

Boat Safety Scheme
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S001-22

MAIB report into fatal person overboard from a hired motor cruiser

The MAIB (Marine Accident Investigation Branch), an independent unit within the Department for Transport, published (05/05/2022) its investigation report into the fatal person-overboard incident involving the motor cruiser Diamond Emblem 1 at the Broads Authority's Great Yarmouth Yacht Station, on the River Bure, 19 August 2020.

What happened

A family group hired the motor cruiser Diamond Emblem 1. A hirer fell overboard from the aft deck of the craft when control of the boat was lost as it manoeuvred at speed and the boat's stern made hard contact against the embankment wall opposite the Great Yarmouth Yacht Station.

On entering the water, the person became entangled in mooring rope and the propeller. They suffered multiple injuries and died due to drowning.

The loss of control arose from a confusion between people at the two (lower and top deck) helming positions.

Recommendations

The report has made recommendations to various organisations including the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities, the Broads Authority and the Boat Safety Scheme.

Chief Inspector's recommendation (2022/123), for the Boat Safety Scheme is to:

Conduct a review of the Boat Safety Scheme requirements for hire boats with multiple helm control positions or systems with the intention of:

- Aligning the requirements with the technical standards outlined in ISO 25197:2020 to require positive visual indication of the active helm control position and that the transfer of command between helm control positions can only be completed at the intended active helm control position; and,
- Including a requirement to incorporate system interlocks in order to prevent inadvertent engine operation from an inactive helm control position

BSS initial response to the MAIB report and recommendations

This was a terrible tragedy, and the BSS recognises the considerable work of the MAIB investigation team in establishing the causes and pointing to ways of preventing further similar incidents.

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The BSS supports the MAIB findings and agrees in principle with the recommendations of the Chief Inspector. His recommendations to the Scheme are now being considered at the BSS Stakeholder Committees.

The BSS notes that the Chief Inspector recognises that the Scheme routinely reviews its requirements affecting hire boats and strives to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

The Full MAIB report is published here <https://www.gov.uk/maib-reports/person-overboard-from-motor-cruiser-diamond-emblem-1-with-loss-of-1-life>

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Notes For Editors

The Boat Safety Scheme, or BSS, is a public safety initiative owned by the Canal & River Trust and the Environment Agency. Its purpose is to help minimise the risk of boat fires, explosions, or pollution from boats harming visitors to the inland waterways, the waterways' workforce, and any other people on or near the waterway.