IIMS News Bulletin

SEPTEMBER 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

Three little, but often misunderstood words - safety management system, or SMS for short - have been everywhere in the maritime news recently. Yes, SMS seems to be the current buzz phrase of the day! I have seen an alarming increase in incident and accident reporting referencing SMS failures and non-adherence as the primary cause.

So, what's going wrong? Why is the SMS being overlooked or worst of all, simply ignored? This is the central theme of my column this month.

Let me start by giving you a few pointers to focus your mind, as it has done mine:

- The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has recommended a ship operator take further steps to improve its safety management system, after a mixed cargo and passenger vessel lost steering in the Bass Strait last year.

- To kick off Maritime Safety Week recently in the UK, Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents at the UK MAIB, Rob Loder, wrote *'Beyond the binder: making safety management systems work at sea'.*

  He continued, "A thorough and comprehensive SMS is one of the most powerful tools available to mariners. Required under international law by the IMO, an SMS sets out procedures, processes and policies, guiding

crews through routine operations and, critically, identifying risks and setting out how to manage them. Done properly, emergency response procedures are planned in advance, so that when a crisis strikes, nothing is left to chance.

"But an SMS is only as good as its implementation. Too often, our investigations reveal a troubling pattern. Often SMS have failed to prevent an accident because they had not fully identified all the operational hazards. We have also had examples where the SMS was seen as a compliance exercise and filed away rather than used as a way to engage staff in working safely. An SMS should be a living document that is regularly reviewed and updated."

- The most destructive mistake in maritime safety management is reducing the SMS to a bureaucratic exercise. On paper, the company looks safe: thick manuals, dozens of forms, complete binders ready for audits.

- Adherence to the SMS would certainly have helped minimise the events that led to the disaster and perhaps might even have prevented it from happening altogether.

- Viewing SMS as a cost, not an investment - many managers focus on minimum compliance. They see SMS only as something "you must have" to pass audits and avoid detentions. They miss the fact that an effective SMS reduces accidents, downtime, and insurance costs.

- An SMS created only in the office is destined to fail. When procedures are written by shore staff and handed down to ships without input from seafarers, the result is predictable: documents that are impractical, ignored, and often bypassed.

I guess you get my drift and the rather depressing picture I am painting. Safety Management Systems are now also making their way into the UK under 24 metre regulatory landscape for the first time following the launch of the MCA's Sport & Pleasure Vessel Code, which mandates them. To some vessel owners and operators this will be an entirely new concept.

I recommend an excellent short guide entitled *'5 common SMS mistakes and how to avoid them'* by Deepbridge Maritime Consulting - an excellent resource seemingly. A PDF copy can be freely downloaded at **https://bit.ly/4yhKG6b**.

You will forgive me now for turning to highlight what is a UK centric, but important story that is not directly related to marine surveying, but to the safety of life at sea. Driving a car in the UK under the influence of alcohol has been illegal for many years but not so getting behind the helm of a recreational vessel. This feels like a loophole in the law that needs urgently fixing, and fast, before more people die needlessly on the water. I would like to personally add my support to the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch's (MAIB) recommendation to see a change in the law.

Here's the background to the story. A recent MAIB report has examined the collision of the rigid inflatable boat Peaky Blinder with a navigation beacon in Portsmouth Harbour on 14 August 2025. Two people tragically and needlessly lost their lives and a third was injured.

The report found that the boat was travelling at an unsafe speed and that the alcohol consumed by its operator substantially increased the likelihood of the accident. The report has also identified a longstanding gap in UK law, with no enforceable alcohol limits applying to non-professional mariners.

As a consequence, the MAIB has recommended that the Secretary of State for Transport:

- bring into force the alcohol provisions for non-professional mariners contained in section 80 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003

- introduce proportionate secondary legislation defining how the limits will apply, and

- establish a national education and awareness campaign to support behavioural change among recreational boaters.

The UK Parliament legislated alcohol limits for both professional and non-professional mariners in 2003, but the principal provisions relating to recreational users were excluded when most of the legislation was brought into force the following year.

Introducing alcohol limits would not amount to a blanket ban on drinking aboard recreational vessels. It would, however, mean that the person responsible for navigating the vessel must remain within prescribed limits. And that seems wholly sensible and proportionate to me.

Survey well,

MikeSchwarz
Chief Executive Officer

Mike Schwarz welcomes Meggan Bell

New face joins IIMS

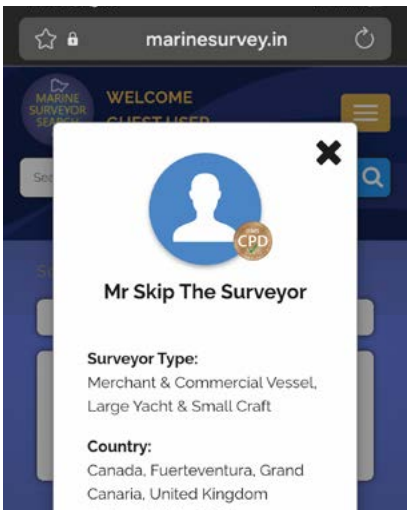
At the end of last month, IIMS waved goodbye to Erin Kelsey. After a couple of years working in the IIMS Certifying Authority team supporting David Parsons, she has relocated with her partner to the north of England.

Erin is replaced by Meggan Bell who steps into the hot seat. Meggan is an experienced administrator whose most recent role was working for the UK National Health Service in Southampton.

Meggan has had a couple of weeks side by side training with Erin, and her first job is to become capable to process and authorise the many tonnage applications IIMS receives. Thereafter, she will learn to support David with MCA coding administration.

We wish Meggan good luck in her new position.

Is your IIMS listing accurate?



A special plea to IIMS members to check how accurate is what we say about your surveying skills on your listing pages?

A recent open debate at the quarterly management board meeting sparked an interesting debate about an individual member's list of specialisations that they have been approved to display.

After much discussion, it has been decided to discard the word 'specialisation' in favour of 'surveying categories'.

The word 'specialisation' is defined as the process of focusing on a specific subject, skill, or type of work, or a particular area of expertise. Specialisation occurs when a marine surveyor concentrates their efforts and resources just on a narrow range of surveying activities to build high proficiency in that area of work.

It is apparent from looking at some existing members' listings that they offer and perform a far wider range of surveys than just those they specialise in. Therefore, the term 'surveying categories' better serves the thousands who will search the IIMS website or search app looking for a surveyor. For example, if it is 20 years since you last conducted a bulk cargo survey, or 15 years since you inspected a wooden craft, IIMS would urge you to consider if you are still competent to carry these out.

Furthermore, in discussion with a number of senior and experienced members, it became apparent that they no longer perform the surveying activities they were approved to do some years ago. Indeed, some said they are now engaged in other activities having extended their experience and knowledge, which are not shown on their listing.

This is a long-term project which will take time to complete. But for now, IIMS in asking members to take a long hard look at their surveying categories. Are they still correct? The Institute won't remove any of your existing listings without your permission, but you are asked to do an honest assessment and appraisal.

We will be writing to all members to notify them that this process is underway.

If in the meantime you want to start the ball rolling, please reach out to Membership Secretary, Rachel Lock, by email at **membershipsupport@iims.org.uk**.

The Report September magazine (edition 117) published

Published today, highlights of this edition, which is packed with essential news, comment and advice, include:

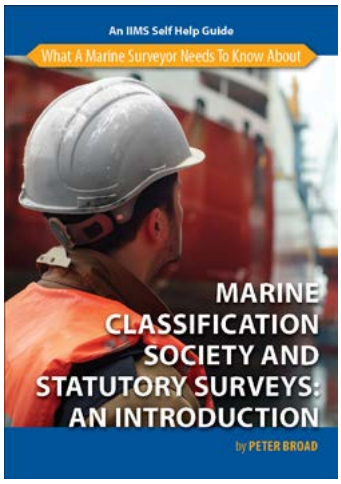
- Do you know why a Ship Structural Access Manual is required onboard?
- Ensure the SMS adequately addresses electrical hazards
- Latest guidance for shipping lithium-ion cells and batteries in containers
- Spotlight on emerging AI technology in the maritime sector
- The harmonised future of electric boating
- Whitepaper highlights rising barnacle biofouling risk for ship operators as regulations tighten
- Seven pillars for improved PSC performance
- Large scale required to improve boat recycling efficiency
- Justifying sustainable superyacht refits

Read this and past editions of The Report magazine at: **https://bit.ly/2WQTosu**.

What A Marine Surveyor Needs To Know About

What a marine surveyor needs to know about – IIMS handy guides

We have published more than 30 self-help handy guides, written by acknowledged experts in their field, in a wide variety of subjects relevant to our membership. Here are just our three latest guides that are out now. Buy your guide now: **https://bit.ly/2KIN5WM**.

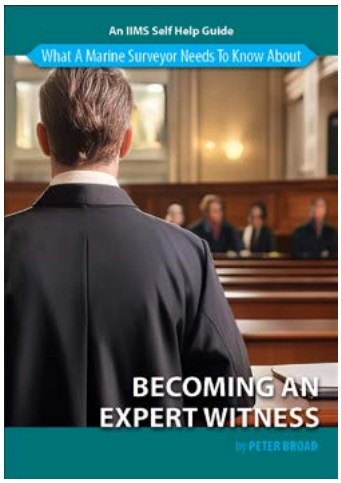


What a Marine Surveyor needs to know about Marine Classification Society and Statutory Surveys – an introduction

The aim of this handy guide is to give readers an introduction to and provide them with insight and knowledge about:

- What are Marine Classification Societies?
- Who carries out Marine Classification Society Surveys?
- Where and when are Marine Classification Society Surveys carried out?
- What are Statutory Surveys?
- Who carries out Marine Statutory Surveys?
- Where and when are Marine Statutory Surveys carried out?

£27 ebook | £30 paperback

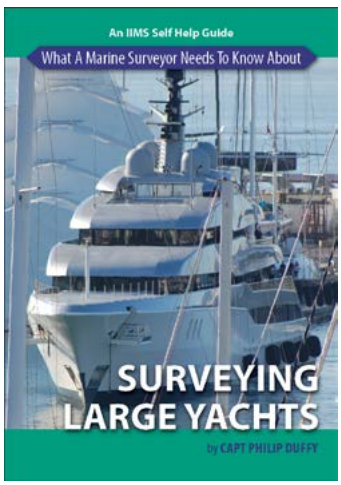


What a Marine Surveyor needs to know about becoming an expert witness

Becoming an expert witness can be a daunting prospect but lucrative activity. Standing up in a packed courtroom to give your evidence, even if you are confident that you know your subject inside out, is still a challenge, especially the first time, and in what can be intense surroundings in the court.

Being prepared for every eventuality is essential, and that is the aim of this guide. Author Peter Broad is experienced in giving expert witness in court and is a seasoned veteran, making him perfectly placed to write this handy guide.

£30 ebook | £35 paperback



What a Marine Surveyor Needs to Know About Surveying Large Yachts

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, the surveyor's primary responsibility remains unchanged. Is the vessel seaworthy and fit for purpose?

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.

£37 ebook | £40 paperback

WSC report containers lost at sea more than doubled in 2025

The World Shipping Council Containers Lost at Sea 2026 Report revealed that an estimated 1,478 containers, two-and-a-half times the 576 lost in 2024.

In 2025 approximately 280 million containers were transported globally, which meant the 1,478 lost was equivalent to 0.0005 percent of those transported.

The 2025 figure is above the recent three-year average. This was strongly influenced by several discrete but significant incidents, with one major vessel loss accounting for 640 containers, or approximately 43 percent of all containers lost during the year.

This one major incident underscores the continued influence of isolated, large-scale events in shaping yearly outcomes.

The report identifies challenging weather and ocean conditions, particularly in the North Atlantic and North Pacific, as well as fire-related incidents, as key contributors to container losses.

The report also shows that 128 containers were recovered in 2025, the highest recovery figure recorded since WSC began gathering recovery data in 2023.

Container Loss Trend
The number of containers lost at sea continues to fluctuate year-to-year, reflecting the impact of isolated large-scale incidents.

The increase in 2025 reverses the sharp decline observed in 2022–2024 but remains consistent with historical variability driven by major incidents.

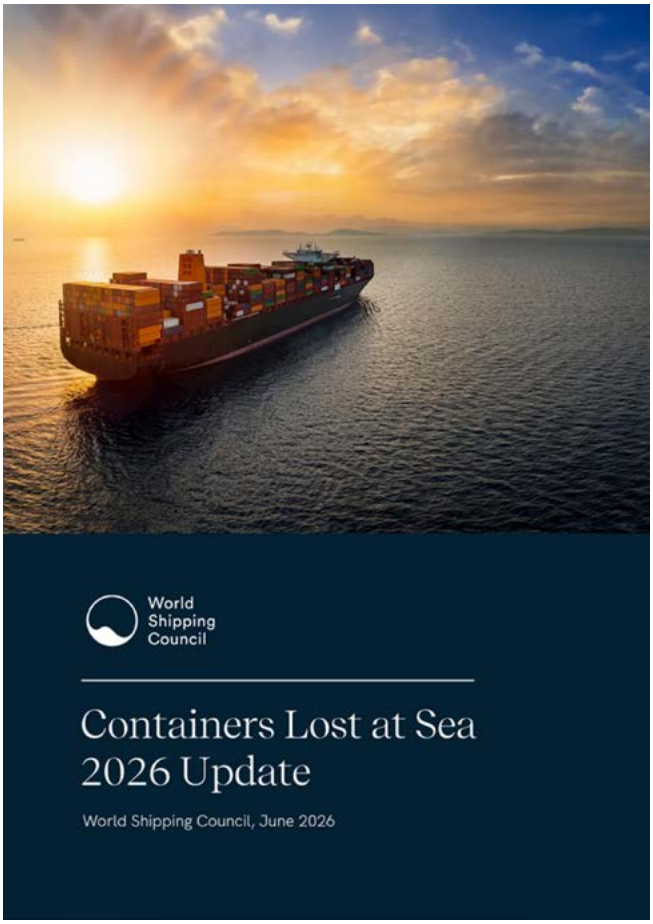
The full dataset since WSC started its surveys show:

- The highest recorded loss remains 2013, with 5,578 containers
- The lowest recorded loss was in 2023, with 221 containers

Every container loss incident presents a risk to the environment, seafarers, shippers' cargo and to the ship, and we will continue to work systematically to prevent them. Nevertheless, despite periodic spikes, the overall trend continues to demonstrate that container losses are rare relative to the scale of global trade.

WSC has conducted its Containers Lost at Sea surveys since 2011, covering losses from 2008 onwards. From 1 January 2026, new mandatory international reporting requirements entered into force, with amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea requiring all containers lost or observed drifting at sea to be reported. Flag states must also report the number of containers lost at sea to the International Maritime Organization.

Download the report:
https://bit.ly/44M6dqg.



How digitalisation and AI will impact the future of superyacht refit

MB92 Group has published its fifth report examining the major trends shaping the superyacht industry.

The Intelligent Refit Era: How Digitalisation and AI Will Redefine the Future of Yacht Refit, explores how digitalisation is changing the way yachts are designed, operated and maintained; and the capabilities the industry will need to benefit from this transformation.

From individual tools to connected intelligence
Although artificial intelligence is already being tested and used across the sector, the report concludes that the most significant change will not come from AI or any other technology in isolation.

Instead, the future will be shaped by "connected intelligence", the integration of reliable data, compatible systems and skilled people throughout the yacht lifecycle.

Digital twins and predictive-maintenance tools can help anticipate technical problems, reduce downtime and improve lifecycle planning. Enhanced connectivity is also expanding the use of remote technical support, training and digital services, creating new opportunities for yacht management and the owner experience.

Data, skills and trust will determine progress
The report identifies data quality, interoperability, organisational readiness and cultural adoption as some of the principal barriers to digital transformation.

Superyachts are highly customised environments, often combining legacy equipment and systems supplied by multiple specialist companies. This can leave operational information fragmented and make it difficult to introduce new platforms or scale the use of AI.

Technology will only create value if the underlying data is reliable and the people using it understand and trust the tools. The report therefore advocates "smart assistance": using technology to organise information, improve diagnostics and automate repetitive work while keeping experienced professionals responsible for judgement, creativity and accountability.

Digitalisation will also change the capabilities required on board and ashore. Traditional expertise in navigation, engineering, maintenance and project management will increasingly be complemented by skills in data, cybersecurity, advanced diagnostics, systems integration and human-machine collaboration.

According to the survey, maintenance tracking is the leading future onboard use for digital technology, cited by 64.3% of respondents. Reporting to owners and management follows at 54.8%, with route planning cited by 35.7%.

Cybersecurity and privacy will become increasingly important as navigation, communications, entertainment, maintenance and energy-management systems become more connected. The industry must preserve valuable technical histories while protecting personal and commercially sensitive data throughout the yacht lifecycle.

Better data can also make environmental performance more measurable by improving the monitoring of energy use, emissions and lifecycle impact.

Click to register for a free copy of the report: **https://bit.ly/4fD4GaO**.

Cargo securing in focus: Preparing for the 2026 PSC CIC

The Paris and Tokyo Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on Port State Control (PSC) will conduct a joint Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) focusing on cargo securing. As the campaign approaches, Jordan Hatch, Loss Prevention Executive at NorthStandard, shares insights on how shipowners and operators can prepare.

From 1 September to 30 November 2026, the Paris and Tokyo Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on Port State Control (PSC) will conduct a joint Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) focusing on cargo securing.

During this period, PSC officers will apply a dedicated inspection questionnaire alongside routine inspections across ports in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

While avoiding deficiencies or detention will be a priority for operators, the campaign is also a timely reminder that shortcomings in cargo securing often reflect wider operational risks, many of which can ultimately lead to P&I claims.

What PSC inspectors will be looking for
Although the final CIC questionnaire will be published ahead of the campaign, inspectors are expected to examine both documentation and how cargo securing procedures and the requirements of the relevant codes are implemented in practice, including:

- Availability and approval of a vessel-specific CSM
- Whether the CSM reflects the vessel's current configuration and equipment
- Condition, maintenance and identification of lashing gear and securing fittings
- Procedures and implementation for withdrawing damaged equipment from service
- Crew familiarity with cargo securing requirements
- Evidence that the CSM is being followed during cargo operations
- Inspection and maintenance records within the CSM and Safety Management System (SMS)

Sunseeker – new owners and new CEO

Sunseeker has announced that Cross Ocean Partners and Cheyne Capital have formally become the Company's long-term owners and shareholders, following the successful completion of the ownership transfer process.

Sunseeker has also named the upcoming appointment of Scott Millar as Chief Executive Officer, marking the start of an exciting new era for one of the world's most recognised yacht brands.

Scott Millar first joined Sunseeker through Teneo, where he was engaged to support the development of the Company's ambitious five-year growth plan. As that work progressed, his passion for the business, deep understanding of the brand and extensive experience leading complex transformations quickly distinguished him as the natural choice to lead Sunseeker into its next chapter.

With more than 27 years' experience in business transformation and operational improvement, Scott Millar has held a range of senior executive positions including Chief Executive Officer and Chief Transformation Officer across multiple international industries.

The appointment follows a period in which Steve Timms, as Interim Chief Executive Officer, has guided the business through an important phase of strategic development and ownership transition.

China MSA investigation reveals 13 crew died of phosphine gas poisoning

Excerpt from Maritime Cyprus www.MaritimeCyprus.com

On September 29, 2022, a horrific maritime disaster unfolded in the waters off the coast of Vietnam. The Chinese-registered bulk carrier, MV "WUZHOU 8", was transiting from Koh Sichang, Thailand, to Lianyungang, China, laden with over 50,000 tonnes of cassava chips. Within hours, a toxic emergency struck the vessel, incapacitating all 21 crew members. Despite international rescue efforts, the incident resulted in 13 fatalities, leaving only 8 survivors.

A comprehensive safety investigation report released by the Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) of China reveals how a routine cargo fumigation turned into a lethal, invisible trap.

The Incident Timeline: A Rapidly Unfolding Emergency

The tragedy began with cargo operations in Thailand and culminated in a frantic night at sea:

- September 27, 2022: A local Thai fumigation company applied aluminium phosphide tablets to the top of the loaded cassava chips across all holds. The holds were closed, and the vessel departed.
- September 28, 2022: Crew members sealed the hatch cover joints with asphalt tape. Over the course of the day, several crew members reported smelling a pungent, garlic-like or chemical odour on deck.
- September 29, 2022 (2200 hours): While sailing 52 nautical miles south-southwest of Con Son Island, Vietnam, the Third Officer and an Able Seaman on the bridge suddenly experienced acute symptoms—nausea, severe vomiting, chest tightness, and fatigue.
- September 30, 2022 (0100–0400 hours): The illness rapidly spread through the ship. The Master, believing the crew had caught a cold or suffered food poisoning, ordered traditional remedies like ginger water. By 0400 hours, 17 crew members were severely incapacitated, forcing the Chief Officer to stop the engines and signal that the vessel was "not under control".
- September 30, 2022 (Afternoon): The Vietnam Maritime Search and Rescue Centre (VMSRC) dispatched rescue helicopters to evacuate the crew. The Master passed away on board before evacuation, and 12 other crew members subsequently succumbed to the poisoning.

Uncovering the Cause: Food Contamination vs. Gas Inhalation

Initially, the crew and company suspected severe food poisoning or a COVID-19 outbreak. However, comprehensive forensic testing by the Ho Chi Minh City Public Health Research Institute entirely ruled out contaminated provisions, water, or shipboard medications.

Instead, the autopsy findings for 12 of the deceased crew members pointed uniformly to toxic pulmonary oedema, a classic manifestation of acute phosphine gas poisoning.

How the Gas Penetrated the Living Quarters

The investigation identified a fatal combination of mechanical deficiencies and atmospheric conditions that allowed the gas to trap the crew:

- Positive Pressure in the Holds: The aluminium phosphide tablets absorbed moisture from the high-humidity cargo holds, rapidly decomposing into phosphine gas. Because the cassava chips filled the holds nearly to the top, the gas accumulated in a tight space, creating high positive pressure.
- Defective Seals: On-site flooding tests later revealed aged rubber seals and gaps in the cargo hold access covers, alongside accommodation doors that could not fully close. The pressurized gas escaped the holds and lingered on the deck.
- The "Downwind" Trap: On the evening of September 29, the vessel altered its course, matching its speed closely with the southwesterly winds. This created a stagnant micro-climate where the escaped phosphine gas accumulated directly in front of the accommodation block instead of dissipating.
- Negative Pressure in the Living Spaces: The ship's air conditioning system was running in recirculation mode, which generated negative pressure inside the lower accommodation deck. This pressure differential acted like a vacuum, drawing the highly toxic phosphine gas through the gaps of the faulty doors directly into the crew's living spaces and the bridge.

Find out more, including the critical safety issues identified and recommendations: **https://bit.ly/4gWAt8T**.

Maritime Safety Week 2026

The UK Maritime Safety Week 2026 took place from 6-10 July. To mark this occasion, Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents at the UK MAIB, Rob Loder, writes Beyond the binder: Making Safety Management Systems work at sea.

Every year, Maritime Safety Week gives the industry a chance to pause and ask a difficult question: are we really doing enough to keep seafarers safe? This year, I want to focus on safety management systems (SMS) and the importance of closing the gap between safety in theory and safety in practice.

A thorough and comprehensive SMS is one of the most powerful tools available to mariners. Required under international law by the IMO, an SMS sets out procedures, processes and policies, guiding crews through routine operations and, critically, identifying risks and setting out how to manage them. Done properly, emergency response procedures are planned in advance, so that when a crisis strikes, nothing is left to chance.

But an SMS is only as good as its implementation. Too often, our investigations reveal a troubling pattern. Often SMS have failed to prevent an accident because they had not fully identified all the operational hazards. We have also seen examples where SMS were seen as a compliance exercise and were filed away rather than used as a way to engage staff in working safely. An SMS should be a living document that is regularly reviewed and updated. Senior leadership engagement with the SMS is essential because crews take their cue from management.

In particular, the safety learning uncovered during our investigation into a fatal accident on board Laureline bears repeating.

An able seaman was fatally injured on board the roll-on/roll-off cargo vessel Laureline when he was crushed between the rear of a moving trailer and the vessel's structure. Laureline was alongside at Purfleet, England, loading and discharging trailers using the terminal's tugs under the direction of the ship's crew. One of the two able seamen who were working on the vehicle deck passed behind a trailer while it was being loaded, likely assuming that the tug driver had completed manoeuvring the trailer. Unaware of the able seamen's position, the tug driver reversed the trailer again to realign it. The able seaman was crushed between the trailer and the vessel's structure, causing fatal injuries.

Our investigation found that the vessel management company's new vehicle deck cargo operations safety procedure was not well understood by the vehicle deck crew and that they routinely entered the defined danger zone around manoeuvring vehicles and trailers. The lack of understanding highlighted weaknesses in the training and implementation of the new procedure, and that the tug driver's knowledge of danger zones and the requirement to stop when a crew member was out of sight did not align with their actual working practices.

These procedural lapses led to tragedy: a seafarer lost his life carrying out a routine task. The MAIB report commented that this accident was a stark reminder that procedural controls alone are not sufficient to protect workers.

This Maritime Safety Week we are urging all vessel operators, regardless of your sector, size, or vessel type, to think carefully about your SMS and answer these questions honestly:

- Is it comprehensive? Have you identified and fully mitigated all potential risks?
- Does your SMS reflect your operations? Is it specific to your vessel?
- Has it been briefed? Do your crew have a detailed understanding of safe working methods? Do they know what they should do in an emergency and have you done regular drills?
- Does it reflect real-life working? Have you conducted management assurance to ensure that the working practices detailed in the SMS are what crew are actually doing on board?
- Is it regularly reviewed? Does your SMS reflect lessons learned from near misses and incidents, both on your vessel and across the industry?

F/V Antarctic Discovery. Credit: Australian Longline PTY Limited.

Toxic gas from rotting fish in confined space hospitalised four crewmembers

Four crewmembers were hospitalised after decomposing fish offal was accidentally pumped into a machinery space on board FV Antarctic Discovery, according to the Transport Accident Investigation Commission of New Zealand (TAIC).

The investigation report identified four systemic safety issues involving machinery isolation, confined-space hazards, coordination between multiple organisations, and oversight of safety-critical modifications.

What happened
On 21 February 2025, during maintenance in the Lyttelton dry dock, the longline fishing vessel Antarctic Discovery experienced a serious incident on board, involving hydrogen sulphide (H_2S) poisoning.

Two apprentice fitters entered the vessel's bow thruster room to reinstall pipework. While working, contaminated water began discharging from a flexible red hose that was tied at the entrance to the bow thruster room. The hose was temporarily attached to the discharge side of the offal pump. The pump had been accidentally started and was drawing seawater from the forepeak tank (the extreme forward lower tank usually used for trimming or storage in a ship), which had been previously used to store offal. The contaminated water from the red hose was discharging down into the bow thruster room.

The apprentices escaped and alerted the crew. Responding to the incident, the vessel's superintendent was briefly overcome by toxic H_2S gas while attempting to enter the forecastle but managed to retreat. The chief engineer and second engineer entered the forecastle through another entrance to investigate the source of the liquid and simultaneously collapsed. The second engineer regained sufficient consciousness to crawl to safety. The superintendent and second mate donned breathing apparatus and rescued the chief engineer. All affected personnel were hospitalised with symptoms of H_2S exposure and later recovered.

Why it happened
It is about as likely as not that the offal pump started when one of the apprentice fitters accidentally pressed the unlabelled start button. Their workspace was directly adjacent to the control panel for the offal pump. Without warning, contaminated water containing decomposing offal was pumped into the forecastle, releasing H_2S gas into a confined area with poor ventilation.

The Commission found that a combination of procedural failures, design shortcomings and inadequate oversight contributed to the accident. The offal pump had not been isolated nor locked and tagged out, leaving it active during maintenance. The forepeak suction valve remained open and the temporary flexible red hose, installed after a previous valve failure, was not capped.

The bow thruster room had many of the characteristics associated with an enclosed and confined space but had not been identified as such, meaning the risk assessment for work permitted in the space was not in line with good industry practice.

Read the full report: **https://bit.ly/4wm69tu**.

Canal & River Trust boater consultation to launch in December 2026

The consultation, which will be co-created with boaters over the coming months, forms part of the Canal & River Trust's response to the independent commission on boat licensing, which reported at the end of 2025 and highlighted that the existing licensing system doesn't work well for boaters or the Trust.

It also raised concerns about communication and relations between the Trust and boaters.

About the consultation and why it is happening
The consultation will consider a wide range of topics, including boat safety, support for boaters, greater certainty around navigation requirements, fair sharing of the space, and managing the canal network responsibly.

Ahead of the 14-week formal consultation, the Trust will work with boaters to ensure that the consultation properly reflects the real experiences, priorities and challenges faced by those on the water.

This pre-engagement process will involve national boating organisations, boater representatives, local boating groups and the creation of a new Citizens' Boater Panel, bringing together a diverse range of boating voices from across the network. The panel will include people with different boating lifestyles, helping the Trust understand perspectives that may not always be heard and ensuring real-world boating experiences help shape the consultation from the outset.

The Canal & River Trust will publish regular updates on the engagement process, opportunities to get involved and information about how feedback is being used to help shape the consultation.

What to expect over the coming months

August:
Listening
Working directly with boating communities and representative organisations to better understand their experiences and priorities.

- Recruitment for the Citizens' Boater Panel.
- Workshops with National Boating Organisations, boater representatives and the Navigation Advisory Group.
- Engagement with local boating groups and communities.
- Attendance at boating and waterways events across the network.

September:
Working together
Focusing on deeper discussions with boaters.

- Citizens' Boater Panel recruitment closes, panel members are confirmed and begin participating in workshops and discussions.
- Continued engagement with boating organisations, representatives and stakeholder groups.
- Exploration with boaters about the practical implications of recommendations from the Licensing Commission report.

October–November:
Shaping the consultation
Using boaters' input to help finalise the consultation approach.

- Final stakeholder workshops and co-design sessions.
- Testing consultation themes, language and questions to ensure they are clear and accessible.
- Sharing updates on how feedback has influenced the consultation design.
- Publication of information about consultation dates, timescales and opportunities to participate.

December 2026–February 2027:
Public consultation
The formal consultation opens, providing opportunities for all boaters and stakeholders to have their say through online responses, events and engagement sessions.

Spring 2027: Reporting back

- Independent analysis of consultation responses.
- Publication of findings.
- Explanation of how feedback has informed next steps and future decision-making.

Fire safety and ageing ships signal PSC compliance pressure

With 425 detentions and 1,752 detainable deficiencies recorded in 2025 across the ClassNK fleet, the Port State Control Annual Report 2026 sends a clear message to shipping: PSC readiness depends on daily maintenance, crew familiarity and a living Safety Management System, not last-minute preparation.

ClassNK issued its Port State Control Annual Report in June 2026, providing an overview of PSC detention trends and detainable deficiencies identified on ClassNK-classed ships during 2025.

ClassNK PSC Annual Report 2026: At a glance

- Total detentions in 2025: 425
- Total detainable deficiencies in 2025: 1,752
- Most detained ship type: Bulk carriers (268)
- Highest detention ratio by ship type: Reefer carriers (10.9%)
- Highest detention ratio by age: Ships over 25 years old (16.2%)
- Top PSC authority by detentions: China (139)
- Tokyo MOU: 9,219 inspections / 249 detentions
- Paris MOU: 2,305 inspections / 91 detentions
- USCG: 2,156 inspections / 11 detentions
- Top deficiency category: Fire safety (426)
- Other key deficiency areas: Life-saving appliances (172), Emergency systems (169), ISM (159)
- Most frequent individual detainable item: ISM (105 cases)

Detentions and deficiencies in focus

According to the report, the number of ClassNK-classed ships of 500 GT or over increased to 8,948 in 2025, while the number of detentions rose to 425, compared with 381 in 2024 and 419 in 2023.

Bulk carriers accounted for the highest number of detentions, with 268 cases, followed by general cargo ships with 65 and oil/chemical tankers with 33. However, in terms of detention ratio, reefer carriers recorded the highest figure at 10.9%, followed by general cargo ships at 8.5% and bulk carriers at 6.3%.

Ship age remains a significant factor. Ships over 25 years old recorded the highest detention ratio, at 16.2%, with 96 detentions in 2025. Vessels over 20 and up to 25 years old followed with an 11.1% detention ratio. By contrast, ships up to five years old recorded a much lower detention ratio of 1.4%, although detentions in this youngest category increased from 10 in 2024 to 28 in 2025.

By PSC authority, within the ClassNK dataset, China accounted for the highest number of detentions, with 139 in 2025, followed by Australia with 44, TÃ¼rkiye with 32, Russia with 28 and Canada with 21.

Looking at the major PSC regimes, ClassNK recorded 9,219 inspections and 249 detentions under the Tokyo MOU, 2,305 inspections and 91 detentions under the Paris MOU, and 2,156 inspections and 11 detentions by the USCG.

Fire safety remains the leading detainable deficiency area

In 2025, ClassNK recorded 1,752 detainable deficiencies in conjunction with the 425 detentions. Fire safety was the leading category, with 426 detainable deficiencies, followed by life-saving appliances with 172, emergency systems with 169, ISM with 159, safety of navigation with 136, and water/weathertight conditions with 119.

At individual item level, ISM was the most frequently reported detainable deficiency, with 105 cases. Other frequent items included fixed fire extinguishing installations, lifeboats, ventilators, air pipes and casings, fire doors and openings in fire-resisting divisions, fire pumps and pipes, fire detection and alarm systems, emergency fire pumps and fire drills.

The findings show that many PSC problems are not isolated technical defects. They often point to broader weaknesses in maintenance planning, testing, recordkeeping, crew familiarisation, emergency preparedness and ship-shore follow-up.

Download the full report: **https://bit.ly/4ySRdES**.

Masts of WWII shipwreck carrying wartime explosives to be removed

Image Copyright Christine Matthews and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.

Work to remove the masts from the SS Richard Montgomery will begin in early September, marking a significant milestone in the long-term management of the historic wreck, the government has confirmed.

The operation will involve constructing an underwater platform to allow specialist maritime engineers to cut the three masts over the course of several weeks.

The wreck contains around 1,400 tonnes of wartime explosives, which is why every aspect of the operation has been developed under rigorous safety and engineering standards.

The iconic shipwreck, which lies in the Thames Estuary 1.5 miles off Sheerness and is surrounded by an exclusion zone, has been subject to continuous monitoring and extensive technical assessment since it sank in 1944.

Independent expert advice has confirmed the planned operation can be carried out safely without increasing the risk posed by the explosives remaining onboard. Works are due to begin in September.

The operation will be delivered by specialist marine contractors, Resolve Marine, working to strict safety procedures and under continuous oversight.

Detailed planning has been undertaken with relevant authorities, including local emergency services, harbour authorities and other partners, to minimise disruption and ensure the work is carried out safely.

Once removed, the masts will be sent to The Historic Dockyard Chatham – which is home to specialist restoration facilities – where they can be properly preserved.

They will then go on to be displayed somewhere locally, creating opportunities for local people and visitors to learn more about Kent's maritime heritage and delivering thousands of pounds in regional tourism benefits.

The project is backed by £9.5 million government funding and on-site preparations started in July to remove any risk ahead of the major engineering project.

The existing exclusion zone around the wreck will remain following the mast removal and work could be completed by the end of September. As with all major engineering projects, the removal of the masts is a complex process, and project deadlines may be extended if delays are caused by weather.

The government is clear that the masts – which have been visible to local communities for 82 years – are incredibly important to the people of the Thames and Medway estuaries, like those on the Isle of Sheppey and in Southend, who recognise them as part of the area's shared national maritime heritage. That is why the government will ensure the masts remain accessible to the public for generations to come.

Discussions about their long-term home are ongoing, as they need to be safely preserved and protected in a way that fully acknowledges their connection to the rich history of these vital waterways.

IGP&I confirms pooling arrangements for autonomous vessels

The International Group of P&I Clubs has confirmed liabilities arising from Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) are now eligible to be covered within the Group's pooling arrangements.

This follows the recent approval of the IMO MASS Code, a major regulatory milestone that provides the first global framework for the safe operation of autonomous vessels, albeit on a non-mandatory basis until around 2032.

The availability of poolable insurance for autonomous vessels will be subject to individual Club underwriting considerations, with compliance with flag and class requirements remaining key.

The decision reinforces the Group's long-standing approach of adapting established P&I principles to new technologies.

Tim Howse, Autonomous Vessels Committee Chair, said, "The approval of the IMO MASS Code and the availability of our pooling arrangements for autonomous vessels represent an important step in the evolution of shipping. By confirming that established mutual P&I principles can respond effectively also to autonomous operations, we are giving shipowners the confidence and certainty they need to support innovation in this rapidly developing sector."

An evolving risk landscape

MASS introduce a different operational model, with responsibilities shifting from onboard crew to shore-based systems and remote operators. Actions by Remote Operation Centre (ROC) personnel will be treated in line with traditional navigational responsibilities. Where the conduct of ROC personnel or system results in an incident, such as a collision, associated third-party liabilities will continue to fall within standard mutual P&I cover.

At the same time, the use of shore-based personnel and infrastructure introduces interaction with other insurance lines. Liabilities arising from land-based activities, such as workplace injuries within a ROC or damage to the ROC itself, are not marine P&I risks and are expected to be addressed under conventional employers' liability or premises insurance.

Cyber and technology risk

Malicious cyber risks remain covered under mutual P&I arrangements, consistent with existing Group practice. However, given the increased reliance on digital systems in autonomous operations, owners are encouraged to engage closely with their Club and underwriters to assess their specific exposures and insurance needs.

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

DNV guidance on boiler tube plugging class requirements

Boiler tubes play a critical role in both heat transfer and in maintaining the pressure integrity of marine boilers. When leaks occur, careful evaluation is required to prevent secondary damage.

And DNV has shared guidance on class acceptance criteria, including the assessment of repair feasibility and the follow-up of plug repairs on defective boiler tubes.

Boiler tubes are often exposed to high temperatures, corrosive environments and fluctuating operating conditions, making them susceptible to various forms of degradation. In case of leaks, plugging is often used as a rapid method to restore boiler integrity. Common causes of leakage include, corrosion, overheating, workmanship, and soot-related mechanisms.

Why plugging repairs are used

Plugging is commonly used because it provides an immediate way to stop leakage and restore pressure containment without requiring full tube replacement. It allows the boiler to remain operational until permanent repairs can be arranged and is often the only practical option during voyages. However, plugging does not address the underlying cause of the defect and may introduce new risks if not properly assessed.

Impacts of plugged tubes

Plugging alters the thermal and hydraulic behaviour of boilers. In water tube boilers, it disrupts natural circulation, causing uneven heat distribution and increasing the risk of overheating or burnout of uncooled plugged tubes near the furnace.

In exhaust gas boilers, uncooled plugged tubes significantly increase the likelihood of soot fires and increased exhaust gas back pressure which can affect main engine turbocharger efficiency.

In all boiler types, the remaining tubes are subjected to higher thermal loads, and the steam generation capacity may be reduced.

Class acceptance criteria for plug repairs

Tube plugging is generally considered a deviation from the boiler's approved design, and class acceptance of a plug repair is given on a case-by-case technical assessment of the boiler condition and the consequences of the plugged tubes.

Principles for class acceptance:

- DNV evaluates the number and location of plugged tubes, their impact on circulation and heat transfer, the associated risk of burnout or soot fire, and the overall condition of the boiler.
- Acceptance is conditional upon repairs being carried out in accordance with evaluated and accepted procedures, using qualified welders, suitable materials, satisfactory nondestructive testing (NDT) and pressure testing, in line with DNV requirements and the manufacturer's instructions.
- Mitigating measures may be required, such as derating the boiler by reducing firing rate and pressure, or applying refractory protection.
- Where justified, plugging may be accepted as a permanent repair and recorded as a Memo to Owner (MO) in the vessel's class status.

Recommendations

All plug repairs shall be carried out in accordance with the boiler manufacturer's instructions, by qualified personnel and in compliance with applicable classification requirements.

Early involvement of DNV is essential. The proposed repair plan shall be submitted to DNV for evaluation prior to commencement of the repair. This evaluation may be carried out by DNV technical support or by the responsible local surveyor. For further details, refer to Section 2 of DNV-CG-0456.

Download the full guidance: **https://bit.ly/4hus0ds**.

Engine room fire risk highlighted due to auxiliary engine erosion plug failure

Photo credit: Skuld Club

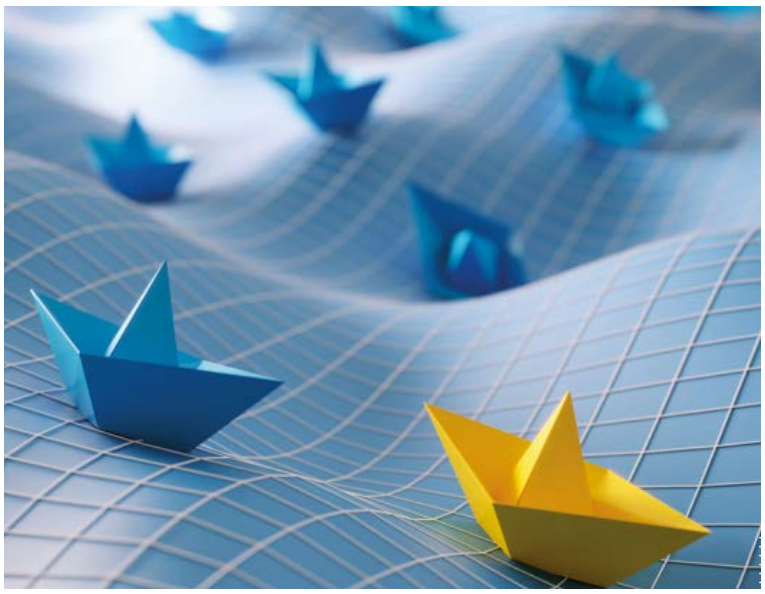
Fire in the engine room remains the most common and costly risk in Hull and Machinery insurance, due to the combination of flammable materials, complex machinery and human factors, according to Skuld Club. Skuld has seen recent cases of engine room fires due to erosion (fusible) plug failure. An erosion plug failure in a fuel pump can cause engine room fires by allowing pressurised fuel to escape as a fine spray, which can ignite instantly upon contact with hot surfaces. An erosion plug is a safety device built into fuel pumps, and particularly in high-pressure fuel pumps.

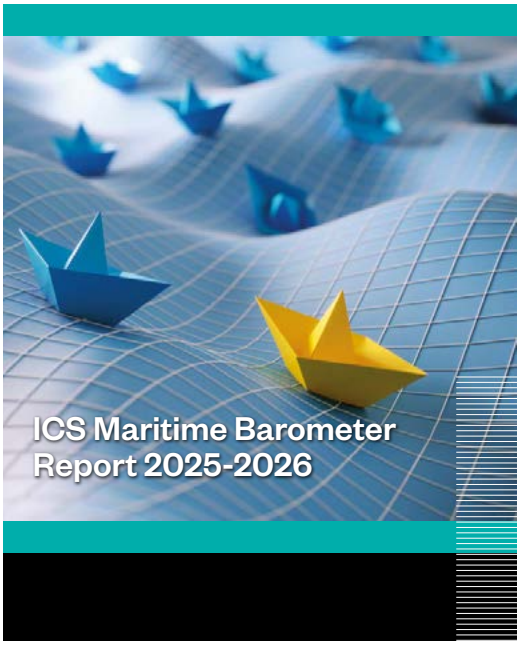
Erosion plugs are made from a low-melting-point alloy and are designed to relieve pressure during overheating, preventing the fuel pump casing from rupturing or exploding. However, excessive temperatures, internal friction, pump seizure and inadequate maintenance can cause the plug to melt, erode or blow out prematurely. When this happens, pressurised fuel oil escapes, often as a fine atomised spray rather than a liquid leak. This fine mist presents a serious fire hazard. If it comes into contact with hot surfaces such as exhaust manifolds or turbochargers, it can ignite almost instantly.

Combined with high fuel pressure and the presence of hot machinery, the resulting flash fire can spread rapidly through lagging gaps, cable runs and accumulated oil deposits, significantly increasing the extent of damage in the engine room. Skuld strongly advises to always strengthen their maintenance controls and inspection.

Recommendations

- Ensure strict compliance with the manufacturer specifications, such as torque setting, verification of installation of the locking devices, such as locking wire, and tabs. To implement post-maintenance inspection and sign-off procedures.
- Conduct operational checks after reassembly and under load conditions of the fuel pumps, fuel lines, and their fittings.
- If the maintenance is conducted by shipboard personnel, ensure adequate competency and training of the personnel performing the maintenance. Avoid critical repairs when appropriate tools are unavailable and where spare parts are not compliant or incomplete.
- Conduct frequent inspections of the fuel system, implement leak detection routines and thermal imaging for early identification of abnormal conditions.
- Ensure that exhaust systems and turbochargers are properly insulated. Repair the damage immediately and treat any exposed hot surface as a critical hazard.
- Perform regular tests on fire detection systems and fixed firefighting systems onboard. Conduct regular fire drills focusing on early isolation and shutdown action for fuel spray fire scenarios.
- Furthermore, operators are encouraged to review their planned maintenance systems, work controls and verification processes.
- Implementing a robust Safety Management System (SMS) can help ensure compliance with procedures for fuel handling, maintenance and hot work operations, reducing the risk of similar incidents.





ICS Maritime Barometer Report 2025-2026 published

The 2025–2026 ICS Maritime Barometer features insights from a record number of industry leaders, offering a comprehensive overview of how this resilient sector is evolving to maintain world trade in an increasingly complex and uncertain environment.

A clear theme runs throughout the findings: geopolitical instability continues to act as an underlying force shaping both the risks faced by the industry and the conditions under which it is transitioning.

Rather than a standalone concern, political instability is increasingly seen as a risk multiplier, influencing a broad range of challenges across a time of extreme market turbulence and volatility. Its impacts are reflected not only in elevated concerns around cybersecurity (the second highest risk) and the growing prominence of unilateral and regional regulation and the related administrative burden (third highest risk), but also in rising barriers to trade and shifting patterns of global commerce.

Together, these dynamics point to a more fragmented and less predictable operating environment for shipping. This Barometer outlines pain points that can be addressed to ensure that the most effective means of global trade can secure the practical, political and financial support it needs to meet future expectations.

The Barometer also highlights how external pressures are shaping the industry's green transition. Regulation, public funding, and market-based measures emerge as the most influential factors, underscoring the extent to which progress is dependent on the interaction between policy frameworks, financial support, and economic incentives. At the same time, constraints around funding availability and regulatory divergence continue to present challenges, reinforcing the complexity of delivering change at scale.

This uncertain environment is clearly reflected in sentiment around future fuels. Liquified natural gas (LNG) and biofuels are jointly identified as the most viable options, followed closely by heavy fuel oil (HFO) combined with abatement technologies. Rather than signalling a rapid shift towards new solutions, these results point to a more pragmatic approach. Respondents are prioritising fuels with established supply chains, proven technologies, and compatibility with existing infrastructure, reflecting a broader preference for certainty and reliability in decision-making.

Overall, the Barometer presents an industry navigating a period of sustained volatility with a focus on resilience, adaptability, and practical decision-making, with actors taking an increasingly pragmatic approach to their operations. Leaders are balancing immediate operational pressures with longer-term strategic objectives, adopting approaches that reflect both the scale of the challenge and the realities of the operating environment.

Download the full report: **https://bit.ly/4fwbYgq**.

India introduces new requirements for transporting plastic pellets in containers

Plastic pellet pollution remains a concern in shipping due to incidents of nurdle spillage.

West P&I Club has highlighted a circular from India's DGS, Circular No. 19 of 2026, which introduces specific requirements for the carriage of plastic pellets (nurdles) in freight containers. Nurdles are increasingly recognised as an environmental risk that warrants targeted control.

In the circular, DGS said recent incidents along the Indian coastline have highlighted serious concerns regarding marine pollution caused by the loss of freight containers carrying plastic pellets at sea. It added recovery of these pellets has proved extremely difficult and requires extensive manual clean-up operations. There is also the further issue of plastic pellets fragmenting into microplastics, raising another concern of the long-term impact on marine biodiversity, coastal ecosystems and fisheries-dependent livelihoods.

Specifically, West P&I Club said incidents such as MSC ELSA 3, which occurred in May 2025 and affected the Indian coastline, have illustrated the scale of the issue. At the international level, the IMO has already issued recommendations on the carriage of plastic pellets, with further discussions ongoing regarding potential mandatory measures.

The circular introduces two requirements regarding stowage and packaging.

Stowage:

- Containers carrying plastic pellets must be stowed under deck only.
- Carriage on deck is prohibited.

From a loss prevention perspective, this directly addresses a recognised exposure, as container losses are more likely to occur in high-deck stow, particularly in adverse weather when automatic and semi-automatic twist locks are used.

Packaging:
It needs to meet secure standards not less than those prescribed under the IMDG Code for dangerous goods.

This strengthens cargo containment and reduces the risk of leakage at sea and during handling.

Compliance will be checked through Port State and Flag State inspections. The requirements apply to shipments from 15 April 2026 onwards.

Vessels calling at Indian ports or transiting their waters and are carrying plastic pellets, must consider the following:

- Ensure the crew check the packaging standards during cargo acceptance
- Ensure stowage planning reflects the under-deck requirement
- Advise the crew prior to trading to or through Indian waters

The club said the key takeaway is that expectations around the carriage of plastic pellets are evolving. Early alignment with these requirements will support compliance within the Indian context and help position the maritime industry for further developments in what is likely to remain an active area of regulatory focus.

AMSA National Compliance Plan for 2026–27 outlined

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has published its National Compliance Plan 2026–27, outlining a risk-based approach to improving maritime safety, strengthening compliance and protecting seafarers across Australia's shipping industry.

The plan sets out how AMSA will target high-risk areas over the next 12 months, including conducting at least 2,400 Port State Control inspections on foreign-flagged vessels and 2,300 inspections on domestic commercial vessels.

The plan follows the reporting of 46 serious crew injuries across regulated Australian vessels and foreign-flagged vessels in 2025. While this was fewer than in 2024, the continued occurrence of serious injuries highlights the need for targeted action on occupational health and safety, crew fatigue management, safety management system implementation and electrical safety.

For the first time, AMSA has committed to conducting 15 inspections under the Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993 (OHS(MI) Act), reinforcing its focus on improving workplace health and safety at sea.

The 2026–27 compliance program will focus on:

- Risk-based inspections of foreign and Australian-flagged vessels, with an emphasis on navigational safety, pollution prevention, and cargo securing and stowage.
- Seafarer safety and welfare under the Maritime Labour Convention, including occupational health and safety, and hours of work and rest.
- Domestic commercial vessel safety, with priorities including electrical safety, watchkeeping, lookout practices and fatigue management.
- Pollution prevention through inspections of exhaust gas cleaning systems and support for safe environmental practices.
- Strengthening safety management system implementation and safe operations among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander operators.

The authority said the plan reinforces its zero-tolerance approach to breaches of Maritime Labour Convention requirements for seafarer health, safety and welfare, while ensuring maritime employers meet their obligations under Australian and international law.

Download the full report: **https://bit.ly/4wnomqD**.

Fatalities more than doubled despite injury rates improving says IMCA annual report

The International Marine Contactors Association (IMCA) has released its annual Safety Statistics Report, revealing fatalities more than doubled despite overall safety performance improving last year.

The report showed that while traditional safety indicators continued to improve during 2025, fatalities rose from three to seven (four of them offshore) prompting IMCA to warn that injury frequency rates alone no longer provide a complete picture of risk.

The report argued that the offshore marine contracting industry must now place greater emphasis on preventing serious injuries and fatalities by identifying high-consequence hazards before they result in tragedy, rather than relying solely on traditional performance measures.

The Fatal Accident Rate (FAR) increased from 0.30 to 0.69. Reported fatal incidents included an electrocution, a fall from height and a mooring incident involving a parted rope, while details of four additional fatalities were not provided.

One of the report's clearest messages concerns the industry's continuing exposure to "line of fire" incidents, which remained the leading cause of lost time injuries despite reducing from approximately 52% of cases in 2024 to around 41% in 2025.

Rather than treating line of fire as a single category, IMCA is encouraging companies to focus on the specific situations where workers are exposed to harmful energy, including lifting and rigging operations, mooring activities, suspended loads, moving equipment, dropped objects, stored energy, and hand and finger exposures.

Understanding exactly where controls fail, rather than simply classifying incidents, will be key to preventing future serious injuries, said IMCA.

Drawing on both the statistics and its Safety Flash reports, IMCA identified several recurring areas requiring continued attention, including line-of-fire hazards, lifting and rigging operations, dropped objects, mooring and snap-back zones, working at height, electrical safety and routine day-to-day tasks.

Many of the industry's most serious incidents continue to occur during familiar activities rather than exceptional operations, reinforcing the importance of effective planning, supervision and risk management every day.

Key points in 2025:

- 167 Contractor Members contributed safety data
- 1.02 billion hours of work were reported
- Seven fatalities reported, of which four were offshore.
- 0.69 Fatal Accident Rate (FAR) increase from 0.30 in 2024
- 268 Lost Time Injuries (LTIs) reported
- 996 Total Recordable Injuries (TRIs) reported
- Line of fire is the most common LTI
- Safety Observation Frequency Rate (SOFR) of 387.1, a decrease from 482.1 in 2024

Download the report: **https://bit.ly/4bzBe4D**.

LR Fuel Quality Report reveals operational challenges of ISO-compliant fuels

Ship operators are facing a growing risk from fuels that appear compliant under routine ISO 8217 testing but still present operational risks once on board, according to Lloyd's Register.

In its latest Fuel Oil Bunker Analysis and Advisory Service (FOBAS) Fuel Quality Report, covering the first half of 2026, off-specification fuels remain a persistent challenge.

However, some of the most disruptive cases now involve fuels that pass routine compliance testing but show poor stability or compatibility, or contain non-conventional blend components that are only identified through more detailed investigative analysis.

Several incidents investigated highlighted this trend. In March and April, a number of vessels reported operational difficulties after bunkering fuel in a major bunkering hub. Further forensic analysis found that many of the fuels contained elevated concentrations of Estonian shale oil, in some cases estimated to be around 10-15%.

While shale oil is recognised within ISO 8217 as an acceptable blend component, FOBAS investigations found that higher concentrations can be associated with fuel instability and operational issues affecting filters, separators and fuel pumps.

The report also shows that fuel quality variability remains stubbornly high. Off-specification cases remained elevated throughout the first six months of 2026, suggesting that quality issues are no longer isolated events but a more persistent feature of today's marine fuel supply chain.

The most common recurring issues included:

- sulphur exceedances
- sediment and stability problems
- sodium contamination
- excessive water content
- elevated catalytic fines
- low flash point distillate fuels

At the same time, biofuels (especially FAME blends) are continuing to grow without being a primary source of quality issues. Where issues occurred in blended fuels, they were generally associated with the conventional VLSFO component rather than the FAME fraction.

The report concludes that operators will need to adopt a more proactive approach to fuel management as marine fuels become more diverse and fuel quality risks become harder to identify through routine compliance testing alone.

Greater emphasis on fuel stability, compatibility and understanding fuel composition will be critical to reducing operational disruption and maintaining vessel performance.

Murray Kirkwood, Fuel Specialist Consultant, Lloyd's Register, said: "The findings from our latest report show that fuel quality risk is evolving. The challenge is no longer simply identifying fuels that fail specification. Increasingly, operators are encountering fuels that meet the required limits but still create operational difficulties once they are stored, handled and used onboard.

"As fuel blending becomes more complex, the distinction that matters is increasingly not between on-spec and off-spec fuel, but between fuels that are operationally resilient and fuels that are operationally fragile. Understanding that difference is becoming essential for shipowners and operators."

Download the report: **https://bit.ly/4wY36HJ**.

IBIA statement on recent marine fuel quality concerns

The International Bunker Industry Association (IBIA) said in a statement it is aware of recent reports highlighting operational issues observed in connection with certain residual marine fuels containing components which may indicate the presence of shale oil.

IBIA's Technical Working Group has reviewed the information currently available and notes that, while these reports raise legitimate questions that warrant further investigation, the available evidence does not establish a direct causal relationship between the presence of these compounds and the operational issues reported.

Shale oil-derived hydrocarbons are a permitted feedstock under ISO 8217. Their presence alone should not be regarded as evidence of fuel quality deficiencies or non-compliance.

The relevant consideration is whether the finished fuel, as delivered, meets the requirements of ISO 8217, including the provisions relating to fuel composition and operational fitness for use.

The reported cases nevertheless reinforce the importance of understanding how increasingly complex marine fuel blends perform in practice.

As the industry continues to diversify feedstocks and blend components, greater transparency, traceability, quality assurance and information sharing across the supply chain will become increasingly important.

IBIA supports further technical investigation, industry collaboration and data sharing to improve understanding of fuel behavior and operational performance. Such work will help ensure confidence in marine fuel quality while supporting the safe, reliable and efficient operation of ships.

Lloyd's Register campaign targets ageing feeder fleet

Lloyd's Register (LR) has launched a new campaign, which will bring together LR's classification, advisory and digital expertise to support operators as they assess fleet renewal.

The campaign, 'Powering the next generation of feeder vessels', is in response to growing pressure in the feeder sector, where ageing vessels, tighter regulation and rising operating costs are forcing owners to make tougher fleet renewal decisions.

Feeder vessels, critical to regional and short-sea container trades, are now under strain from ageing assets, stricter emissions rules, rising fuel costs and shifting trade patterns, forcing owners to reassess long-term fleet strategies.

Unlike larger deep-sea vessel segments, feeder operators often face unique operational constraints. Routes are typically shorter, port calls more frequent and commercial flexibility more limited.

The result is a growing need for owners to make informed decisions about vessel life extension, efficiency upgrades, retrofit opportunities and future fleet renewal programmes.

The campaign is designed to meet that challenge with a combination of technical assurance, operational insight and digital support. Drawing on experience across vessel design, operation and lifecycle management, it focuses on the areas where feeder operators face the greatest pressure including newbuild specification and technical assurance, retrofit and life-extension planning, vessel and voyage performance, emissions and compliance management, future fuel readiness and stowage optimisation.

A key differentiator is LR's ability to support decisions throughout the entire asset lifecycle. From concept design and newbuild projects to fleet optimisation, retrofits and life extension programmes, the campaign brings together specialists from multiple disciplines to provide a single lifecycle proposition.

Alongside its class and advisory support, LR is also highlighting digital solutions that help operators strengthen compliance oversight, improve visibility across fleet performance and make faster operational decisions.

Commercial fishing remains safety key safety issue says TSB annual report

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) received 990 reports of marine transportation occurrences in 2025, including six fatalities.

The total of 257 marine transportation accidents represents an increase from the 213 accidents in 2024 but is 4% below the 10-year average of 267. In 2025, 85% were shipping accidents, slightly more than 83% on average over the previous 10 years. The remaining 15% of accidents in 2025 were aboard ship (when a person is seriously or fatally injured), just below the 10-year annual average of 17%.

According to information provided by Transport Canada, marine activity for Canadian commercial non-fishing vessels over 15 gross tons (GT) was 23 732 thousand commercial vessel-km in 2025, which is 11% above the 2015–2024 average. This yields a rate of 3.1 shipping accidents per million commercial vessel-km in 2025, lower than the prior 10-year average of 3.3.

The six marine transportation fatalities represent a 50% reduction from the 2024 total of 12 and a reduction from the 10-year average of 15. Of these fatalities, three involved shipping accidents, below the average of 9 per year. As in previous years, many of the fatalities (3 of the 6) were related to commercial fishing (Canadian-flag vessels in Canadian waters). Due to this continuing trend, commercial fishing safety remains a key safety issue on the TSB's Watchlist.

The 733 marine transportation incidents reported to the TSB in 2025 represents a 1% decrease from 2024 and is 13% below the 10-year average of 842. As in previous years, most reportable incidents (82%) were related to the total failure of machinery or technical systems.

Type of shipping accidents
The most frequent types of shipping accidents in 2025 were:

- collisions (28%)
- grounding (25%)
- fire/explosion (19%)

The total number of collisions (62) was 18% below the 10-year (2015-2024) average of 76, the number of groundings (55) was only 1% over the 10-year average of 54 and the number of fire/explosion accidents (41) was 10% over the 10-year average of 37.

Type of vessel
The total number of fishing vessels (71) involved in shipping accidents in 2025 was significantly higher compared to 56 in 2024, but close to the 2015 to 2024 average of 72. Fishing vessels represented 29% of all vessels involved in shipping accidents.

Download the full report: **https://bit.ly/4h01gBw**.

Manual rescue boat davits raise PSC compliance concerns

The American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) has issued guidance for cargo ships equipped with rescue boat launching appliances that rely entirely on manual operation without stored mechanical power.

The guidance follows the adoption of IMO Resolution MSC.459(101), which introduced an exemption applicable only to rescue boats installed on or after 1 January 2024. The exemption does not apply to systems installed before that date, meaning existing arrangements remain subject to previous requirements.

During a recent Port State Control (PSC) inspection at a European port, a container ship (keel laid December 2008) received deficiency Code 11113 – Launching arrangements for rescue boats. The PSC officer reported that:

- The rescue boat davit could not be slewed out using stored mechanical power or gravity
- It was not possible to actuate the launch from a position within the rescue boat
- No Flag State acceptance of the alternative arrangement could be demonstrated on board

The vessel's dedicated rescue boat weighed 610 kg, fully equipped with engine and without crew. The manual hand crank operated launching arrangement consists of a single-arm radial davit without a hydraulic accumulator.

The PSC argued that the amended LSA Code paragraph 6.1.1.3 (introduced by Resolution MSC.459(101)) applies only to rescue boats installed on or after January 1, 2024. An alternative design for the rescue boat davits may be accepted if it can be clearly demonstrated that it had been approved or accepted by the flag Administration. At the time of the inspection, such approval or acceptance could not be demonstrated.

The regulatory framework

In 2019, IMO adopted Resolution MSC.459(101), which amended the LSA Code to allow manually operated launching appliances for dedicated rescue boats weighing up to 700 kg (fully equipped but without crew), provided specific safety conditions are met, including limits on manual operating force and requirements for safe embarkation. However, the amendment only applies to rescue boats installed on or after 1 January 2024 and does not apply retrospectively to older installations.

In 2025, IMO issued MSC.1/Circ.1693 to clarify the interpretation of the amended LSA Code requirements. The circular confirmed that manual hoisting of a dedicated rescue boat from its stowed position is considered part of launching preparation rather than the launching process, and that manual operation does not need to be performed from inside the rescue boat for systems covered by the amended requirements.

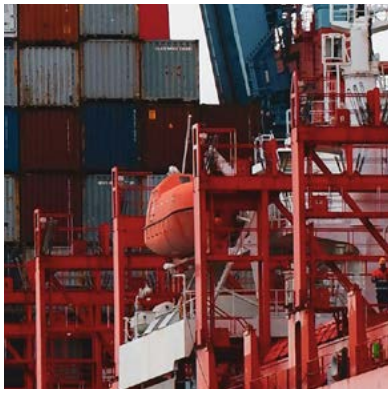
However, the interpretation applies only to arrangements meeting the requirements introduced by Resolution MSC.459(101) and does not extend the exemption to rescue boat launching systems installed before 1 January 2024.

Regulatory implications for existing vessels

Where a rescue boat was installed before 1 January 2024 and its launching arrangement relies solely on manual operation without stored mechanical power, the installation may be considered non-compliant with the unamended provisions of paragraph 6.1.1.3 unless the arrangement has been formally accepted by flag Administration under SOLAS regulation I/5.

This situation creates a regulatory gap for some existing vessels:

- Many existing cargo ships have manual rescue boat launching arrangements that are safe, functional, and long-accepted
- IMO has codified these arrangements as acceptable for new installations, confirming they achieve an equivalent level of safety
- But the codification was prospective only, and the pre-existing flag Administration acceptances were not always formally documented
- As a result, PSC authorities may raise deficiencies against existing vessels that are unable to demonstrate documented flag Administration acceptance of their arrangements



Crewmember crushed by equipment on scallop dredger

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has published its final report on an incident that left a deckhand seriously injured while working on scallop dredger Jacob.

The MAIB also published a safety flyer with safety lessons and considerations to the fishing industry.

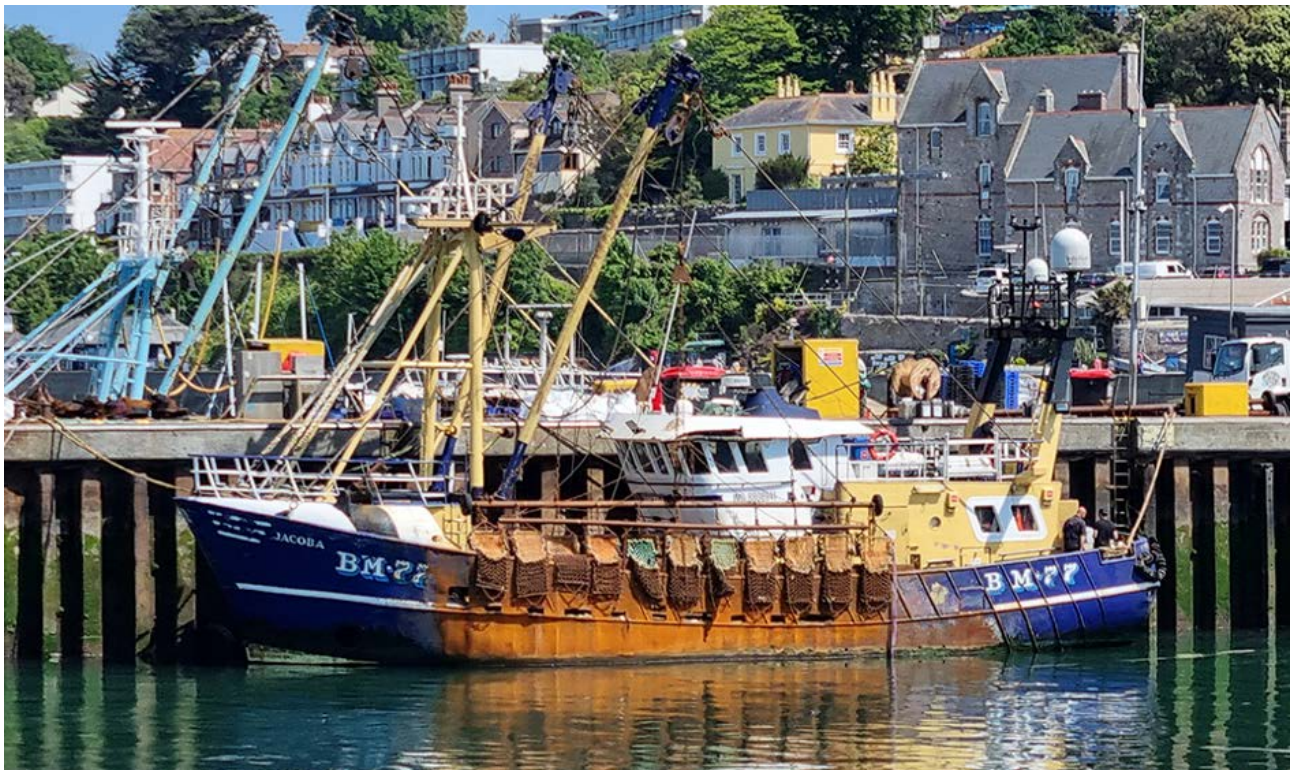
What happened
On 10 May 2025, a deckhand on board the UK registered scallop dredger Jacoba was seriously injured while working on the vessel's deck during dredging operations in the English Channel. The deckhand was attempting to clear a snagged dredge chain while positioned between the vessel's main beam and tipping bar when the beam was lowered from the wheelhouse, striking and crushing them against the equipment. The injured deckhand sustained significant injuries and was evacuated by helicopter to hospital.

Safety issues
- The risk assessments did not adequately address the operation of scallop dredging gear, resulting in associated hazards being ineffectively mitigated and placing the crew at risk.
- The lack of effective crew familiarisation meant that hazards were not fully understood, increasing reliance on informal practices and creating conditions for unsafe conduct during routine operations.
- The requirement to ensure crew had completed mandatory safety training went unenforced and Jacoba continued to operate with uncertified crew. This reduced assurance that those on board had the required safety knowledge.
- Limited company oversight and reliance on informal on board practices meant that Jacoba did not have a structured safety management framework. The absence of a fishing safety management system reduced assurance that risks were being systematically identified, controlled and reviewed.
- The absence of regulator follow up or enforcement following an identified deficiency in crew training represented a missed opportunity to ensure all crew had completed essential safety training.

Recommendations
Jacoba's owner has been recommended to expedite the implementation of a safety management system that aligns with the principles outlined in Maritime and Coastguard Agency guidance. The company has also been recommended to review its risk assessments for scallop dredging and to ensure crew have undertaken the required training.

Read the final report: **https://bit.ly/3ROrPiK**.

Source: MAIB



MCA releases MGN165 Amendment 2 (F) on how to reduce risk of flooding on fishing vessels

The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency has published guidance on how to reduce the risk of flooding and the action to take if flooding occurs on fishing vessels.

MGN165 Amendment 2 (F) fishing vessels: risk of flooding provides guidance on bilge systems, during construction and operation, to help reduce the number of vessels and lives lost as a result of flooding.

It noted that MAIB investigations into fishing vessel losses continue to show flooding as the primary cause. Between 2016 and 2024, 86 vessels were involved in flooding or foundering incidents. Of these, 29 vessels were lost.

Reducing the risk – during construction and refits
A vessel shall always be maintained to the standard it was built to comply with and any modifications to a vessel shall meet the relevant Construction and Outfit Standards or the Standards of a Recognised Organisation appropriate to the length of the vessel.

Based on vessel age and survey type a more invasive survey regime for fishing vessels will be conducted.
For example:

- satisfactory visual external examination and a functional test at working pressure at annual surveys for over 24 metre vessels and intermediate inspection of under 24 metre vessels;
- additional internal examination of a sample of pipes selected at intermediate surveys for over 24 metre vessels; and
- Internal examination and pressure testing, or thickness measurement at Renewal surveys for vessels over 10 years unless proven that pipes have been renewed in the last five years.

The notice also recommends owners and skippers consider use additional or alternative equipment, such as salvage pumps, propeller shaft-mounted pumps and secondary bilge alarms, to reduce the risk of catastrophic flooding.

It also provides guidance on the actions to take in the event of flooding and on preventing and dealing with flooding in shelter decks, as well as reminding owners that vessels must be maintained in accordance with accepted/recognised construction standards and ensure modifications comply with these standards.

Read the notice in full: **https://bit.ly/4pFlAdN**.

MTF releases new safety guidance for the growing methanol-fuelled fleet

The Maritime Technologies Forum (MTF) has released new guidelines aimed at helping shipping companies develop new Safety Management Systems (SMS) and strengthen existing ones for vessels operating on methanol fuel.

The guidance comes as the maritime industry steps up its decarbonisation efforts and methanol gains traction as one of the most viable low-carbon marine fuels. Its ability to remain liquid at ambient temperatures, compatibility with existing fuel infrastructure and growing adoption across the sector have positioned methanol as a leading alternative fuel for the near term.

Despite these advantages, methanol presents a distinct set of safety risks, including toxicity, a low flashpoint, and nearly invisible vapours and flames. These characteristics require robust operational procedures and enhanced risk management measures to ensure its safe use at sea.

Developed jointly by MTF members and industry experts with experience in methanol fuel technologies and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, the new guidance sets out practical recommendations for designing and improving Safety Management Systems for methanol-fuelled ships.

Methanol (CH_3OH) has emerged as a particularly attractive option due to its environmental credentials and practical advantages. It is a well-established fuel that ship operators can already deploy today to reduce pollutant emissions and support the transition towards carbon neutrality. Methanol engines, fuel supply systems and bunkering solutions are already commercially available; and uptake within the shipping industry is growing. In 2025, 66 methanol dual-fuel ships were ordered, with reports of up to 822 methanol-ready ships in the pipeline.

Proposed guidelines can be used to develop new or strengthen existing SMS
Companies can utilise these guidelines to develop new SMS and/or strengthen their existing SMS covering methanol as fuel onboard their fleet. MTF recommends that these guidelines may be used in addition to other similar existing and/or upcoming guidelines to ensure safe operations when using methanol fuel onboard ships.

Download the guidelines: **https://bit.ly/4wfC5Q0**.

Cargo ship lost steering in Bass Strait following mechanical fault

A cargo ship's crew were unable to the use of the backup control system after a mechanical fault left the ship without steering for more than eight hours. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) said inadequate training on the system and unclear instructions in ship's safety management system (SMS) contributed to the incident.

What happened
On 23 July 2025 at 2345, Matthew Flinders III was in transit between Bridport and Lady Barron, Tasmania, when a rudder angle feedback failure in its autopilot system caused a loss of steering. The failure caused both rudders to lock in the hard to port position and caused an uncontrolled turn to port. In response the ship's master reduced engine power and alerted the engineer.

The crew attempted to rectify the problem but were initially unable to identify the cause of the failure. Unable to reinstate steering using the rudders – and rolling heavily in the moderate swell – the crew disconnected the steering gear from the rudder crossbar and centred the rudder manually, after which they regained limited heading control using different power settings on the ship's twin propellers.

The ship slowly made its way back to Bridport, while the crew continued investigating the problem. At about 0815 the engineer identified a loose linkage arm associated with the steering control system. After re-tightening, steering was restored and the ship continued its voyage to Lady Barron.

What the ATSB found
The ATSB investigation found that the loose linkage arm caused a loss of rudder feedback to the autopilot system. This meant that neither the autopilot nor the follow-up manual steering modes were available.

The ship was fitted with a non-follow-up (or 'toggle steering') backup control system that was not dependent on the failed sensor. The toggle steering system was available throughout the occurrence and was engaged by the engineer in an attempt to reinstate rudder control. However, the master was unfamiliar with the toggle steering controls on the bridge and was unable to regain steering.

The ATSB also identified that induction training for new personnel did not adequately address the use of the backup control system and that the ship's safety management system (SMS) did not include clear instructions on its use. Additionally, controls on the bridge were not labelled, and a simple changeover procedure was not posted as required.

Finally, emergency steering drills, which would have served to increase crew proficiency with the ship's systems, did not include actual operation of the steering system in backup mode. Also, drills were not conducted at the required intervals, which meant that the master had not participated in any emergency steering drills.

Download the full report: **https://bit.ly/4gQewsj**.

Source: ATSB/Bass Strait Freight

ClassNK releases Guidelines for Additional Fire-fighting Measures for Container Carrier Edition 2.0

ClassNK has released its new Guidelines for Additional Fire-fighting Measures for Container Carrier (Edition 2.0).

The guidelines provide criteria for evaluating additional firefighting measures implemented on container carriers beyond the mandatory requirements of international conventions and regulations.

Edition 2.0 reflects operational experience gained from ships in service and the latest international developments. By complying with the guidelines, shipowners and operators can enhance fire safety in a practical and effective manner, while the corresponding notations enable the implementation of such measures to be demonstrated to external stakeholders.

Background
In recent years, cargo characteristics and stowage methods on container ships have become more diverse, highlighting the need for enhanced fire safety measures beyond existing mandatory requirements. To support the evaluation of additional fire-fighting measures and to facilitate their external recognition, ClassNK published the guidelines in April 2023. Based on feedback from shipowners and shipbuilders, discussions at the IMO, and ship operational conditions, the guidelines have now been revised and issued as Edition 2.0.

Example of Revisions
- Added the installation of fire hydrants for rapid fire-fighting operations on lashing bridges.
- Added the measures related to video monitoring systems for early fire detection in weather deck cargo areas.
- Revised equipment specifications and required quantities to be reasonable, taking into account ship operational condition and cost-effectiveness. For example, reduced the required number of cameras from eight to two, clarifying the intended use of portable infrared thermographic cameras for firefighting operations and fire patrols.

ClassNK will continue to work on developing appropriate guidelines and providing certification services to support further improvements in maritime transportation safety.

Download the guidelines: **https://bit.ly/457LD3O**.

WSC welcomes EU ETS revisions for maritime decarbonisation

The World Shipping Council welcomes the European Commission's practical EU ETS revisions to accelerate alternative maritime fuels and channel revenues back into shipping's decarbonisation.

The proposed fuel mechanism announced for the maritime sector follows the policy logic already used in aviation. Helping close the price gap between conventional and alternative fuels can encourage uptake, support investment in production and position Europe as a leading alternative fuel bunkering hub.

Simon Bergulf, Vice President, Environment and Climate at World Shipping Council, said, "Liner shipping has already invested over €160 billion in ships that can operate on renewable fuels, but these cleaner ships need cleaner fuels. Closing the price gap is one of the most practical ways to get those fuels into ships' tanks."

Sustainable maritime fuels can still cost from 100 to 400 percent more than conventional marine fuels, making the price gap one of the biggest barriers to uptake.

Reinvesting a significant share of ETS revenues in maritime decarbonisation is both a sensible and necessary step to meet the EU's climate goals. WSC believes those ETS revenues could also be used to strengthen European ports, including through alternative fuel infrastructure and electrification, benefitting all who call European ports and contribute to ETS.

The Council also welcomes recognition that the current ETS design can make European ports more expensive and less competitive for cargo moving between two non-EU markets and transhipped in Europe.

However, WSC is concerned by the Commission's proposal to expand the transshipment list of neighbouring non-EU ports based on infrastructure alone. Ports within 150 nautical miles of the EU could be penalised simply because they have deep water, long berths and ship-to-shore cranes, regardless of whether transhipment is taking place.

"The ETS should be focused on cutting emissions, not making neighbouring non-EU ports less competitive," Simon Bergulf said.

WSC also noted that it would like to see a firmer commitment in the final ETS revisions against double payments once a global measure is adopted at the IMO. "That certainty would strengthen Europe's position in global negotiations and support progress at the IMO," Simon Bergulf said.

The Italian Sea Group CEO steps down from role

The Italian Sea Group S.p.A. (TISG) has announced that chair and CEO Giovanni Costantino, as well as board member Gianmaria Costantino, a non-executive director, have resigned from their positions as directors, effective under Article 2385 of the Italian Civil Code.

These resignations have resulted, pursuant to Article 14.2 of the Articles of Incorporation, in conjunction with Article 2386, paragraph 3, of the Italian Civil Code, in the dissolution of the entire Board of Directors, as the majority of directors appointed by the Shareholders' Meeting are no longer in office.

The Company's Board of Directors will continue to operate on an interim basis until the new Board is appointed, to ensure continuity and the continuation of the restructuring process.

The Board of Directors, operating on an interim basis, will be convened as soon as possible to resolve on the convening of a shareholders' meeting for the appointment of the new Board of Directors, pursuant to and for the purposes of Article 2386, paragraph 3, of the Italian Civil Code.

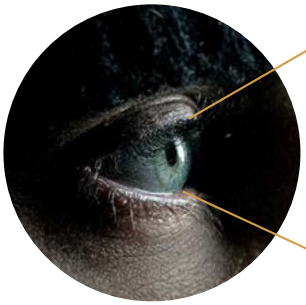
The resigning directors, having done everything possible to address the crisis and bring the Company to its current stage in the restructuring process, have determined that the continuation of this process can now be facilitated by a change in governance, which is likely to strengthen stakeholder confidence and ensure continuity and the best possible satisfaction of creditors.

As of the date of the resignation, Giovanni Costantino indirectly holds, through GC Holding S.p.A., a company controlled by him, a stake equal to 53.604% of the Company's share capital, corresponding to 28,410,000 common shares. Gianmaria Costantino does not hold, directly and/or indirectly, any stake in the Company's share capital.

Regarding their relationships with the Company, TISG said it should be noted that Giovanni Costantino does not have any employment and/or contractual relationships nor any other financial relationships with the Company or with group companies. Gianmaria Costantino is employed by the Company and this will continue in accordance with the relevant contractual provisions. No indemnities or other benefits are provided for the resigning directors in connection with their resignation from office.

It also said the resigning directors have not raised any observations, objections, or complaints regarding facts or circumstances that influenced their decision to resign from office, other than those indicated above, nor have they expressed dissent regarding resolutions adopted by the Company's board of directors. To the best of the Company's knowledge, there are no relevant shareholder agreements within the meaning of Article 122 of the TUF concerning the Company's shares to which the resigning directors are parties.

The Company will continue to provide updates to the market on developments in the situation, in accordance with the disclosure obligations set forth in applicable regulations.

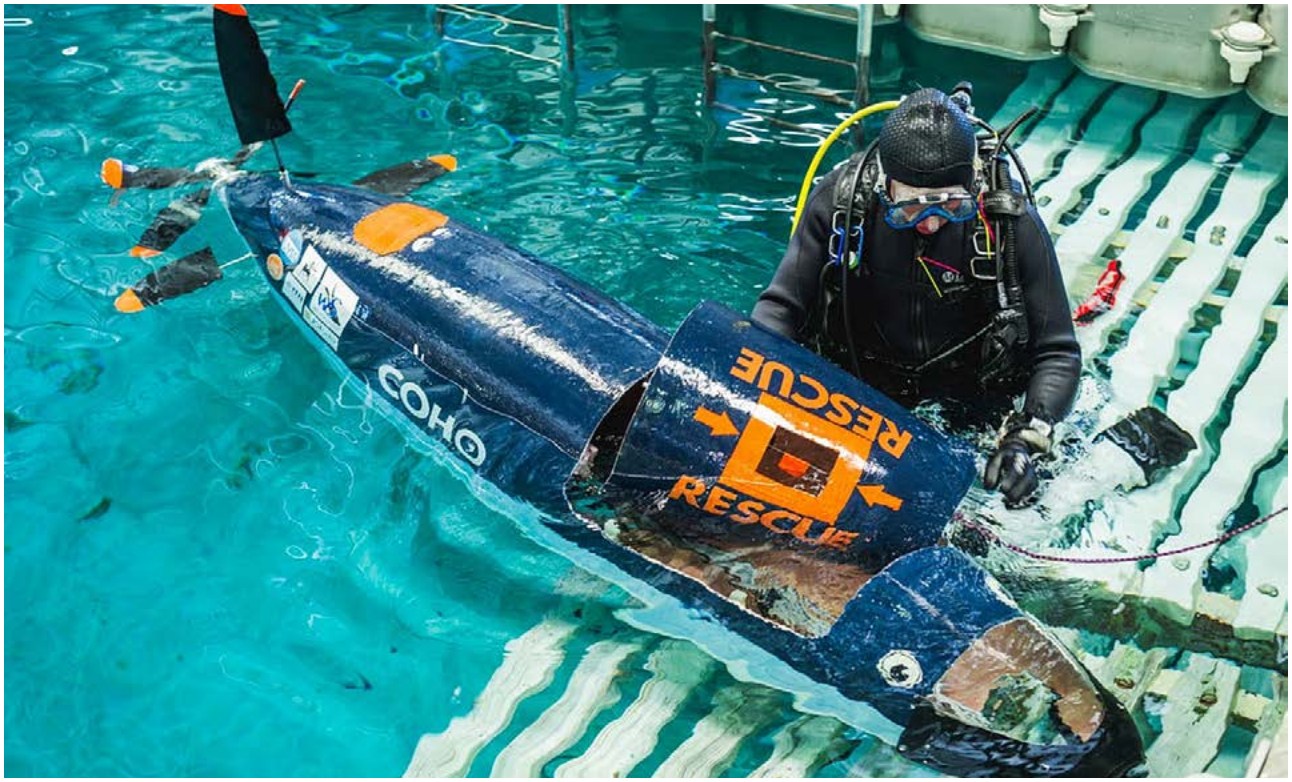


What caught my eye...

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

Seventh European International Submarine Races concludes with new record

What a joyous story this is. An event dedicated to human powered submarines. This should be an Olympic sport!



The 2026 European International Submarine Races took place at QinetiQ's Ocean Basin in Gosport, UK, with five days of competition between university teams from around the world. Defending champions Team OMER, from École de Technologie Supérieure (ETS) in Montréal, retained their title, winning the Hill Trophy and recording the fastest run of the competition at 6.36 knots.

Teams raced their human-powered submarines over a 200-metre course at a depth of up to six metres, each run combining a timing-gate sprint, a 180-degree turn and a progressively harder slalom. The demanding course tested hydrodynamic efficiency, manoeuvrability, propulsion performance and pilot endurance.

Each of the participating submarines is human-powered and fully designed and built by a team of university students. The submarines are able to operate safely at depths of three to six metres, where they float neutrally buoyantly. The submarines were built to be fully flooded, and the pilots breathe air through scuba systems, hence the requirement for pilots who are also qualified divers. Each submarine's pilot straps their feet into a set of pedals and drives a propeller or other propulsion system using muscle-power alone. Steering is achieved with joysticks and mechanical or mechatronic control systems driving rudders and dive planes.

Now who on earth would invent such a crazy event? Well, I have the answer! Sir Bob Hill. He was a Vice Admiral of the Royal Navy and one of the founders. The Sir Robert Hill Trophy is awarded in his honour.

What price nuclear propulsion for superyachts?

When I think about nuclear reactors, I imagine large scale, sinister production plants dotted about the country in remote landscapes and, slightly menacingly, hidden from view. But discussion at a recent industry event means this technology can transfer to propel boats potentially.

The panel session at the recent 2026 Monaco Energy Boat Challenge explored the prospects for nuclear power in superyachts, with Lloyd's Register (LR) contributing technical insight to the debate on one of the sector's most ambitious emerging technologies. The session examined in detail how advances in small modular reactor technologies, combined with changing expectations around sustainability, energy security and operational autonomy, are prompting renewed interest in nuclear propulsion across the maritime sector.

While nuclear-powered yachts remain a long-term proposition, panellists agreed that the conversation is no longer theoretical. Rapid developments in maritime nuclear technologies, combined with increasing pressure to decarbonize shipping and yachting, are encouraging designers, owners, regulators and classification societies to consider how such vessels could be safely designed, operated and regulated in the future.

Jan de Boer, representing LR, commented, "The yachting sector has always been at the forefront of innovation. While significant regulatory and societal challenges remain, it is important that the industry begins the conversation now.

"Classification societies have a key role to play in establishing the safety frameworks, risk assessments and assurance processes that will be required should nuclear propulsion become a viable option for superyachts." It's a whole, brave new world looming!

UK IWA celebrates 80th anniversary

The UK Inland Waterways Association (IWA) marked its 80th anniversary with a special cruise aboard the historic SS Daniel Adamson. Sadly, I was not one of the invited guests on this occasion!

The event celebrated eight decades of the IWA's work to protect, restore and promote inland waterways, while highlighting the potential of the River Weaver and challenges affecting its future.

It combines industrial heritage, important wildlife habitats and reliable cruising conditions, yet remains underused. The IWA believes the navigation deserves greater recognition but says issues such as limited dredging, infrastructure concerns and restricted access through Marsh Lock continue to hold it back.

IWA chair Mike Wills said, "Over the last 80 years, the IWA has helped secure the future of waterways around the country. The River Weaver is one of the finest examples of what our waterways can offer, combining industrial heritage, outstanding wildlife and excellent cruising conditions. However, its potential is being held back by avoidable infrastructure issues, most notably the prolonged closure of the Anderton Boat Lift. We want to see this remarkable navigation fully connected, accessible and able to realise the benefits it can bring to local communities, boaters and visitors."

My hearty congratulations to the IWA and their team for reaching this milestone.

Unusual new ferry service from Fécamp to Shoreham

SailLink is launching a pilot project offering trips between Shoreham Port in the UK and Fécamp, a French commune in Normandy, this month. With an ambitious plan, they aim to prove that regular, wind-powered crossings can become a practical alternative to traditional ferries.

Each crossing will take around 8 hours and will be limited to just 12 passengers. The crossings will take place aboard Mer Agitée, a high-performance racing catamaran captained by Michel Desjoyeaux, who will personally skipper each journey. Mr Desjoyeaux is a well known name in the yachting world and is the only sailor in history to have won the Vendée Globe round-the-world sailing race twice.

As stated, the new ferry service is a pilot project running through September 2026 only. Prices for the pilot start at £220 for a one-way ticket, with return journeys priced at £440.

So, what do you think? Just a publicity stunt, or is this project viable and does it have legs?

More stories for you next month.
Mike Schwarz

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