

MAIB

**MARINE ACCIDENT
INVESTIGATION BRANCH**

SAFETY DIGEST

**Lessons from Marine
Accident Reports
3/2008**

MAIB
is an

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

SAFETY DIGEST

Lessons from Marine Accident Reports

No 3/2008

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MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) is an independent part of the Department for Transport, the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents being responsible directly to the Secretary of State for Transport. The offices of the Branch are located at Carlton House, Carlton Place, Southampton, SO15 2DZ.

This Safety Digest draws the attention of the marine community to some of the lessons arising from investigations into recent accidents and incidents. It contains facts which have been determined up to the time of issue.

This information is published to inform the shipping and fishing industries, the pleasure craft community and the public of the general circumstances of marine accidents and to draw out the lessons to be learned. The sole purpose of the *Safety Digest* is to prevent similar accidents happening again. The content must necessarily be regarded as tentative and subject to alteration or correction if additional evidence becomes available. The articles do not assign fault or blame nor do they determine liability. The lessons often extend beyond the events of the incidents themselves to ensure the maximum value can be achieved.

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The Editor, Jan Hawes, welcomes any comments or suggestions regarding this issue.

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- By post at: Publications, MAIB, Carlton House, Carlton Place, Southampton SO15 2DZ.

**If you wish to report an accident or incident
please call our 24 hour reporting line
023 8023 2527**

The telephone number for general use is 023 8039 5500.

The Branch fax number is 023 8023 2459.

The e-mail address is maib@dft.gov.uk

Summaries (pre 1997), and Safety Digests are available on the Internet:
www.maib.gov.uk

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The role of the MAIB is to contribute to safety at sea by determining the causes and circumstances of marine accidents, and working with others to reduce the likelihood of such causes and circumstances recurring in the future.

**Extract from
The Merchant Shipping
(Accident Reporting and Investigation)
Regulations 2005 – Regulation 5:**

“The sole objective of the investigation of an accident under the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2005 shall be the prevention of future accidents through the ascertainment of its causes and circumstances. It shall not be the purpose of an investigation to determine liability nor, except so far as is necessary to achieve its objective, to apportion blame.”

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

AB	–	Able seaman
CoSWP	–	Code of Safe Working Practices
CO ₂	–	Carbon Dioxide
DSC	–	Digital Selective Calling
EEC	–	Electrical Engineering Cadet
EEO	–	Electrical Engineering Officer
EGE	–	Exhaust Gas Economiser
EPIRB	–	Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon
FRC	–	Fast Rescue Craft
GPS	–	Global Positioning System
GRP	–	Glass Reinforced Plastic
GT	–	Gross tonnes
HP	–	Horsepower
HSE	–	Health and Safety Executive
IMDG	–	International Maritime Dangerous Goods
IMO	–	International Maritime Organization
ISM	–	International Safety Management Code
kHz	–	kilohertz
m	–	metre
“Mayday”	–	The international distress signal (spoken)
MCA	–	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MFO	–	Medium Fuel Oil
MGN	–	Marine Guidance Note
mm	–	millimetre
OOW	–	Officer of the Watch
PPE	–	Personal Protective Equipment
RAF	–	Royal Air Force
RNLI	–	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
rpm	–	revolutions per minute
SAR	–	Search and Rescue
VDR	–	Voyage Data Recorder
VHF	–	Very High Frequency
VTS	–	Vessel Traffic Services

Introduction

Tragically, in this edition of the Safety Digest, many of the incidents have ended with one or more fatalities. In nearly every case, the death(s) resulted from risks being taken unnecessarily and without recognition.

“Risk Assessments” have, to a certain extent, become mired in bureaucracy; they have become paperwork exercises, rather than life-saving assessments. Everything we do at sea is hazardous in one way or another – a few moments thought, to identify the risks of what we are about to do, would prevent most accidents. But familiarity breeds contempt; by the time we have done something a few times, we have lost the sense of danger. We rationalise subconsciously that, because we have always “got away with it”, it must be safe. Have this thought in your mind when you read the articles in this digest, and I hope you will see what I mean. Alertness to the dangers would have prevented many of the accidents. Then consider whether you, or the people who work with you, have become complacent.

I put a “stop press” notice in my introduction to the last Safety Digest, on an enclosed space fatality. This fatality is currently under investigation by the MAIB; MAIB has also recently published reports into a triple fatality on board *Viking Islay* and a double fatality in *Sava Lake*. There continues to be serious concern by accident investigators around the world that there remains an unacceptably high death rate due to enclosed space entry. On the noticeboard at the back of this digest, there is a copy of the Safety Bulletin MAIB issued on the subject.

Finally, in Sections 2 and 3, fishing and leisure, we find yet again that the biggest killer is the lack of a lifejacket. Unless you are wearing your lifejacket, properly fitted and secured, it will not help you in an accident. Accidents normally happen without warning at sea, so there is rarely time to “put them on when they are needed”. Do not make the assumption that you don’t need one because you are a strong swimmer – look at the tragic consequences of Case 22. The tide is slowly starting to turn and more people are routinely wearing lifejackets – please join the club.



Stephen Meyer
Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents
December 2008