IIMS News Bulletin



AUGUST 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

I have spoken about the onslaught of technology many times before, and how it is affecting and transforming the shipping and marine surveying industries, but once again, I have made it the central theme of my introduction to this month's News Bulletin.



On 30 June, I joined the great and the good from the UK maritime industry at the MCA's 2026 Autonomy Industry Meeting, held in Southampton UK. It felt akin to a 'top-level summit' and it was a revelation. We think of autonomous vessels as being new tech and, indeed, they are, yet they have been on the scene for some while. The regulatory framework and landscape, however, have not kept pace. It is a complex and challenging business! Even a report of an incident recently in Portsmouth Harbour involving an autonomous vessel colliding with a yacht has not dampened spirits it seems for the brave new autonomous world ahead. An investigation is underway after a Royal Navy uncrewed surface vessel (USV) collided with Lutine, a 55-foot X-55 racing yacht, resulting in damage to both vessels. The collision draws attention to a programme that most UK recreational boaters will never have heard of. The Rattler uncrewed surface vessels are designed to test the future of the UK's autonomous naval operations – but they are sharing one of the UK's busiest waterways with ferries, commercial traffic and leisure craft. An anonymous source quoted by English newspaper, The Sun, claimed the drone "went rogue", before striking Lutine, which the source says was under sail and had right of way at the time. This is just one small example of what regulators and insurers are faced with and will need to get their collective minds around. This technology is not without jeopardy it seems.

The MCA event coincided with the publication of the new non-mandatory Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) Code. Under the leadership of Dr Katrina Kemp, the MCA's Maritime Autonomous Policy Lead, this is the culmination of 8 years of work with assorted industry personnel to reach this point. Katrina is well known to IIMS. Some years ago, she was the MCA's external monitoring Lead Auditor responsible for our annual Certifying Authority audit. Mandatory adoption of the Code is not expected before 2032 – that will be the best part of 14 years of planning, preparations and endless meetings. And that is remarkable.



Delegates assembled at the Palmerston Lecture Room in Southampton for the MCA's 2026 Autonomy Industry Meeting.

The UK delegation, consisting of MCA and Department for Transport leads, plus industry experts, has been instrumental during discussions at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to develop the MASS Code. Over 100 international partners, including administrations and industry and academia stakeholders, have negotiated and cooperated, culminating in the IMO Maritime Safety Committee's 111th session from 13-22 May adopting the non-mandatory MASS Code.

The Code provides the first international regulatory framework for remotely operated and autonomous cargo ships covered under SOLAS Chapter I. It was published by the IMO on 1 July 2026.

The MASS Code sets out a comprehensive, goal-based framework to ensure that remotely controlled or autonomous ships are designed and operated to a level of safety, security and environmental protection that is expected of a conventional ship. They will also be required to comply with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and other applicable mandatory IMO instruments. The Code applies to cargo ships. As it is a non-mandatory instrument, Member States are given the opportunity to test its use while paving the way for making it mandatory under the SOLAS Convention.

Details of the new Code can be found at **https://bit.ly/4gi1QKC**.

It was clear from the meeting that there are still plenty of unknowns, but as the MCA speakers said honestly, "we have to start somewhere". What hit home to me was the sheer complexity that those involved in developing the Code are having to deal with.

Sticking with the technological theme for a moment, I have accepted an invitation as a keynote speaker at the recently announced AIMS International Marine Surveyor Symposium to be held in Sydney, Australia from 19-22 July 2027. Although on the face of it, AIMS and IIMS are competitor organisations, I applaud their initiative and am happy to work with them to support the event and to be in attendance. The title of my keynote address is ***'Transformative AI, its effects on marine surveyors, and the importance of standards'***. IIMS intends to host an event whilst I am in Australia, and I hope to meet members next year in Brisbane.

Finally, I wanted to say a few words about our training initiatives. In the past few weeks. I had the pleasure of hosting a factory facility visit at Seldén Mast Ltd in Gosport – a rare and insightful opportunity indeed. The 20 in person delegates were joined by many more online for the afternoon session presented by Kim Skov-Nielsen, entitled ***'Rigs, Masts & Sails: What surveyors need to know'***. Kim shared some frightening photographs taken from his extensive collection as he highlighted and pointed out what and where surveyors should be looking and what they might discover. Judging by the feedback, it was clearly a great event.

IIMS has a series of high-profile events (open to members and non-members) planned between now and year end. Please read elsewhere about them in this news bulletin.

Survey well,



MikeSchwarz
Chief Executive Officer

IIMS forthcoming training activities

IIMS has a series of essential training events and residential courses planned for the coming months. Students, members and non-members are encouraged to attend. They are as follows:



Report Writing online seminar

5 August 2026

Who should attend? Student and less experienced yacht and small craft surveyors, or those wanting refresher training in the 'dark art' of preparing and writing survey reports.

For more information go to
https://bit.ly/3SvfksB.



IIMS Ireland Workshop and Seminar, Shannon Harbour, Ireland

23-24 September 2026

IIMS has lined up an eye-catching two-day programme at Shannon Harbour - a mix of practical hands-on activities followed by a series of important presentations by industry heavyweights on day two.

For more information go to
https://bit.ly/4vAVPgG.



Practical Surveying Course, Port Solent, UK

5-8 October 2026

Are you new to the marine surveying profession, or do you have limited surveying experience and need more knowledge? Perhaps you're wondering whether you're inspecting the boat correctly and if your reports have enough detail to meet modern day expectations? Our Practical Surveying Course could be just the ticket for you.

For the first three days, IIMS senior and experienced surveyors will assist and guide you in inspecting and surveying three different boats, as well as discussing toolkit requirements and how to use them. The surveyors are also on hand throughout the three days to answer any questions delegates may have about inspections or the surveying profession in general.

The final morning will be dedicated to an in-depth lecture on report writing, which will offer tips and advice. Spaces are limited, so booking early to avoid disappointment.

For more information go to
https://bit.ly/4aAx77Q.



YCTI course and IIMS one day seminar, Bodrum, Türkiye

3-4 November 2026

Yacht Coatings Technical Insights course.

For more details go to **https://bit.ly/4fdXIKm**.

5 November 2026

One day event training seminar.

Reflecting the growing number of members in Türkiye. Full details of the one-day IIMS seminar to follow the YCTI course on the two preceding days and the venue will be announced in the coming weeks as we build the programme. Watch out for further information.



Annual Scotland Seminar, Helensburgh, Scotland

25-26 November 2026

Once again, IIMS will host its annual training seminar near Helensburgh. Two days of presentations on a range of topical and practical issue of relevance to surveyors. More information about this event will be available soon. Watch this space for further details.



Practical Boatbuilding Course, Lyme Regis, UK

7-11 December 2026

After a couple of fallow years, IIMS is bringing back its highly-rated practical 5-day boatbuilding course to be held at the Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis, UK. The Boat Building Academy tutors are highly experienced and will host the event on behalf of IIMS. The content is based on two days of wooden boat theory, to include discussions on faults in wooden boats and typical issues, followed by three days of FRP/GRP with some practical work, including hand lay-ups and repairs, and will cover faults in FRP/GRP, including osmosis.

Spaces are strictly limited, so early booking is recommended.

For more information and to view the 5-day plan of activities, go to **https://bit.ly/3SEvWOw**.

Rigs, Masts and Sails: What surveyors need to know

A group of 20 marine surveyors gathered at the Seldén Mast Gosport facility in late June on one of the hottest days in the UK. Their mission? To learn about the work and manufacturing process that Seldén Mast conducts from their facility. Under the expert guidance of Richard Thoroughgood, supported by Technical Director Andy, and their colleague Zoe, the group were treated to an in-depth tour of the works. A number of masts were available for inspection and those who attended votes the morning session a great success. IIMS would like to put on record its thanks to Richard and his colleagues at Seldén Mast for accommodating and hosting the group.

The group moved on to nearby Cams Hall Golf Club and after a buffet lunch, they were joined online by further delegates. With temperatures touching a record 37 degrees, the airconditioned meeting room was especially welcome! The afternoon session was led by IIMS member Kim Skov-Nielsen, an expert in the area of rings, masts and sails, who is based in Spain. Using a series of graphic photographs which identified faults and flaws, some obvious, some far less so, that could potentially lead to catastrophic failures, he delivered a masterclass.









AIMS International Marine Surveyor Symposium 2027

IIMS is pleased to support the Australian Institute of Marine Surveyors (AIMS), in partnership with the Pharos Institute, at their planned inaugural online International Marine Surveyor Symposium 2027, to be held from 19–22 July 2027.

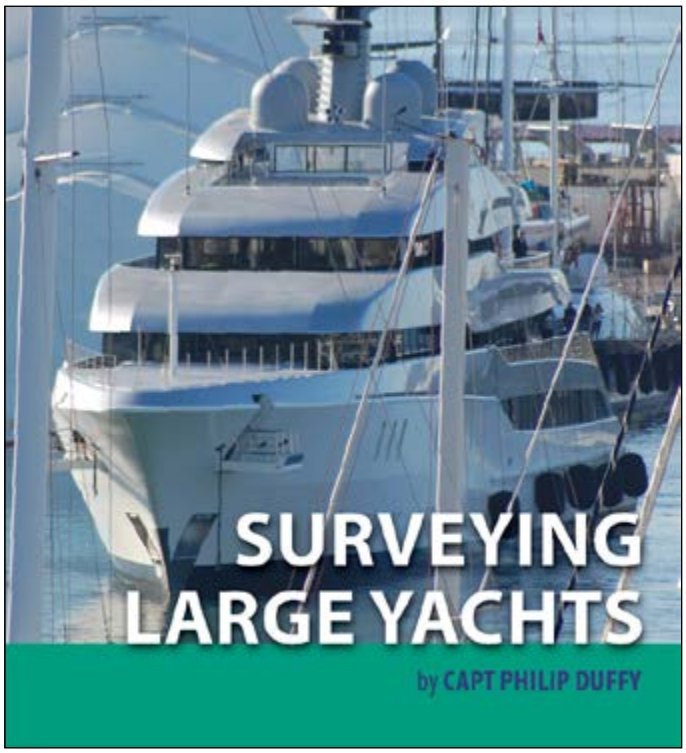
As their brochure correctly says, contributing to the future of marine surveying requires more than discussion, it requires leadership, evidence and the willingness to share professional insight.

This symposium will bring together practitioners, researchers and industry leaders to examine the critical issues influencing the future of marine surveying across recreational, commercial and shipping sectors, as well as the growing impact of artificial intelligence on professional practice.

At this time, AIMS is putting out a call for research papers and case studies to be presented at the Symposium.

For more information go to **https://bit.ly/4eNWWni**.





What a marine surveyor needs to know about surveying large yachts

IIMS has launched yet another new self-help handy guide - What a marine surveyor needs to know about surveying large yachts by Capt Phil Duffy.

Large yacht surveys follow the same procedures and require the same logical approach as small craft surveys; however, there are key differences – primarily in vessel size, the extent of main and ancillary machinery, the extensive regulatory compliance, and certification that large yachts require.

Whilst a large yacht is undoubtedly a luxury asset – often worth millions of euros and equipped with cutting-edge technology, entertainment systems, and leisure amenities – the surveyor's primary responsibility remains unchanged. Is the vessel seaworthy and fit for purpose?

This handy guide aims to be practical, helping the reader to prepare, conduct, and document surveys efficiently while ensuring the safety of people and assets.

Author Capt Phil Duffy is an expert in the field of surveying large yachts and has surveyed these types of vessels for many years. As such, he is well placed to have written this informative handy guide.

And you can get your own copy -
£40 paperback/£37 digital ebook.

Buy a copy: **https://bit.ly/4uJZibx**.

Misdeclared cargo remains a persistent threat to shipping and supply chains

New statistics released by Allianz show a container ship fire occurs every 17 days, underscoring the persistent risk misdeclared and undeclared dangerous goods pose to seafarers, shipping and global supply chains. Allianz Safety & Shipping Review 2026 says misdeclared cargo is still a major contributor to container ship fires.

“Misdeclared and undeclared dangerous goods are a known and preventable threat to seafarers, ships, cargo and the marine environment. This is not a paperwork issue. It is a life-and-death safety issue,” said Joe Kramek, President and CEO of the World Shipping Council.

“The vast majority of shippers do the right thing. But a small group of irresponsible actors are cutting corners, hiding risk and creating danger for everyone in the supply chain. They are also undermining diligent shippers who follow the rules.”

In response to this growing threat, WSC has implemented its Cargo Safety Program, an AI-enabled screening tool designed to identify high-risk shipments before they are loaded. For example, a shipment that was described as “hand tools” was flagged and discovered to be lithium-ion battery-powered tools, which, if not handled correctly, could pose a serious fire risk. This is one of thousands of incidents that the Cargo Safety Program has already prevented.

The latest data published by Allianz also highlights the fire risk facing vehicle carriers, with a fire recorded every 37 days. WSC has taken leading efforts at the International Maritime Organization in support of updated regulations to improve fire safety on vehicle carriers, including the safe transport of electric vehicles.

“Industry will do its part, but it cannot solve this challenge alone. There are international rules already in place to protect seafarers, ships, cargo and the global supply chain. Governments and regulators must enforce them,” Joe Kramek said.



Record Seawork 2026 underlines the strength and resilience of the commercial marine sector

Europe's leading commercial marine and workboat exhibition closed its doors on another landmark year, welcoming record numbers of visitors and a global community of maritime professionals to Southampton's Mayflower Park.

Seawork 2026 concluded with record-breaking figures and widespread industry acclaim, confirming the event's position as the essential annual gathering for the international commercial marine and workboat sector. Despite the occasional shower that did nothing to dampen proceedings, a record 7,972 visitors and 522 exhibitors came together across three days at Mayflower Park, Southampton — proof, if any were needed, that marine operations professionals are not easily deterred by a spot of British weather.

Delegates from over 60 countries were represented at the show, with significant international delegations from the Netherlands, Italy and Poland adding a strongly global dimension to what is already Europe's largest on-water commercial marine exhibition.

TSB final report says Titan sub-mersible operated without oversight



The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) has published its investigation report into the 2023 implosion of the Titan submersible.

On June 18, 2023, the Titan submersible, owned by U.S. based company OceanGate, imploded while descending to the wreck of the Titanic with five people on board.

As a result of its investigation, TSB has also issued six recommendations.

At the time of the incident, the operation was supported by a Canadian cargo vessel operated by Canadian company Horizon Maritime Services Ltd., the Polar Prince, which towed the Titan from St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, to dive locations, and provided a base for OceanGate's operations at sea. Horizon Maritime also provided this service to OceanGate in 2021 and 2022.

The investigation found that the Titan's carbon fibre hull failed progressively, with damage accumulating during each dive.

The hull's as-built properties were never tested to ensure they met the theoretical specification used in the design, and its construction did not follow standard engineering practices.

OceanGate's risk management was further affected by social and psychological factors, as well as the structure of the company.

Consequently, the company did not know how long the hull would remain safe when used repeatedly for dives to the depth of the Titanic and failed to identify and mitigate key risks associated with its operation.

Beyond the design of the Titan and the organizational structure of OceanGate, the investigation identified a broader gap in the international oversight of submersibles. International Maritime Organization guidelines regarding design and operation of submersibles are non-binding to member states, resulting in inconsistent oversight around the world.

Read the final report: **https://bit.ly/4eKErAk**.

In this case, Transport Canada was aware that the Titan was operating from St. John's with the support of a Canadian vessel. However, the Titan received no oversight. This situation is not unique; in fact, in Canada, it is relatively common for vessels to receive no oversight from Transport Canada. The investigation found that the lack of regulatory oversight to identify safety deficiencies resulted in increased risk to those involved in the Titan's operations.

Transport Canada's oversight activities were further limited by a lack of formal information sharing among federal organizations. OceanGate had numerous interactions with several government departments including Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency, Global Affairs Canada and Parks Canada. However, information gathered by these organizations was not shared with Transport Canada, leaving it without a complete picture of the operation and the risks it posed.

Yoan Marier, Chair of the TSB said, "When it came to the Titan, critical information existed across multiple federal government organizations, but no one was responsible for connecting the dots. Without a complete picture of the operation, the Titan continued to operate in Canada without regulatory oversight.

"We have been calling for stronger regulatory surveillance in the marine sector for years. Lives are at risk when safety gaps are left unaddressed."

This investigation revealed systemic safety gaps in the oversight of submersible operations, both in Canada and internationally. As a result, the Board is issuing six recommendations to address deficiencies in the following areas:

- regulatory oversight
- technical standards for submersibles
- safety management



Image: Sailors' Society

Summit for Seafarers – Fansipan Challenge

Sailors' Society is now gearing up for its Fansipan Challenge later this year.

The aim of this fundraising trek is to climb to the summit of Fansipan. At 3,147m, it is Vietnam's highest peak.

This challenging trek is open to maritime professionals and takes place 27-30 November.

Fully supported by a qualified trek leader and surrounded by your maritime peers, you'll be inspired to reach new heights and will come back with memories to last a lifetime.

So why not enjoy a unique weekend full of physical challenge and adventure, while you connect and build a network with fellow maritime professionals.

And you can do all this while raising vital funds to help us support seafarers and their families 24/7.

Find out more: **https://sailors-society.org/**





Allianz Safety and Shipping Review 2026

The Allianz Safety and Shipping Review 2026 has been published and is available to download now. It highlights geopolitical conflict and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz as a major factor that shaped shipping risk and activity.

According to Allianz, incidents like the closure and reported mining of the Strait of Hormuz signal a transition toward a "new maritime order" defined by escalating security risks along strategic shipping corridors, the disruption of established trade routes, persistent uncertainty, higher risk premiums, and a greater strategic emphasis on resilience over pure cost efficiency.

Despite the long-term improvement in the industry's safety record, loss spikes have continued to occur; while looking forward, the reshaping of sector forces is set to persist.

Strait of Hormuz disruption highlights importance of maritime chokepoints
The conflict in the Middle East paralyzed the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global oil trade route. Allianz Research data shows that around 1,150 cargo-carrying vessels (over 100GT) with an estimated vessel and cargo value of approximately $125 billion, a volume of 29 million GT, and as many as 20,000 seafarers are in the Persian Gulf waiting to resume operations following recent diplomatic breakthroughs.

Shipping incident and loss developments
In addition to geopolitical uncertainty, traditional risks for the shipping industry highlighted in the Allianz Safety and Shipping Review 2026 remain a major concern, although the numbers of total vessel losses and incidents have continued to decline in recent years. Machinery damage or failure and fires are among the main loss drivers in this regard, leading to significant economic and insured losses.

Around the world, the number of reported shipping incidents on vessels over 100GT declined over the past year by around 16% (2,818 in 2025 compared to 3,353 in 2024).

The East Mediterranean and Black Sea region saw the highest number of reported incidents (622), followed by the British Isles (619), which is also the location of the most incidents over the past decade, reveals the Allianz Safety and Shipping Review 2026.

According to the Allianz Safety and Shipping Review 2026, machinery damage or failure was the major cause of all shipping incidents globally during the past year, accounting for over half (1,505), followed by vessel collision (260) and fire / explosion (218), which remains a major concern on vessels. Machinery damage being the main cause of shipping incidents is significant as machinery claims inflation has not yet returned to pre-Covid-19 levels, with repair costs having continued to rise, a trend which could be exacerbated by the recent conflict in the Middle East.

Fires on large vessels remain a persistent concern
Fires on large vessels, including container ships and car carriers, remain a worry. There were more than 200 incidents on large vessels reported during 2025, down from 2024, but still the second highest total over the past decade, with at least nine total losses reported.

Larger vessels drive more complex and costly claims
The increasing size of vessels is also driving a trend for a rise in general average claims, where the shipowner and cargo interests share losses or expenditure to save the whole venture in an emergency. Such claims are typically complex and large. Contributions to cover losses can be as high as 50% of the cargo value, which if a vessel is carrying a few thousand electric cars, for example, could easily be over US$100mn.

Download the review at: **https://bit.ly/4wsrVvi**.





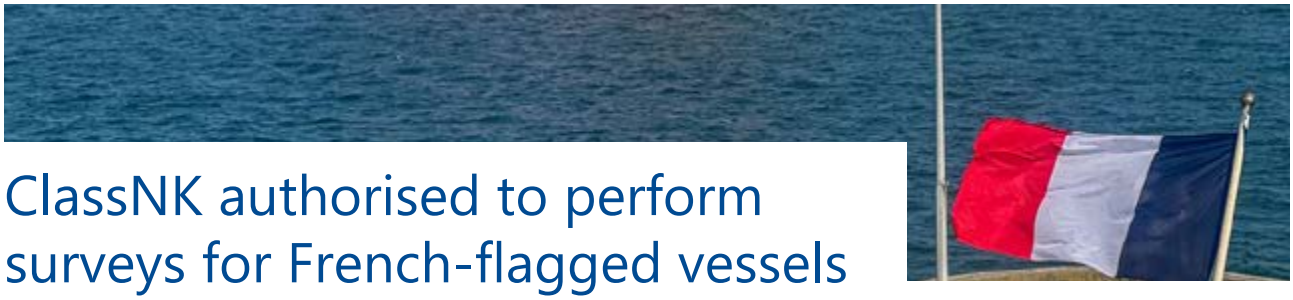
The sling that should not have been there

The web sling had a rated safe working load of one tonne. TAIC commissioned independent testing of the failed sling. It broke at 2.86 tonnes, just 48 percent of its expected minimum breaking load of six tonnes.

The sling was saturated with oil and in poor overall condition. The bearing surface of the eye had been partially cut through, damage consistent with previous use on a sharp or insufficiently rounded edge under load. Some fibres were already frayed before the accident. Only the remaining clean fibres failed on the day.

The ship's lifting gear register listed four belt slings of one-tonne capacity, recorded as good condition following an assessment on 28 February 2025. TAIC found it was very unlikely the failed sling was one of those four. It had no identification tag, no inspection record, and no entry in the register. The Commission concluded the sling had very likely been inherited from the previous operator when Thoresen Shipping acquired the vessel in 2021, remaining on board unknown, uninspected, and available for use ever since.

The bosun picked it up with no reason to know it had never been through the ship's safety management system.



ClassNK authorised to perform surveys for French-flagged vessels

ClassNK has received authorization from the French government to carry out surveys for French-flagged vessels. With this authorization, ClassNK is now able to perform statutory surveys and issue certificates for French-flagged vessels on behalf of the French government, in accordance with the requirements of international conventions, including SOLAS, MARPOL, and the International Convention on Load Lines. As a result, ClassNK is now able to offer a comprehensive one-stop service for French-flagged vessels, including classification, statutory surveys, and certification.

In addition, ClassNK has been delegated authority by more than 100 countries and regions worldwide to undertake statutory surveys and issue certificates under international conventions on their behalf, including many European nations.

As a recognized society authorized by the French government, ClassNK will contribute to the safety and regulatory compliance of French-flagged vessels.



Superyacht Australia and APSA announce strategic shift

Superyacht Australia and APSA announce strategic shift to promote the Asia-Pacific Region as a Premier Superyacht Cruising Destination.

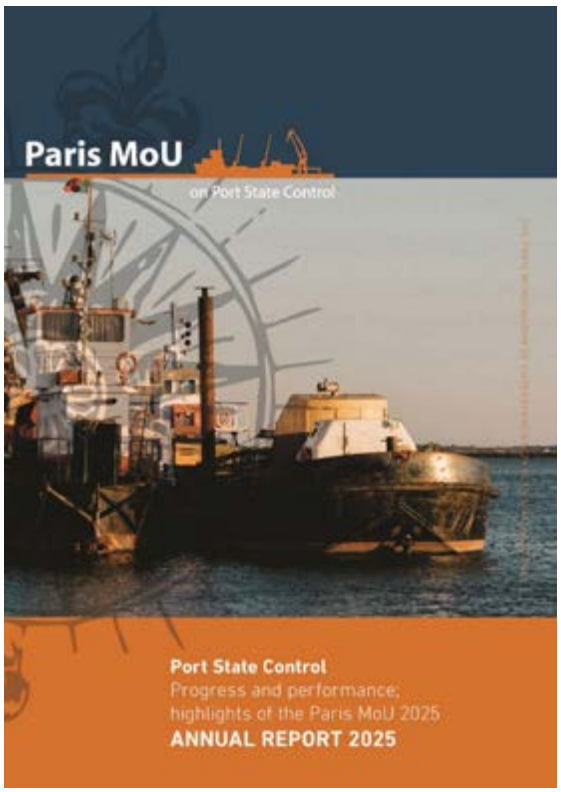
Superyacht Australia and the Asia-Pacific Superyacht Association (APSA) have announced a strategic evolution of their long-standing partnership, redirecting focus from the Mediterranean and Caribbean source markets towards promoting the Asia-Pacific region, including the South Pacific as a world-class superyacht cruising destination.

For many years, Superyacht Australia has run a collaborative South Pacific marketing campaign aimed at owners, captains and brokers in the Mediterranean and Caribbean, with a strong presence at the Monaco Yacht Show (MYS) and, previously the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show (FLIBS) and more recently the Palm Beach International Boat Show. This campaign has played a significant role in raising awareness of Australia and the South Pacific among the international superyacht community and drawing more yachts into the region.

Building on this foundation, Superyacht Australia and APSA will now broaden the campaign's scope to showcase the full breadth of the Asia-Pacific as a cruising ground. The expanded program will encompass Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan and the Philippines, alongside Australia and the South Pacific, positioning the region as one of the most diverse and compelling superyacht destinations in the world.



Rising detention rates and recurring areas of concern in Paris MoU Annual Report 2025



The Paris MoU has published its 2025 Annual Report with a total of 16,474 inspections recorded last year.

In 2025, there were 9,879 were inspections with deficiencies, 688 detentions and 19 bannings.

Bans, detentions and deficiencies
During 2025, the number of refusals-of-access (bans) increased to 19, marking a rise following several years of relatively low figures.

The detention rate also trended upward, reaching 4.18% in 2025, compared to 4.03% in 2024. This follows a period of consistently elevated detention percentages in recent years, including the 4.25% recorded in 2022. The Paris MoU will continue to closely monitor these developments.

An analysis of deficiencies and detainable deficiencies reveals no significant shift towards non-compliance within any single convention or regulatory area. Instead, the data underscores recurring areas of concern that consistently show higher rates of noncompliance in both absolute and relative terms.

These include:
- fire safety (SOLAS Chapter II-2: 16.8%),
- structural and electrical elements (SOLAS Chapter II-1: 11.6%), and
- health protection, medical care, welfare and social security protection (MLC Title IV: 10.0%).

At the specific deficiency level, fire doors (3.1%) and Seafarers' Employment Agreements (1.3%) remain prominent areas of non-compliance. Additionally, broader ISM-related deficiencies accounted for 4.5% of the total.

Flag performance
The "White, Grey and Black (WGB) List" presents the full spectrum of performance, from quality flags to flags with poor performance that are considered high or very high risk. The list is calculated based on the total number of inspections and detentions over a three-year rolling period for flags with at least 30 inspections during that timeframe.

In terms of flag performance, no major shifts occurred compared to the previous year. Although the overall detention rate remains relatively high, the distribution of flag States across the White, Grey, and Black categories has not changed substantially.

RO performance
The Committee maintains close oversight of the performance of Recognized Organizations (ROs) acting on behalf of flag Administrations. To be included in this performance list, an RO must have a minimum of 60 inspections over a three-year period. In 2025, 31 ROs met this criterion, a slight increase from the 29 ROs listed in 2024.

An assessment of RO performance revealed no concerning trends or significant deviations from previous years. Notably, the number of ROs in the lowest performance category remains small.
The results from these performance lists will be applied to Ship Risk Profile calculations starting 1 July 2026.

Download the report: **Paris MoU on Port State Control Annual Report 2025**



Queensland Government removes more than 150 wrecks from the Mackay region

The Queensland Government has removed a number of derelict vessels from the Pioneer River in Mackay, bringing the total to more than 150 vessels cleared from local waterways under the Keeping Our Waterways Safe initiative.

Removing derelict vessels is a complex operation that requires careful planning, specialist contractors, and close coordination to ensure the work is carried out safely and without causing environmental harm.

The Maritime Safety Queensland-led operation was supported by Mackay Regional Council, who engaged a contractor to remove debris and rubbish left behind by previous vessels and illegal camping activity. This collaborative effort has delivered a cleaner and safer area for the community to enjoy.

The Queensland Government remains committed to ensuring Queensland waterways are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for everyone.





UK National Boat Count 2026

Canal & River Trust's annual National Boat Count, carried out throughout March, has recorded that boat numbers on the charity's waterways dipped slightly by 2.1% while licence evasion remained constant.

Following the trend of the last ten years, numbers of boats without home moorings continued to increase, rising 3.6% to 8,825. Across the country, London and South East saw overall boat numbers fall by 9.7% while the North West recorded a 2.4% increase. All other regions saw changes of less than 2% either way.
Nationally, licence evasion stands at 11.8%, compared with 11.7% last year, marking the first clear slowdown in the upward trend seen in recent years. However, evasion levels remain significantly higher than the Trust would like, and ongoing cost of living pressures mean there is a risk that rates could increase again.

In response, the Trust is reviewing its enforcement processes and increasing its focus on early support and intervention to help prevent boaters falling into difficulties. This includes strengthening links to organisations who can provide financial and other support and improving communication with boaters who may be at risk of becoming unlicensed. The Trust's welfare team is the first port of call for boaters in need of support and has helped with 1,676 cases between April 2025 and May 2026.

SSBelfastFanatic, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

Dali chief engineer reaches deal with US authorities



The chief engineer of the cargo ship Dali, which struck and destroyed Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge in March 2024, has reached a deferred prosecution agreement with U.S. authorities.

The Indian national, admitted he failed to report a hazardous condition to the U.S. Coast Guard, specifically that the ship was operating with an unsafe fuel supply pump. Under the agreement, he will serve 36 months of probation and avoid prosecution if he complies with its terms.

Investigators found that the Dali's operators had been relying on a flushing pump to supply fuel to two of the ship's generators, even though the pump was not designed to automatically restart after a blackout.

According to the National Transportation Safety Board, a loose wire in the ship's electrical system triggered a breaker failure, leading to two blackouts and the loss of propulsion and steering that preceded the crash.

SeaKeepers Australia gains charity and DGR status

The International SeaKeepers Society Australian Charitable Trust has been officially registered as a charity and endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient, opening new opportunities for Australians to support ocean research, conservation and education through tax-deductible giving. The designation means eligible donations made to SeaKeepers Australia are tax deductible, creating a new pathway for individuals, businesses, vessel owners and the broader marine industry to contribute to the organisation's work while receiving associated tax benefits.

The development also brings SeaKeepers' Vessel Donation Program to Australia, extending an initiative that has operated for many years in the United States as part of the organisation's international DISCOVERY Program. Through the program, yacht owners are provided with an alternative option when considering the future of a vessel. Rather than pursuing a traditional sale, owners may choose to donate a vessel, with the proceeds supporting SeaKeepers' ocean-focused programs and mission-driven activities.

The International SeaKeepers Society has used vessel donations to generate funding for marine science expeditions, citizen science projects, education initiatives and conservation activities around the world.



Federal court dismisses antitrust lawsuit against Boats Group

Boats Group has announced that a US federal court has dismissed an antitrust lawsuit brought against the company, finding that the complaint failed to allege any anticompetitive conduct and granting its motion to dismiss the case in its entirety.

The case, Brill v. Boats Group, alleged anticompetitive conduct by the operator of online marine marketplaces including Boat Trader, YachtWorld and boats.com.

According to Boats Group, the court's 25-page ruling found that the plaintiff had failed to adequately allege anticompetitive behaviour. The court concluded that the complaint did not establish that Boats Group had obtained its market position through improper means, instead noting that the company's position could reflect "growth or development as a consequence of a superior product [and] business acumen".

Patrick Kolek, CEO of Boats Group, said: "Our market position cannot be duplicated by shortcuts or meritless litigation. There is simply no substitute for the passion, integrity and hard work our team brings to the marine industry every day. While we remain entirely focused on delivering next-generation product innovation for our community of buyers and sellers, this ruling makes it clear that we will always vigorously defend our business against baseless claims."

Hull corrosion sank fishing vessel North American



Source: Daniel Ramirez

The flooding and sinking of fishing vessel North American in Seattle, Washington, USA was a result of hull corrosion, said the National Transportation Safety Board.

What happened
On May 14, 2024, about 0550 local time, vessel representatives for the fishing vessel North American, which was uncrewed and docked on the Lake Washington Ship Canal, in Seattle, Washington, were notified that the vessel was flooding.

Salvors arrived on scene and attempted to dewater the vessel but were unable to keep up with the flooding, and the vessel eventually sank.

There were no injuries, and no pollution was reported. Damage to the vessel was initially estimated at $3 million.

Analysis
On May 13, the vessel had been underway for about 6 hours on a sea trial to familiarize the new captain and chief engineer with the vessel and its systems. Other than a short trip to get fuel and another trip to drop off equipment at a nearby dock (both in the previous month), the vessel had been laid up for the entire winter at its dock. While underway, a bilge alarm alerted the crew to flooding in the engine room.

Crewmembers stated that the flooding was coming from the shaft alley, which ran beneath the vessel's three floodable fish holds. Crewmembers emptied all the water from the three fish holds, successfully pumped the bilge, and reported that water was no longer coming from shaft alley. When they returned to the dock that afternoon, crewmembers attempted to identify the source of the flooding into the shaft alley without success. When the last crewmember left about 1830, he reported there was no visible flooding and that there was no water in the bilges.

A postcasualty dive survey found three wastage holes in the hull. The diver found no other potential sources of water ingress after examining the entire hull, the rudder, propeller, and all thru-hull fittings (including the stern tube). The crewmembers did not report striking any objects or grounding during their sea trial, and the dive survey confirmed that there were no signs of collision or grounding. Therefore, it is likely that the source of the flooding into the shaft alley, and subsequently the engine room, was the three holes in the hull, which were located beneath the shaft alley.

The vessel's owner had been aware of corrosion within the double bottom areas since 2020, when a hole in the hull was found during a survey. The owner conducted additional hull surveys in 2021 and 2023 in an attempt to identify and address any areas needing repair. The survey found potential areas of concern, but immediate repair of the areas was not deemed necessary. It is likely that localized corrosion within the shaft alley resulted in the holes identified postaccident, and that the holes manifested or worsened during the sea trial on May 13.

Why it happened
The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the flooding and sinking of the fishing vessel North American was hull corrosion, which resulted in wastage holes that allowed water ingress into the engine room overnight while the vessel was unattended.

Download the PDF: **https://bit.ly/4uqc66W**.



IMO treaty on hazardous and noxious cargo to enter into force in 2027

The International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (2010 HNS Convention) is set to come into effect on 29 November 2027.

The 2010 HNS Convention establishes the first international compensation regime for accidents involving hazardous and noxious substances carried by sea.

The conditions for the IMO treaty's entry into force were met on 29 May 2026, paving the way for the 2010 HNS Convention (the 1996 Convention as amended by the 2010 Protocol) to enter into force 18 months later.

There are currently 12 contracting States to the 2010 HNS Protocol, following ratifications by Belgium, Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Sweden in April 2026. Nine of these States have more than 2 million units of gross tonnage.

Reports on contributing cargo submitted by contracting States in accordance with article 20 of the Protocol confirm that the required aggregate quantity of contributing cargo - more than 40 million tonnes - was achieved for the 2025 reporting year.

What the treaty covers
The Convention covers loss of life, personal injury, property damage, economic loss, clean-up costs and environmental damage arising from incidents involving more than 2,000 hazardous substances carried by sea, including chemicals, oils, acids, fertilizers, alcohols, LNG and LPG.

Under the regime shipowners are subject to strict liability for damage and are required to maintain State-certified insurance or other financial security. Additional compensation will also be available through the HNS Fund, financed by contributions from receivers of HNS cargo in Contracting States.

It is estimated that approximately 65,000 ships will require HNS certificates of insurance or other financial security.

HNS Fund
An HNS Fund will be established to provide compensation once the shipowner's liability is exhausted.

Total compensation available under the Convention is capped at 250 million Special Drawing Rights (SDR) of the International Monetary Fund (approximately USD 360 million at current exchange rates) per incident.

Shipowners are held strictly liable up to the maximum limit established under the Convention for the costs arising from an HNS incident.

Marine Incident Annual Report

2025

AMSA reveals 4,174 marine incidents in 2025

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has published its Marine Incident Annual Report 2025, revealing it had received a total of 4,174 marine incident reports along with 452 marine safety concerns.

The Report analyses marine incidents across domestic commercial vessels (DCVs), foreign-flagged vessels (FFVs) and regulated Australian vessels (RAVs), identifying trends across the entire fleet over the past five years.

Trends in reporting
In 2025, AMSA received a total of 4,174 marine incident reports from foreign-flagged vessels (FFVs), regulated Australian vessels (RAVs) and DCVs. In 2024, it had received a total of 5,639 marine incident reports.

The reduction in reported marine incidents in 2025 is primarily attributable to a change in classification introduced on 1 January 2025, under which defect reports for RAVs and FFVs are no longer captured within the marine incident reporting process. A substantial number of reports that would have been previously recorded as marine incidents were excluded in 2025, including approximately 1272 reported defect reports.

In addition to marine incident reports, AMSA receives notifications of marine safety concerns. Marine safety concerns can be reported by anyone who observes an event or practice that may endanger, or if not corrected could endanger, the safety of a commercial vessel or persons on board a commercial vessel.

In 2025, AMSA received 452 reports of marine safety concern representing a 14.7% increase on the number received in 2024 (394 reports).

In 2025:
- 4,174 marine incidents were reported including 1,229 involving DCVs.
- Passenger vessels continue to show a good reporting culture, accounting for almost half (46%) of all reported DCV incidents though comprising only 9% of the fleet.
- Larger DCVs (12m and over) made up 67% of marine incident reports, despite comprising only 21% of the DCV fleet.
- 4 fatal DCV marine incidents occurred.
- 228 injuries were reported on DCVs with 44 of these serious.
- Most serious crew injuries were linked to navigation (DCVs) or maintenance, operational access and cargo handling (RAVs/foreign-flagged vessels).
- Contact, collisions, groundings and power, propulsion or system failures continue to be the most common marine incident types across all vessel types.
- Common contributing factors include poor lookout and main engine/gearing failures.

The impact on people
Behind every marine incident is the potential for serious harm.

In 2025, DCV marine incidents resulted in 4 fatalities, 228 injuries (including 44 serious injuries), and 92 person overboard incidents. That's a 19% increase in person overboard incidents compared to 2024.

Across RAVs and FFVs, a further 206 injuries were reported, the majority involving crew.

The most serious injuries were linked to operational activities, particularly navigation on DCVs, and maintenance, operational access and cargo handling on RAVs and FFVs.

These outcomes highlight the real-world consequences of breakdowns in safety controls, especially during everyday tasks where risks can be underestimated.

Read the full report: **https://bit.ly/4y41OvY**.



Bulk carrier engine shutdown due to erroneous switch activation

FMG Nicola. Source: ATSB

The Australian Transportation Safety Bureau (ATSB) has said that bulk carrier FMG Nicola's went adrift after a main engine emergency shutdown switch erroneously activated.

What happened

On 7 February 2025, the fully laden bulk carrier FMG Nicola was departing Port Hedland under the conduct of 2 marine pilots with 3 tugs in attendance. At 1515 local time, about 5 miles into the pilotage, FMG Nicola's main engine unexpectedly shut down. An emergency was declared, and the pilots immediately took action to control the ship's movement while the port's vessel traffic service mobilised additional port tugs and the ship's engineers rectified the engine fault. The main engine was restarted at 1523, and the ship was brought back under control. Multiple tugs attended and the ship was brought clear of the channel side and taken safely to sea.

What the ATSB found

The ATSB investigation found that FMG Nicola lost propulsion because the main engine low lubricating oil pressure emergency shutdown switch erroneously activated with all system parameters otherwise normal.

Also, the investigation found that the emergency response was as per port guidance, procedures and training. The ship remained underway and kept moving and was safely navigated via the channel to sea. While the ship departed, and tracked along the edge of, the charted shipping channel, there was no evidence to show that the ship had contacted the seabed.

What has been done as a result

Pilbara Ports Authority advised that port operations have been reviewed in the areas of ship reliability and vetting, towage strategy and arrangements and pilotage and emergency response and relevant procedures have been updated. Actions taken included improved operational awareness of and training in escort towage arrangements and updating of pilotage and emergency response procedures.

The ship's manager/operators responded to this incident by upgrading the management (testing and replacement) of main engine lubricating oil pressure switches on all ships in its fleet. This was supported by fleetwide implementation of a procedure for rapid response to main engine shutdown due to low lubricating oil pressure.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority has updated its processes to better ensure prompt reporting of incidents to the ATSB.

ATSB Chief Commissioner Angus Mitchell welcomed the actions by the ship operator and port authority.
"The safety of ports and the ships that use them requires commitment to continued improvement and learning from incidents by port authorities, users, facility owners and service providers," he said.
"By working together to enhance procedures and strategies, emergency situations can not only be safely managed, but lessons can be learned and used to further improve operational safety."

Safety message

The safety of ports and ships that use them requires commitment to continued improvement and learning from incidents by port authorities, port users, facility owners and port services such as towage and pilotage. By working together, enhancing procedures and strategies, emergency situations can not only be safely managed, but lessons can be learned and used to further improve operational safety.

Download the report: **https://bit.ly/3SyLjYT**.

NMA warns of serious crushing injuries in packaging machinery

Credit: Sjøfartsdirektoratet



The Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) has received reports of serious crushing accidents involving fish packaging machines in factories on board vessels.

An incident in which a person was caught in an automated palletising prompted the NMA to share an article highlighting the dangers involved. In the particular incident a vital safety barrier had been removed.

Removed safety barriers
Palletising machines are equipped with safety barriers designed to ensure they stop if personnel enter the restricted area surrounding the machine. One of the barriers is a safety fence around the machine, with doors that must remain closed during operation.

When one of the doors is opened, the machine's operating voltage is intended to be automatically disconnected. In the incident on which this article is based, involving a palletising machine on board a vessel, two doors had been removed. This was justified on the grounds that the doors caused frequent stoppages during periods of good fishing and high activity in the factory.

The doors were fitted with sensors that functioned as safety devices. As a result, the operator was able to enter – and climb on to – the machine while it was still energised. The operator's movements activated sensors, which in turn activated the palletising machine while the person was inside it.

Risk assessment
The risk assessment for the incident referred to stated that the area was secured with safety barriers and that entry into the area would cause the packaging machine to stop. This assessment, however, was based on the assumption that the doors were installed. Consequently, the risk assessment did not reflect how the work was actually carried out by the employees.

An updated risk assessment must reflect the actual risk. In this incident, it did not do so, as the doors were not in place.

It is essential that those involved in the operation participate in the development of procedures, which must be relevant and realistic to follow. Otherwise, procedures may be bypassed, which can have serious consequences for employees who are not familiar with the specific safety conditions associated with the operation in question. If certain tasks are caried out safely but outside the established procedure, it is important that the procedure is updated accordingly and made known to everyone.

Corrective measures
The NMA recommends that the entire industry establish a practice of always assessing corrective measures when safety barriers are modified or removed.

This includes:

- a comprehensive review and risk identification for both normal operation and operational deviations
- approval from the manufacturer or supplier when changes are made to barrier and safety functions
- ensuring that procedures or routines are in place for the isolation of machinery and equipment before work is permitted to commence
- technical safety devices must not be removed or disabled
- removal of safety barriers requires compensating measures to ensure an equivalent level of safety
- ensuring that the crew receive correct and sufficient training and familiarisation, both for normal operation and in case of operational disturbances. This must form part of the vessel's safety management system.

Read the article: **https://bit.ly/43nnR2M**.



Croatia looks to amend boat licensing rules following fatal collision

The Croatian Government has already begun work to update its existing system of issuing recreational boat operators' licences in the wake of a collision that left four people dead in the Adriatic Sea near the city of Split recently. Siniša Orlić, head of Croatia's Maritime Safety Directorate, told local media recently that amendments are to be the made to the existing regulations on boat operators' licences as these are already considered outdated.

The director added that the government has also been working with other parties within the EU to modify the licensing system to address issues such as human error, which is responsible for more than 80 per cent of accidents.

One of the changes being proposed is making practical training mandatory for operators of private vessels of no more than 18 metres in length up to 12 nautical miles offshore. Under the current system, boat operator licence holders who fall under this category are not required to undergo such training.

These and other amendments have been proposed following the collision on 14 June 2026 between the locally-registered catamaran ferry Krilo Eclipse and a French-flagged yacht off Split. The yacht sank shortly afterwards due to the force of the impact; four of the eight people who were on board perished in the tragedy.

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

Overall non-compliance rate improves slightly on pilot transfer arrangements

The results of the International Maritime Pilots Association (IMPA) 2026 Safety Campaign on pilot transfer arrangements, highlight that the overall non-compliance rate has improved slightly to 13% compared to the previous year, with pilot ladders remaining the leading source of non-compliant observations.

Around the clock and across the globe, maritime pilots transfer to and from vessels of every size in all weather conditions and throughout every season. The work is inherently hazardous, yet it remains essential to the safe and efficient movement of ships in and out of ports.

This year's campaign attracted participation from members from 34 countries submitting a total of 4,051 entries.

Key findings of the IMPA 2026 Safety Campaign

- 13% non-compliance rate
- 4051 reports
- 740 number of pilots participating
- Highest rates of noncompliance found in Asia / Middle East (24%) and Africa (22%)
- No significant change to historic non-compliance trends
- Pilot ladders remain the leading source of non-compliant observations
- 35% of non-compliant reports included pilot ladders not secured to strongpoints
- 89% of non-compliant observations were not reported to port State authorities

Ship types

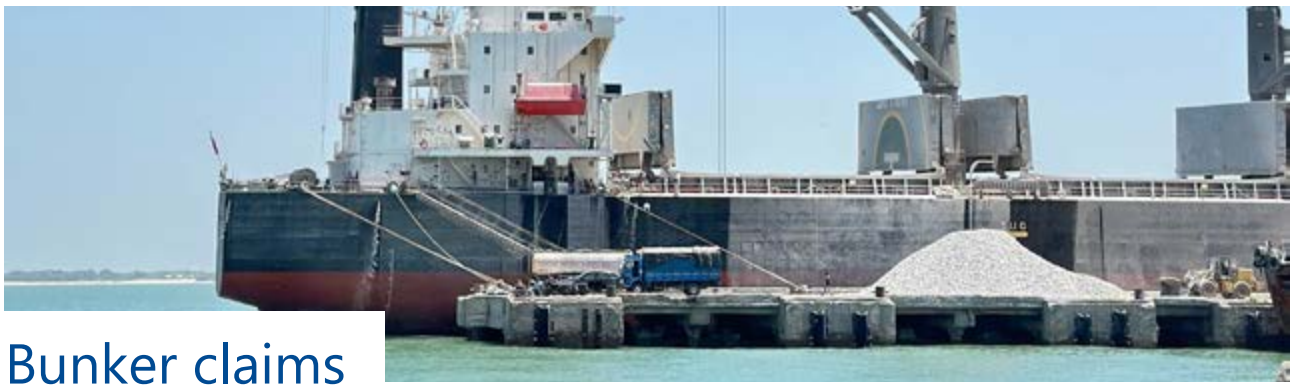
A total of 4,051 vessel inspections were recorded across a wide range of ship types. Bulk carriers accounted for the largest share, with 952 inspections, of which 837 were compliant and 115 were non-compliant, resulting in a non-compliance rate of 12%.

Container ships followed closely with 938 inspections and recorded the highest number of non-compliant cases at 175, giving a non-compliance rate of 19%. Oil and product tankers represented 839 inspections, with 87 instances of non-compliance, equivalent to a 10% non-compliance rate.

Among other major vessel categories, general cargo ships recorded 450 inspections and a 13% non-compliance rate, while RORO cargo ships achieved one of the strongest performances among high-volume vessel types, with only 9% of inspections found to be non-compliant. Cruise ships recorded a 12% non-compliance rate across 182 inspections.

In addition, LNG and gas carriers recorded a 12% non-compliance rate, while offshore support vessels (OSVs) achieved a rate of 6%. ROPAX vessels and other passenger ships recorded higher rates of 22% and 26% respectively.

The highest non-compliance rate among vessel categories was recorded on fishing vessels at 50% followed by naval and auxiliary vessels at 37%, although both categories were represented by small sample sizes. Superyachts recorded a 25% non-compliance rate, while reefers reported 20%.



Bunker claims surge 50% as concerns over fuel quality risks grow

Between January and May 2026, Gard recorded more than 70 bunker-related claims, marking a 50% increase compared with the same period last year. The increase highlights a growing trend in both the number and complexity of bunker-related incidents. As highlighted in the "Beyond Specification: Bunker Claims Insights in early 2026" report from Gard, data from the first five months of 2026 shows a notable rise in claims between January and February and the period from March to May, coinciding with increased regional uncertainty and pressure across global fuel supply chains.

While the rise in claims does not directly confirm that geopolitical tensions are the primary cause, it reflects a market facing greater operational challenges. Changes in fuel-blending practices, shifts in sourcing strategies, and tighter fuel availability are among the factors contributing to a more challenging bunker quality environment.

Industry experts and fuel testing laboratories have also warned that current market conditions could encourage the use of lower-cost blend components, increasing the risk of fuel quality issues and a further rise in bunker-related disputes.

Key findings

- Sharp rise in bunker claims and geopolitics: Bunker-related claims increased significantly in early 2026, with over 70 cases recorded – a 50% rise compared to 2025. Most claims involved fuel quality, with a noticeable uptick following the escalation of the Middle East conflict.
- Global risk profile with concentration driven by supply volumes: Bunker quality incidents were recorded worldwide, reflecting a broadly dispersed and global risk environment rather than a localized issue. Higher numbers of claims at major hubs such as Singapore, Houston, and ARA mainly reflect their large bunkering volumes.
- VLSFO remains the primary source of claims: Very Low Sulphur Fuel Oil (VLSFO) accounts for the vast majority of bunker quality claims. Its complex blended nature increases the likelihood of variability and contamination, making it more prone to quality issues. This reinforces that VLSFO continues to be the key technical risk area in marine fuel usage.
- ISO 8217 compliance does not guarantee fuel suitability: A significant proportion of cases involved fuels that met ISO 8217 parameters but still caused operational issues and damage to machinery. This underscores the growing importance of Clause 5, which focuses on whether fuel is fit for use and free from harmful substances. Standard testing alone is often insufficient, requiring more advanced analysis to identify problematic contaminants.
- Claims are driven by both technical and contractual challenges: Bunker disputes are often complex due to misaligned contractual relationships between owners, charterers, and suppliers. Issues related to binding sample, parameter(s) to be tested, time bars and evidentiary requirements frequently complicate claims resolution.
- Operational impact is often underestimated compared to headline casualties: While no major casualties were directly linked to poor fuel in this dataset, several vessels were disabled or required towage. These incidents can create high exposure when occurring in congested or coastal waters. The absence of catastrophic outcomes should not obscure the underlying operational risk.

Read the report:
https://bit.ly/4gD0LgD.

Marine Lubricants: A Hidden Seaworthiness Risk

Marine lubricants are vital for the functioning of a vessel's propulsion, power generation, and auxiliary machinery. Inadequate lubrication can result in increased wear, reduced performance, or even catastrophic failures of critical machinery, thereby directly affecting the vessel's safety and operational reliability.

During service, marine lubricants are subject to degradation and consumption, influenced by mechanical stress, thermal cycles, and exposure to contaminants. Consequently, there is a constant need either to replenish or completely replace these lubricants to sustain optimal machinery performance and reliability. In anticipation of these replenishment and replacement needs, lubricant stocks are maintained on board vessels. These stocks must be monitored and replenished to maintain adequate onboard supplies throughout the voyage and safeguard machinery reliability, thereby ensuring the vessel's seaworthiness.

Where the non-availability or quality of lubricants is determined as the proximate cause of a casualty, a Ship Owner is likely to face questions as to the seaworthiness of the vessel and whether due diligence had been exercised, especially if the vessel commenced the voyage with insufficient lubricant stock or had knowledge of the deteriorated state of the in-service lubricant. This underscores the need to integrate these considerations within the Planned Maintenance System (PMS) and the Lubricant Management Plan (LMP), supported by robust procurement practices and contingency planning.

Download the Risk Alert by Steamship Mutual at **https://bit.ly/3RTUliA**.

2026 Australia Tahiti Rendezvous record-breaking edition



Photo credit: AIMEX

The Australia Tahiti Rendezvous, one of the superyacht industry's most enduring Pacific traditions, has delivered its most successful edition to date.

Held from 25 to 26 June at Marina Taina, Papeete, Tahiti, this year's event welcomed more than 150 visiting crew members, a record attendance reflecting the remarkable concentration of very large vessels currently berthed in French Polynesian waters.

Founded almost 20 years ago, the Rendezvous continues to evolve as both a valuable networking platform and a celebration of the ties between Australia and Tahiti. The 2026 programme spanned informal business engagement, including the Rivergate Marina and Shipyard's VIP Captains' Lunch through to the most highly attended dockside celebration to date, showcasing a blend of Australian and Polynesian culture.

The 2026 Rendezvous brought together a strong delegation of Australian marine industry businesses, demonstrating the breadth and capability of the Australian marine sector, including Australian Superyachts, Carter Marine Agencies, CHAPMAN, d'Albora, Integ Marine Group, Main Beach Superyacht Marina, Melanesian Yachts, Superyacht Group Great Barrier Reef, The Yard Brisbane and Yachtsmiths.

Tow rope failure injured crew on board tug Svitzer Avon



Vessel photo courtesy of Martin Pick (MarineTraffic)

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has closed an investigation into an incident that left two injured on board tug Svitzer Avon.

The MAIB investigated a similar accident involving Svitzer Mercurius in 2019, resulting in a recommendation 2022/138 to Svitzer Marine Limited.

What happened

At approximately 1954 on 4 February 2025, the UK registered tugs Svitzer Avon and Svitzer Brunel left the lock at Royal Portbury Dock, Bristol, England to meet the car carrier Auto Eco in the King Road approaches to the lock. Auto Eco had a pilot embarked for the entry into port and was to employ both tugs for a ship assist move into the lock and onwards to a berth in the dock.

Following an agreement made before departure Svitzer Avon's relief master was supervising the mate, who was at the vessel's controls for the move. The relief master was type qualified for the tug but had little experience on Svitzer Avon.

At 2003, the tug was in position astern of the car carrier. Svitzer Avon's crew passed the towline, consisting of a tow rope and pennant joined with a cow hitch via a heaving line and messenger rope, to Auto Eco's mooring deck where it was then made fast to a bollard. Having passed through the tug's forward staple, the tow rope was held by the tug's winch brake. Although fitted, a render system was not used.

At 2009, the pilot called Svitzer Brunel and requested the tug to standby on the port bow, followed shortly afterwards by the instruction "25% straight back" to Svitzer Avon.

At around 2011, an overcorrection in handling occurred as Auto Eco was turning to line up for an approach to the lock and Svitzer Avon was manoeuvring to hold position astern, causing Svitzer Avon to shear and heel. The tow rope parted under the increased load experienced during the recovery manoeuvre.

The tow rope recoiled, struck Svitzer Avon's wheelhouse and shattered the forward windscreen glazing. Debris also caused the stern window to shatter. Flying glass caused minor injuries to the tug's master and mate.

After checking each other for serious injury, Svitzer Avon's crew quickly changed tasking with the bow tug to complete the move. Once Auto Eco was secured at the berth, Svitzer Avon returned alongside and was met by the port's medical team. The master and mate were transferred to hospital, treated for their minor injuries and later discharged.

Findings

- The relief master was not authorised to supervise the mate during the move.
- The towage company's training regime was not clearly defined or closely monitored.
- The tow rope had previously parted in July 2024 after 800 tasks and had been changed end-to-end. The tow rope subsequently parted on its 307th task due to the excessive towline assembly loading experienced during an overcorrection in a shiphandling manoeuvre.

- The towage company relied on visual inspection and tow rope rotation for towline risk management. The company did not follow best practice nor conduct residual strength testing on parted ropes or as part of its towline risk management system.
- The wheelhouse glazing met the appropriate standard.

The report also shared the actions taken, including what Svitzer Marine Limited has done.

Find out more: **https://bit.ly/4xKjtJg**.



EBI launches Energy Transition for Recreational Boating in Europe roadmap for alternative fuel infrastructure in marinas

European Boating Industry (EBI) has published a roadmap titled Energy Transition for Recreational Boating in Europe: A roadmap for alternative fuel infrastructure, setting out industry and policy recommendations relating to the decarbonisation of recreational boating and the development of marina infrastructure across Europe.

The document highlights the need for a technology-neutral and multi-pathway approach to the energy transition, recognising the diversity of Europe's recreational boating fleet of more than 6.5 million vessels and the operational realities of marinas across coastal and inland waters.

According to EBI, recreational boating accounts for approximately 0.4 per cent of EU transport greenhouse gas emissions. The roadmap examines how the sector is preparing for a transition towards alternative propulsion technologies while contributing to wider European climate objectives.

Marinas are identified as a key component of that transition. The roadmap calls for cooperation between industry, marina operators, EU institutions, national governments and regional stakeholders to ensure infrastructure development keeps pace with changes in propulsion technology.

Philip Easthill, secretary-general of European Boating Industry, says: "The recreational boating sector is committed to contributing to Europe's energy transition. Our roadmap shows that the solutions are being developed and a multi-pathway approach is the way forward. Europe's diverse boating ecosystem requires a pragmatic and technology-neutral approach supported by the right infrastructure, investment, and regulatory framework.

"We look forward to presenting the Roadmap to the EU institutions and cooperating with all players to make progress in the coming years to support sustainability and competitiveness of the sector."

The roadmap identifies sustainable drop-in fuels, including Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), as an option that can be used in most existing diesel engines without major modifications or additional infrastructure.

According to EBI, HVO can reduce lifecycle CO2 emissions by up to 90 per cent compared with fossil diesel, while also lowering particulate and NOx emissions.

Electric and hybrid propulsion systems are also highlighted, particularly for smaller vessels and inland waterways. Hydrogen and methanol are being explored as potential future options for larger boats.

Download the roadmap at **https://bit.ly/4eiXdy8**.



Amadeus courtesy of Frits Olinga (Shipspotting.com)

Deckhand died after falling overboard from potting vessel in North Sea

Exhaustion combined with ineffective fall prevention measures led to a fatal man overboard incident on crab potting vessel Amadeus (TH7). The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has released its report into the incident. They have also published a safety flyer to the fishing industry about the dangers of pot hauling and the need for effective fall prevention measures, including fatigue management.

What happened

At about 0009 on 13 December 2023, a deckhand on the UK registered crab potting vessel Amadeus fell overboard while recovering crab pots in rough seas in the German Bight, North Sea. Despite immediate recovery attempts, the deckhand became unresponsive within minutes in cold water and could not be recovered. A major search and rescue operation was launched but was unsuccessful in locating the deckhand.

Safety issues

- The pot hauling method required crew to lean over the vessel's side in an unstable posture, creating a significant risk of falling overboard.
- No effective fall prevention measures were in place during pot hauling operations.
- The casualty was rapidly incapacitated in cold water and, without a personal flotation device, survivability was significantly reduced.
- The vessel was unprepared for a man overboard emergency; drills had not been practised and recovery arrangements were not ready for immediate use.
- The crew's working pattern resulted in significant fatigue, and existing work and rest rules did not prevent this risk from becoming embedded in routine operations.
- Safety management arrangements and regulatory assurance processes did not ensure that risks were effectively identified, controlled or monitored.

Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, Rob Loder, said: "This accident must not be dismissed as yet another fatal man overboard from a fishing vessel. In the blink of an eye, a young man lost his life doing a task many in the industry would consider routine – but there was nothing routine about the physical toll it took. After weeks of

demanding work and inadequate rest, he was hauling heavy pots in rough winter seas, repeatedly leaning over the vessel's side in an exhausting and unstable task, until one violent lurch was enough to send him overboard.

"Exhaustion must not become simply part of the job. This accident is a stark reminder that, without effective safeguards, this could happen to any crew member."

Recommendations
Safety recommendations have been made to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to improve manual handling guidance, strengthen the management of fishermen's working time and fatigue risk, extend fatigue protections more consistently to all fishermen, mandate proportionate safety management systems for fishing vessels of 15m length overall and above, and strengthen survey, inspection and enforcement processes.

Safety recommendations have also been made to the vessel's operating company to improve man overboard preparedness, assess and reduce the manual handling risks associated with pot hauling, establish verifiable arrangements for managing crew work and rest hours, and implement a structured safety management system to support safe working practices on board.

Download the PDF:
https://bit.ly/4eXf2SH.

Guidance for the safe carriage of cocoa butter in containers



The International Safe Containerised Cargo Organisation (CINS) has published revised guidelines for the safe carriage of cocoa butter in containers, updating industry practices for one of the sector's most temperature-sensitive cargoes.

Developed by a working group of CINS members, the updated guidance is aligned with the principles of the IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code), which sets out international standards for the safe packing and handling of containerised cargo.

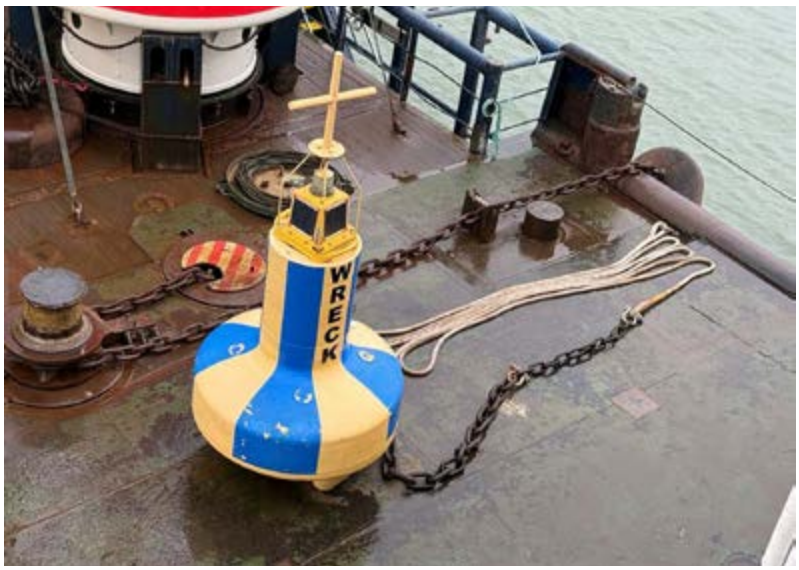
The 2026 edition replaces the previous January 2018 version and reflects significant developments across both the cocoa butter industry and container shipping sector over the past eight years. CINS said the updated guidelines are intended to enhance cargo integrity and reduce risk by addressing the unique characteristics of cocoa butter, which is highly susceptible to melting and temperature-related damage during transport.

Cocoa butter is derived from whole cocoa beans which are fermented, roasted, and then separated from their hulls. About 54–58% of the residue is cocoa butter. It contains various amounts of saturated fats (57-64%) and unsaturated fats (43-36%).1 Cocoa butter becomes soft and malleable at high temperatures and can melt between 30°C and 37°C. Having become warm or molten, it can retain the latent heat and remain in such a condition down to as low as 17°C.

Upon heating, cocoa butter expands and may cause it to burst the packaging and seep out, staining adjacent cartons and possibly leaking outside of the container or causing damage to the container structure. There have been incidences of cocoa butter melting on board ships, resulting in the clogging of ships' bilges.

Download the guidance: **https://bit.ly/4vbG7Z8**.

Royal College of Art to develop low-cost marine aids to navigation



Harwich depot where Trinity House services UK aids to navigation

The Royal College of Art (RCA) has launched a new transformative design initiative to enhance maritime safety in Small Islands and Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

This three-year project awarded with a combined grant of £1.1m will address the safety gap in the world's most vulnerable waterways by developing low-cost co-designed marine aids to navigation.

Currently, vessels at sea rely on aids to navigation (AtoN) that must conform to global standards set by IALA. While these industrially manufactured tools are essential for mitigating maritime risks, the cost, logistical challenges, resources and lack of local technical knowledge often creates a significant barrier for developing regions, leaving critical waterways underserved.

The aim is to co-design and develop low-cost aid(s) to navigation suitable for sustainable local construction and maintenance. This will involve engaging with local communities to collaboratively design and build AtoN solution/s that leverage local expertise in materials and making through a co-design process to exchange knowledge between the project partners.

These prototypes will undergo extensive testing and validation to ensure they provide the same high-level reliability as current alternatives, even in the most challenging maritime climates. The project's findings will be documented in a joint publication, providing a roadmap for future implementation.

The ultimate goal is a significant reduction in maritime risk in SIDS and LDCs ensuring that the oceans remain a safe and productive space for all nations, regardless of their economic standing.

In its capacity as a UNESCO Ocean Decade Implementing Partner, the RCA leverages its world leading expertise in co-design and participatory research to drive innovation and secure a resilient and sustainable future for our oceans.

The project is in partnership with Hawkshill Consulting, the International Organisation for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) and funded by Lloyd's Register Foundation (LRF), and the International Foundation for Aids to Navigation (IFAN).

Global cooperation brings breakthrough on first international Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) Code

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has welcomed global agreement on a new international Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) Code, due to be published next month.

For eight years, the MCA's autonomy team has represented the UK's interests in working groups dedicated to the development of the first non-mandatory International Code of Safety for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS Code).

The Code provides the first international regulatory framework for remotely operated and autonomous cargo ships covered under SOLAS Chapter I. It will be published by the IMO on 1 July.

Leanne Page, MCA Assistant Director - Future Technical Standards, said: "The new code is game-changing progress for the MASS sector, delivered by maritime nations working together on safe and pragmatic standards and driven forward by the IMO.

"We're very proud to have played a leading role in reaching this major milestone.

"The maritime industry is inherently global, so progress towards a harmonised regulatory framework is vital to support consistency, fairness and – most importantly – safe operations internationally.

"The MCA is now appealing for responses and contributions from across the maritime sector in the UK. With your help we can ensure MASS standards support industry and protect safety for everyone on the water."

The next step of international negotiations is the building of a framework for an experience-building phase, which will inform the eventual development of the mandatory MASS Code.



Global Maritime Trends 2026 Barometer report

The maritime industry is set to undergo significant transformation over the coming decades, shaped by accelerating technology adoption, the global climate agenda, and intensifying geopolitical and macroeconomic shifts, according to the Global Maritime Trends 2026 Barometer from Lloyd's Register (LR) and Lloyd's Register Foundation.

The maritime and energy sectors are at a pivotal inflection point. While energy technologies continue to advance, progress remains too slow to meet net-zero targets. Data collection and reporting have increased significantly, but without stronger global cooperation, both the energy and digital transitions risk becoming increasingly regionalised and fragmented.

Key takeaways

1. Progress in the energy transition is real, but it is structurally uneven and insufficient. There has been incremental technological progress. However, deployment lags ambition, and progress is concentrated in a few regions and hubs.
2. Policy misalignment and geopolitical fragmentation are now the primary pain points. The biggest constraint is no longer technology, but its coordination and governance.
3. The human dimension of the transition remains significantly misaligned with equitable net-zero ambitions. Progress in safety, training and workforce development is still uneven and slow. Structural changes persist across fleets and geographies. Without a more coordinated and inclusive approach, the sector risks a fragmented, tiered workforce, undermining both safety and long-term sustainability.
4. Fuel Emission reporting will continue, whether in a unified or fragmented approach, and now is the time to develop a strategy to ensure data collection, quality and maturity.
5. A lack of standardisation previously stood as a barrier to digital transformation, but the IMO compendium and other initiatives will accelerate digital uptake. As these initiatives move towards maturity, the opportunities for digital efficiencies increase. The direction is becoming clearer and so now is the time to act.
6. The barrier for crew digital services is no longer held back by connectivity. It is good to see the improvements in crew welfare through digital technologies. It is now time to build on this foundation and raise standards and support for crew.

Download the report at **https://bit.ly/3QiO4fZ**.

MCA sets up new Yacht Unlimited Certificate of Competency

Maritime & Coastguard Agency

MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

MSN 1858 (M) Amendment 2

Training & Certification Guidance: UK Requirements for Deck Officers on Large Yachts (24m and over)

The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is launching a new qualification pathway for Deck Officers to safely advance their careers on large yachts, strengthening professionalism and opportunity for crew and operators in the growing sector.

The new Yacht Unlimited Certificate of Competency (CoC) allows holders to become Chief Mate or Master on any size yacht – including those above 3,000 gross tonnage – anywhere in the world without having to interrupt their career to gain training and experience on cargo vessels.

The new route instead accepts modern, tailored training through the recently updated UK maritime syllabus – a product of the MCA's ongoing Cadet Training and Modernisation Programme.

MCA Chief Examiner Ajit Jacob said: "The Yacht Unlimited CoC wraps up safety, professionalism and flexibility to improve opportunity and performance for seafarers, operators, passengers and the wider UK maritime industry.

"This groundbreaking approach recognises the skills that are indispensable to all deck officers, as well as the require specialist knowledge and experience required to lead crews safely and effectively in separate sectors.

"We hope the new qualification pathway propels ambitious deck officers into the career of their choice while maintaining the high standards expected at unlimited management level."

The Yacht Unlimited CoC will be issued in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) alternative certification provisions and will be formally communicated to the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The previous certification route, even for those intending to work exclusively on large yachts, required experienced Masters of Yachts to first obtain an Officer of the Watch (OOW) Unlimited Merchant CoC.

They then had to complete further training and additional seagoing service, progressing through Chief Mate and further seagoing service before ultimately achieving Master Unlimited.

This process frequently took many years to complete and proved unfeasible for many experienced professionals.

The new route streamlines progression, allowing seagoing service on yachts to be accepted as operationally appropriate, while remaining fully aligned with the high competency and safety standards of the STCW Convention for Unlimited CoC.

This approach maintains regulatory integrity while avoiding unnecessary duplication of service and loss of career continuity for experienced seafarers.

The new route enables progression from Master (Yachts) less than 3,000 GT to a Master unlimited (Yachts) CoC and a new route for Chief Mate unlimited (Yachts) CoC.

It also provides streamlined progression for candidates who have already completed management level academic qualifications at MCA approved colleges, such as a Foundation Degree or Higher National Diploma (HND).

The Yacht Unlimited CoC was created through extensive collaboration between the MCA, maritime colleges, seafarer representatives and industry operators.

It is specifically for large yachts above 3,000 gross tonnage and does not grant Unlimited Chief Mate or Master status on any other vessel type.

A corresponding pathway for engineers to gain Yacht Unlimited CoC is also in development, following the same principles, and is scheduled to be launched this year.

Full details of the new Yacht Unlimited CoC can be found in Section 4 of MSN 1858 (Amendment 2).

Turning embarkation and disembarkation regulations into safe practice

A single defective ladder step, improperly secured gangway, or poorly rigged pilot ladder can turn a routine transfer operation into a serious accident within seconds.

Ship operators need to always remember that safe embarkation and disembarkation operations depend not only on compliant equipment, but also on a well-implemented Safety Management System (SMS), effective crew training, and a strong safety culture onboard.

Safe embarkation and disembarkation operations remain a critical aspect of shipboard safety management. Although international regulations establish the minimum technical and operational requirements for access arrangements and pilot transfer operations, the effective implementation of these requirements ultimately depends on the vessel's Safety Management System (SMS) and the ability of ship managers and onboard personnel to apply them consistently in practice.

As the maritime industry moves toward the early implementation of revised IMO pilot transfer regulations, shipping companies are increasingly expected to go beyond simple regulatory compliance and adopt a more proactive safety approach.

Compliance today is no longer limited to maintaining certified equipment; it also requires robust procedures, effective supervision, crew competence, and a strong onboard safety culture.

Read in full: **https://bit.ly/3Q4bxBA**.



John Denholm appointed Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping

John Denholm (pictured right)

The Board of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has unanimously elected John Denholm CBE as Chairman of the Board. The decision was made by the ICS Board of Directors at the organisation's Annual General Meeting, held at Palazzo Valentini in Rome, Italy.

John Denholm succeeds Emanuele Grimaldi, President and Managing Director of Grimaldi Euromed SpA, who has served as Chairman since June 2022.

A qualified chartered accountant, John Denholm joined the family-owned shipping business J. & J. Denholm, becoming Chief Executive in 1993. He currently serves as Executive Chairman of J. & J. Denholm and Denholm Energy Services. Throughout his career, John has held numerous leadership positions across the maritime industry, including serving as President of both the UK Chamber of Shipping and BIMCO.

Commenting on his appointment, John Denholm, said, "It is a great honour to be appointed Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping and to represent an industry that underpins global trade and prosperity."



What caught my eye...

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



Teenager rescues two men from inflatable boat off Isle of Skye

I have picked up this story to share simply because it is heart-warming. These days we bash our kids for spending too much time in front of their gaming machines or whiling away endless hours on social media. But clearly this is not for 15-year-old Archie Law, who rescued two men who fell from an inflatable toy boat off the Isle of Skye in Scotland, after spotting them drifting in Broadford Bay. He took his own boat out to help and rescue them.

The incident happened when the UK coastguard received reports of two men in difficulty in the water after falling from a blow-up inflatable boat. The RNLI crew from Kyle of Lochalsh launched a lifeboat within ten minutes and headed towards the area where the men were last seen. By the time the lifeboat crew reached the location, local teenager Archie Law had already spotted the pair from shore, gone out in his own vessel and brought them safely back to land.

Law told STV News, "I went down to the shore and had my binoculars and realised they were paddling and going round in circles.

"I thought maybe I need to do something here. So, I talked to my mum, and we made the decision that it wasn't too bad a night to go out. The tide was in and I was in my boat, so I went out to see if they needed any help.

"They had no life jackets or phones. I was pretty shocked. I didn't believe that when I got there. They were glad to see me. They could have drowned. It could have been very serious."

"They seemed very cold and tired and thankful I had spotted them. I got them back to the wee pier and they were met with towels and warm clothes."

What an adventure this must have been for Archie, and seeing someone of his age who is prepared to use such initiative to pull off a rescue of this kind is a story worth sharing.



The U.S. Coast Guard offers reward for stolen navigational beacon

Have you seen this missing beacon?

Now who on earth would steal a lighthouse beacon? A souvenir or trophy hunter perhaps. But clearly whoever committed this crime had no idea of the serious potential ramifications of their actions. I have reported on similar instances before too, so this is not an isolated case!

The U.S. Coast Guard has offered a $1,000 reward for information on who stole a navigational beacon from an important lighthouse at the harbour at Superior, Wisconsin. The "reckless" removal created an extremely hazardous condition for mariners who rely on the light for navigation, the service said.

According to the Coast Guard, an unknown suspect broke into the Superior Entry Lighthouse on Wisconsin Point, a breakwater that shelters the harbour entrance at Superior Bay. The channel entrance serves laker traffic to and from Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin, where there are large-scale bulk terminals for grain and iron ore.

The structure of the lighthouse itself is privately owned, but the light belongs to the Coast Guard. It is not a traditional Fresnel lens white light - that system was retired decades ago - but rather a flashing green beacon. The suspect broke in, cut the power cable and took the beacon, the Coast Guard said in a statement. Since the light was owned by the service, the theft is a federal felony.

A new life saving device is launched - a cool box!

And here is another account of a remarkable dice with death. This is certainly a bizarre story involving a cool box, which fortunately had a lucky ending for the person who was left clinging to it! The unnamed individual was rescued after spending more than four hours in the water clinging to a cool box following a major multi-agency Coastguard search off the Gwynedd coast in North Wales, UK.

Both of Criccieth RNLI's lifeboats were launched after reports of an overdue rigid inflatable boat (RIB) which had departed from Porthmadog. As volunteer crew responded, an off-duty Criccieth RNLI crew member working for Gwynedd Council's Maritime Department reported finding the overturned vessel on a sandbank near Porthmadog. Unsurprisingly, this significantly changed the nature of the incident, with immediate concerns for the missing person.

A statement from RNLI Criccieth Lifeboat said, "Following an extensive search, the casualty was located on Harlech Beach. It is believed they had been in the water for more than four hours after the ebbing tide carried them from the estuary while they managed to stay afloat by clinging to a cool box.

"The casualty was suffering severe effects of cold-water immersion and was taken aboard the HM Coastguard Search and Rescue Helicopter before being transferred directly to hospital for further treatment."

What a story and who would have thought that a humble cool box could become a life saver!



Photo credit: Criccieth RNLI



Long-term growth and stability are the targets for the Boat Building Academy following industry award

IIMS has a close association with the UK's Boat Building Academy (BBA) going back several years, so I was especially interested to read this story about their recent award and future aspirations. BBA says that winning Business of the Year in British Marine's Boatbuilders Sector Awards comes at a point when the organisation is focused on securing its long-term future rather than celebrating past achievements. The Lyme Regis-based training provider is aiming to buy the freehold of its waterfront campus after five years of operating without recurring public funding.

"We have transformed the BBA into a financially resilient and sustainable organisation operating without any recurring public funding," said director and trustee Will Reed. "Buying our building will allow rental expenditure to be redirected into bolstering general funds and potentially direct student support."

Since opening in 1997, the academy has trained nearly 3,000 people across boatbuilding, furniture making and specialist short courses.

The academy is now preparing to purchase the freehold of its waterfront premises. "This will permanently secure our future and the future of boat building training in the UK, and we would very much like to hear from businesses and organisations interested in helping us to fund this project," Reed says.

Well done Will to you and all your colleagues on winning this prestigious award and good luck for the future!

More next month.
Mike Schwarz



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