and hurried execution to complete the work before the watch changeover at midday.

Actions taken

The operator, Vroon Offshore Services Limited, has:

- introduced a procedure and task-specific risk assessment for FRC strop changes.
- updated its toolbox talk record card.
- reviewed and upgraded the FRC securing arrangements on Vos Tracker and sister vessels.
- issued a fleetwide safety alert.
- instigated a safety campaign across its fleet of 30 vessels.



Surge in EV transportation exposes gaps in maritime safety rules procurement

Industry experts have said the rapid rise in electric vehicle shipments is putting new pressure on the maritime industry, says Steam Marine Technical.

High-profile shipboard fires involving EVs, such as those on the Felicity Ace, Morning Midas and the Freemantle Highway, have highlighted the dangers and significant risks. While lithium-ion battery fires and thermal runaway events aren't always the initial cause, they significantly escalate onboard fires when EVs are involved, yet current International Maritime Organization (IMO) regulations don't adequately address this risk. Whilst the IMO develops updated guidelines, comprehensive regulations specific to EV transport aren't expected until at least 2028.

In the meantime, shipping companies are moving ahead on their own. Many are installing specialised fire suppression systems, boosting crew training, and working collaboratively to share best practices.

At a recent seminar hosted by Stream Marine Technical, John Garner, Managing Director of JG Maritime Solutions and Chairman of the Interferry Regulatory Committee said, "The challenge lies in bridging the gap through proactive compliance, operational readiness, and crew competency. We're seeing companies take the initiative, but it shouldn't take a decade for regulations to catch up."

As EV transport reshapes maritime operations, operators are pushing for faster and more productive coordination between regulators, vessel owners, and manufacturers. Stuart Reid, Marine Superintendent at Serco Northlink Ferries said, "For us, it starts at booking. We screen EVs, flag them for our teams, and invest in the right tools and training. Sharing what we learn with other operators has become standard because guidance from the top is still evolving."

Until new standards are in place, collaboration and knowledge-sharing are the front line of defence. Panellists emphasised that this is more than a compliance issue, it's a shared responsibility.

"Training is absolutely key," said Craig Smith, Expert Consultant and Instructor at **Stream Marine Technical**. "Crews need to spot early signs of battery fires and use the latest suppression technology. There's no silver bullet, but scenario-based drills and new procedures are already making a real impact."

With regulation lagging behind technology, the message from experts is clear: stay alert, stay prepared, and help shape the future of maritime safety before the next crisis hits.

Lloyd's Register alert on steam systems and steam hammer risks

Lloyd's Register (LR) have shared an investigation report into two fatalities which resulted from the catastrophic failure of a bellow type expansion fitting on a steam system pipeline on a LR class vessel.

Subsequent random inspection of vessels with similar expansion fittings as part of their steam piping system have highlighted the following issues:

- Some expansion fittings have not remained in compliance with the makers' limits for axial misalignment or were found compressed/elongated beyond the makers' recommendation. This has introduced unnecessary stress, without the steam system being under pressure.
- Some fittings were inaccessible due to being enclosed in permanent lagging.
- Pipework was no longer adequately supported, to prevent the unnecessary stresses on the fitting

Immediate action recommended

LR have recommended the following should be carried out as soon as possible:

- Ensure expansion fittings are listed and clearly marked on the steam system plans and inspected regularly to confirm that they remain compliant with makers' limits for misalignment and are not excessively compressed or elongated beyond permitted limits.
- Check pipework at both ends of such fittings remains adequately supported to prevent undue stresses at time of installation and allow appropriate movement during service (considering the temperature variation of the pipe work which will cause the pipework to slide within the support clamps).
- Where such expansion fittings are not accessible due to insulation or lagging, such inaccessible locations should be identified and the lagging arrangement changed to make it removable for periodic inspection.
- Check that these fittings remain within their service limits and operational life.
- The direction of flow should be confirmed in accordance with makers' guidance.
- Fitting should be compatible with the fluid (in this case steam) for the specific piping system.

Operating conditions and steam hammer

The investigation for this specific incident concluded that the primary reason for the catastrophic failure of the expansion fitting was due to steam hammer. This is a well-known phenomenon resulting from steam being introduced into a cold section of steam system pipeline or fitting (possibly with some condensation collected within), causing high-pressure shock waves.

It cannot be over-emphasised how essential it is that all persons on board responsible for operating any part of the steam system are suitably trained. They must be aware of the precautions to be taken before and while introducing steam into any part the steam system that has remained out of use and is colder than the steam temperature.

Read the class news: <https://bit.ly/4r2V525>





BSafe case study: Benzene vapour death following unauthorised tank entry

Britannia P&I Club have cautioned its members on the dangers of entering an enclosed space after a sailor died in the cargo hold of a tanker.

Background

An 8,270 gt oil/chemical tanker had discharged benzene on its previous voyage and was proceeding in ballast towards Korea to load its next nominated cargo. The ship had completed discharge at Jiangyin, China and departed for Yeosu, Korea. The planned sequence between voyages included a full cycle of gas freeing and cleaning of cargo tanks in preparation for the next chemical cargo.

The final part of the cleaning process required physical tank entry to conduct manual wiping or "mopping", of any residual wash water. As is standard, tank entry required an enclosed space entry permit to be issued by the master. This company's policy was to mark the hatch cover of the space to show that a permit had been issued, and it was now safe for entry.

Some of the cargo tanks had previously carried benzene. Although the tanks had been rinsed and ventilated for gas freeing, residue benzene vapours remained a serious hazard. Benzene is highly volatile and toxic; in a confined or poorly ventilated environment, inhalation can rapidly cause dizziness, incapacitation, collapse, respiratory failure or fatal exposure.

What happened

On the morning of the incident, the ship was several hours into the passage. Preparations were underway for the "mopping" stage of tank cleaning. This stage typically occurs only after gas freeing has progressed sufficiently and the tank atmosphere has been gas tested and verified safe.

At around 1010 hrs the chief officer (C/O) instructed four deck ratings (bosun, able seaman, and two ordinary seamen) to bring mops and rags to the main deck in preparation for mopping operations which were planned to take place inside the washed cargo tanks. At this point, the "enclosed space entry permit" process had not yet been initiated, and no confirmation had been made that the tank atmosphere was safe. It is understood that the C/O had noted a strong smell of cargo residue from within the cargo tanks at deck level and had therefore felt it unnecessary to test the atmosphere as it was clearly still unsafe.

Shortly afterwards, one of the ordinary seamen (OS) appears to have acted ahead of the authorised sequence. They entered the cargo tank through an open hatch, before the atmosphere had been tested and confirmed safe. It was later discovered that they were not carrying a portable multi-gas detector and was instead wearing a filter-type mask, presumably as "protection". The filter-type mask worn offered no protection in an oxygen-deficient space and could not protect against residual benzene or other toxic vapours that might still linger inside the tank.

Around 1035 hrs, the bosun, who was walking across the deck, looked down into cargo tank 10 Port. Seeing the OS lying collapsed on the tank bottom, the bosun immediately raised the alarm. The bridge informed the master, and shipboard emergency response commenced.

The C/O and second officer donned Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and entered the tank to recover the OS. They fitted the OS with an Emergency Escape Breathing Device (EEBD) but he remained unresponsive. The OS was brought up to deck level on a stretcher and CPR was initiated, with medical support sought from the shore rescue authorities. Despite prolonged resuscitation efforts, the OS did not regain consciousness and was later declared deceased upon hand-over ashore.

The subsequent autopsy identified traumatic injury consistent with a fall onto a hard surface, including cervical spinal fracture – meaning the atmosphere incapacitated the OS before they had reached the bottom. Benzene was detected in the OS's cardiovascular system. Based on this, and the fact that the tank bottom was only accessible by ladder, it was determined that the OS had entered the tank of their own volition, inhaled residual benzene vapours, collapsed inside the tank and fell, sustaining fatal injury. The tank atmosphere had not been tested and confirmed safe prior to entry, and the filter-type mask worn by the OS was not suitable or approved for protection against benzene vapours or oxygen-deficient atmospheres.

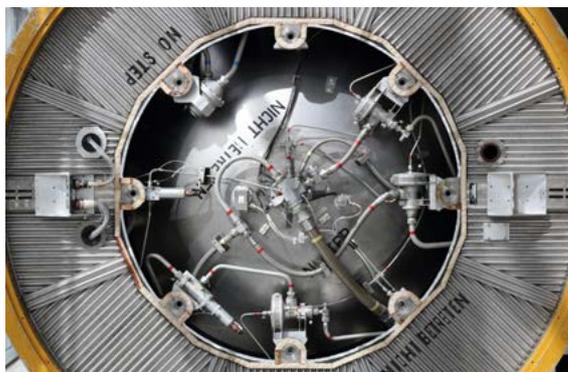
This event developed rapidly and at a point where the tank had not yet been formally cleared for entry. Until an enclosed space permit is issued, a cargo tank must be treated as hazardous, regardless of whether the hatch is open, a fan is running, or the tank has been recently washed.

The purpose of the permit process is to confirm, through measured data and recorded gas testing, that it is safe to proceed. Tanks may look harmless from above yet can still harbour atmospheres that can quickly incapacitate or kill without warning. Therefore, visual appearance from the deck level cannot be relied upon; the atmosphere within a tank can remain dangerous even when it seems inactive or benign.

Download the full report: <https://bit.ly/4a0OrDq>

MTF issues guidelines on qualitative alternative fuel risk assessments

The Maritime Technologies Forum (MTF) has revealed new guidelines for conducting qualitative risk assessments for alternative fuelled ships: HAZID and HAZOP.



The use of alternative fuels will be key to addressing the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships. While IMO has developed guidelines for design and operation of ships capable of using them, the Alternative Design and Approval process is required for most alternative fuels until mandatory regulations are in place. And this dictates using qualitative risk assessment to document an equivalent level of safety compared with a vessel designed to operate with conventional fuels.

Existing guidelines, such as MSC.1/Circ.1455 and IACS Rec. 146, remain valuable references to the general process for handling alternative design, independent of technology.

With the industry's expanding adoption of alternative fuels and lessons learned from recent projects, MTF considered that there is a need to make a supplement to these documents to cover a wider range of fuels and technologies.

The new MTF report provides guidelines for conducting qualitative risk assessments as a core component of the approval process for alternative-fuelled ships. This addresses both HAZID and HAZOP studies, detailing qualification requirements for personnel involved and outlining the procedural steps involved. The guidelines also specify required input documents, reporting requirements and risk criteria. The guidelines support the identification of potential hazardous events and the development of preventive and mitigative safeguards to manage risks associated with the use of alternative fuels.



75% of Britain's waterways face financial peril as almost all brace for heavier winter rainfall

The UK Inland Waterways Association (IWA) has produced a first-of-its-kind map revealing the likely impact of 2°C degrees warming on Britain's 5,000-mile network of canals and navigable rivers, as well as other risks.

Facing a dual crisis of funding and climate resilience, the new map reveals 99% of Britain's navigable inland waterways are at risk. The research from the only national charity that campaigns for all the country's canals and river navigations finds that 75% of canals are financially insecure, while 99% are expected to experience increased winter rainfall, threatening infrastructure already struggling with years of underinvestment.

Key findings include:

- The majority of our waterways are managed by navigation authorities struggling financially;
- Canals will be impacted by increased water shortages, especially in the Pennines and Midlands; and
- Our mapping shows that no part of the system will escape susceptibility to winter precipitation and drought risk.

Britain's 5,000 miles of navigable canals and rivers, including the 2,700-mile connected system across England and Wales are a national treasure providing significant public benefit to millions of people across Britain. The inland waterways are blue green corridors that connect fragmented wildlife habitats and provide free access to nature. They also generate significant economic activity, including associated tourism, supporting over 300,000 jobs and saves the NHS over £1.1 billion each year. Almost 80% of local authorities have a navigable waterway or a waterway under restoration, disproportionately so in more deprived areas.

Charlie Norman, IWA's Director of Campaigns, says, "Right now, Britain's matchless canal and river network faces a perfect storm of underinvestment and climate risk.

"Our findings paint an alarming picture of vital national infrastructure under increased strain. Decades of erratic government support along with more frequent extreme weather events have left many waterways vulnerable to breaches, closures and mounting maintenance costs. This year's drought led to the closure of dozens of canals across the country, affecting wildlife, tourism, businesses and people living on the canals.

"Without intervention the network, a cornerstone of the UK's industrial heritage, providing leisure and tourism destinations for millions, as well as green corridors for wildlife, faces irreversible decline by 2050."

Read about the risks and find the map here:
<https://bit.ly/4oUR0es>

MCIB to be dissolved

On 1 January 2026 the Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) will be dissolved.

From next year, the Marine Accident Investigation Unit (MAIU) will carry out Ireland's statutory marine accident investigations, taking over from the MCIB.



Any ongoing MCIB investigation will continue to be dealt with and determined by the MCIB investigator concerned or by an MAIU investigator, pursuant to the relevant statutory provisions and modifications.

Until 1 January 2026 notifications of occurrences of marine accidents should be directed to the MCIB via the existing MCIB web address or by email to info@mcib.ie.

From 2026, notifications of occurrences of marine accidents should be directed to the MAIU by email to info@maiu.gov.ie or by telephone to **016040578**.

MCIB investigation reports will continue to be accessible either on the MAIU website or by clicking on the existing MCIB web address, which will automatically access the MAIU website.



Source: ABS

ABS and Siemens to advance digitalization in shipbuilding

ABS and Siemens Digital Industries Software (DISW) have signed a memorandum of understanding to accelerate the digital transformation of maritime classification processes across ship design and

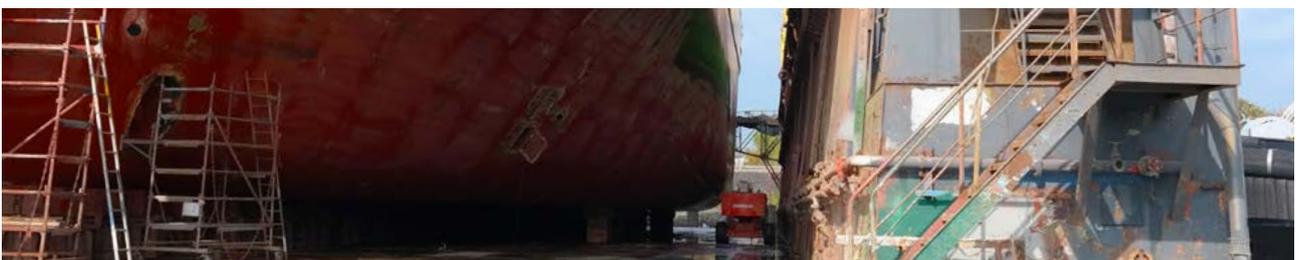
construction. The collaboration will also advance product lifecycle management (PLM) technology to enhance efficiency, data integrity and regulatory compliance throughout the vessel life cycle.

The MOU establishes a framework for both organizations to collaborate on projects such as Class Rule application during 3D design, model-based verification and digital twin integration, secure data exchange between ship designers and Class along with joint research projects and workshops.

The agreement will leverage the ABS PLM platform, ABS Freedom™, and Siemens DISW's Xcelerator platform to align with maritime regulations, specifically targeting its digital twin and simulation capabilities for compliance and classification in the marine sector.

"As a global leader in maritime classification services, ABS is proud to join forces with Siemens, a world leader in AI-powered PLM software, to develop collaborative interfaces that use enhanced data-driven tools for design decision making and digitally streamline our Class operations," said Patrick Ryan, ABS Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer.

Joe Bohman, Executive Vice President, PLM Products, Siemens Digital Industries Software said, "As the classification process is an integral part of ship design and building workflow, we understand the high importance of it. That is why we are delighted to sign an MOU with ABS to explore and establish a strategic collaboration aimed at accelerating and adapting the digital transformation of maritime classification processes."





What
caught
my eye...

*Mike Schwarz casts
his eye back over last
month's eye-catching and
eventful marine news*

The Francis Scott Key Bridge Baltimore accident: Now we know the cause

You don't need me to remind you of the catastrophic incident in March 2024, which resulted in the MV Dali totally destroying the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, killing six highway workers in the process. It really is one of the most spectacular and tragic maritime accidents in recent times, witnessed around the world by millions. We have covered the story in more detail elsewhere in this news bulletin, but I wanted to add some additional, personal commentary.



Now we learn from a public meeting late last year, held by investigators, that a loose wire in the ship's electrical system caused a breaker to unexpectedly open, which started a chain of events that led to two vessel blackouts and a loss of both propulsion and steering. Investigators found that wire-label banding prevented the wire from being fully inserted into a terminal block spring-clamp gate, causing an inadequate connection.

When I shared this information with some close friends in discussion, who have limited knowledge about what happens at sea, they were frankly incredulous that something such as this could cause such devastation, loss of life and a massive insurance pay out running into billions to rebuild the structure, and to say nothing of the lives needlessly lost. I share their sense of incredulity and disbelief! Please let this be another wake up call for the industry.

"Unaffordable" restoration works at iconic British attraction paused



I have featured the story of the Anderton Boat Lift, which is located in the leafy countryside of Cheshire, UK, before. And I have been following the restoration project with interest for some considerable time. The lift, said to be the world's first boat lift, was constructed in 1875 near Northwich by engineer Edwin Clark. It was designed to connect the Trent & Mersey Canal to the River Weaver Navigation, overcoming a 50ft height difference.

The structure has been closed since January 2025, when a lifting gate cable broke on the upper west canal side caisson during a routine test. This has made it impossible for boaters to use the facility and the structure is in need of extensive renovations. However, in a statement issued by the Canal & River Trust, it confirms that it will now be prioritising reopening the structure and getting it operational for boaters. This means the extended restoration project and renovations to the visitor centre are currently paused.

In a statement, the trust says: "The installation will happen over the winter of 2026/27 with one caisson being opened in time for the summer season in 2027, and the other caisson also opening as soon as possible after that.

"Although this seems a long time off, the works are complicated and time-consuming. They will see a new

lifting mechanism installed on ten separate gates, replacing the current ropes, wires and pulleys. The new system will be robust, future-proof, safe to operate and safer to maintain.”

It seems to me that money is tight and a lack of cash may be the real reason why the programme has come to a temporary halt.

Photo credits: EMEC, Orbital Marine Power

EMEC completes 3-in-1 tidal energy, hydrogen and battery demonstration

Innovation continues to flow from all areas of the world and here’s another first from a remote location off the northern coast of Scotland. I read that a world-first demonstration combining tidal power, battery storage and hydrogen production has been completed at the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) in Orkney, Scotland.



The project has been led by EMEC and the demonstration successfully integrated three technologies – Orbital Marine Power’s O2 tidal turbine, vanadium flow batteries supplied by Invinity Energy Systems, and an ITM Power 670 kW electrolyser, at EMEC’s onshore site on the island of Eday.

Multiple energy flow scenarios were trialled. During high generation periods, power from the O2 was used to charge the battery system, supply electricity directly to the electrolyser and export power to the grid. When tidal generation was low, the battery system discharged power to the electrolyser to keep the electrolyser operating. This approach effectively smoothed out the cyclical nature of tidal energy, enabling on-demand electricity to power the electrolyser for hydrogen production. In addition, battery power was used to support operations at EMEC’s onshore Caldale site.

This is the first time globally that tidal power, vanadium flow battery storage and hydrogen production technologies have been integrated into a single energy system. This approach could help overcome future grid constraints and open up new offtake opportunities, paving the way for more resilient, responsive renewable energy systems.

EU study supports mutual recognition of boating licences



The EU Commission has published a study on the mutual recognition of boating licences, addressing longstanding concerns about fragmented requirements for recreational boating licences in Europe.

The European Boating Industry (EBI), which represents the recreational boating industry in Europe, is supporting the development of the study, and has been contributing expertise and participation across its network.

In a statement, EBI says it welcomes the recommendations and is urging policymakers to prioritise the issue by introducing EU-wide measures for licence recognition. According to the organisation, such changes are important for enhancing the experience of Europe’s estimated 48m recreational boaters and strengthening the sector’s competitiveness.

The study’s findings highlight how the absence of mutual recognition affects boaters, charter operators, marinas and training organisations by creating practical and administrative challenges that limit mobility and slow the expansion of nautical tourism. It notes that increased nautical tourism benefits the wider boating sector by supporting companies and jobs. The study recommends adopting mandatory mutual recognition of the International Certificate of Competence (ICC) to simplify cross-border boating, improve safety and reduce administrative complexity.

That’s all for this month, Mike Schwarz



See more. Report faster.
with dual display, advanced data logging & bluetooth.

View **Cygnus 6+ Ultrasonic Thickness Gauge**

Save £200* DISCOUNT CODE: **IIMS26**

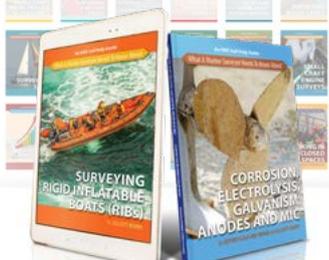
Order at cygnus-instruments.com

*Only valid when ordering directly from Cygnus Instruments Ltd



WHAT A
MARINE
SURVEYOR
NEEDS TO
KNOW
ABOUT

The series of nearly 30
IIMS self help handy guides



BUY ONLINE AT:

<https://bit.ly/36zG3XJ>

The IIMS CPD App...



For **iOS** users go to the "App Store".
Android, go to the "Google Play Store".

Search 'IIMS CPD' and install the app.

Login using your IIMS credentials.

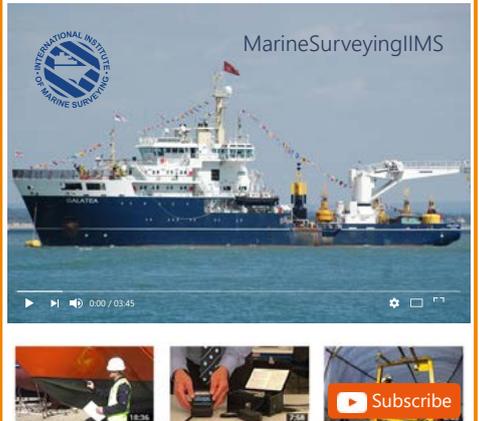
Or the "My CPD Program" link on the IIMS membership details page, re-directs the user to the new CPD Program Website.

Web version, the login panel can be found at:

<https://bit.ly/37sr311>

IIMS

is on
YouTube



<https://bit.ly/2iInWun>

Tritex NDT Multiple Echo Ultrasonic Thickness Gauges



All IIMS members receive a 10% discount and free shipping



Tritex NDT specialize only in the manufacture and supply of Multiple Echo Ultrasonic Metal Thickness Gauges, used for verifying corrosion levels and measuring metal thickness from one side only, without removing any protective coatings.

Tritex NDT gives you the excellent performance that you would expect, with free annual calibration for the life of the gauge.

simple . accurate . robust

sales@tritexndt.com
www.tritexndt.com
+44 (0) 1305 257160





Contact the IIMS Head Office team



As always, the IIMS head office team are here to help you on any matters relating to your membership or education needs. Please contact the appropriate person as follows:



contact details - address, email and telephone number - should change, please be sure to inform us immediately by email: **info@iims.org.uk** or call +44 23 9238 5223 (answerphone out of office hours).

info@iims.org.uk
for general information and enquiries

ca@iims.org.uk
contact for all Certifying
Authority work (Dave Parsons)

accounts@iims.org.uk
for accounting matters (Jen Argent)

membershipsupport@iims.org.uk
for all membership enquiries
(Rachel Moores)

education@iims.org.uk
for education course content and
training information (Vicki Loizides)

tonnage@iims.org.uk
specific email address for tonnage
paperwork and enquiries (Erin Kelsey)

msacourses@iims.org.uk
information about Marine Surveying
Academy courses (Sharon Holland)

msainfo@iims.org.uk
for MSA eCMID AVI matters (Elly Bryant)

marketing@iims.org.uk
for marketing and publishing
(Frances Birkett)

web@iims.org.uk
for web and social media content
(Alex Ockenden)

It is important that we keep our database and records up to date. Perhaps you have a web site address to add? If your