



HM Government of Gibraltar

Office of the Marine Accident Investigation Compliance Office

SAFETY BULLETIN

SB02

Date: July 2025

**Extracts from Gibraltar
Merchant Shipping (Accident
Reporting and Investigation)
Regulations 2012.**

Regulation. 4.(1) These Regulations seek to improve maritime safety and the prevention of pollution by ships, and so reduce the risk of future marine casualties, incidents or accidents by—
(a) facilitating the expeditious holding of safety investigations and proper analysis of marine casualties and incidents in order to determine their causes; and

(b) ensuring the timely and accurate reporting of safety investigations and proposals for remedial action.

Regulation 4(2). Investigations under these Regulations shall not be concerned with apportioning blame nor with determining civil or criminal liabilities.

Regulation 22.(1). The MAICO may, as a result of one or more investigations, whether or not completed, at any time make recommendations as to how future accidents may be prevented.

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Sammy One



Keith

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This safety bulletin has been produced for marine safety purposes and is based upon information available to date.

The Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012 permits the MAICO at any time make recommendations as to how future accidents may be prevented.



N.D. Atkinson MNM
Marine Accident Investigation Compliance Officer.

NOTE

Investigations under these Regulations shall not be concerned with apportioning blame nor with determining civil or criminal liabilities.

BACKGROUND

At approximately 07:30 on Friday 07 February 2025 the small commercial workboat Sammy One and the open fishing boat Keith collided just off the southern entrance to the inner harbour, adjacent to Alpha Head, South Mole. Keith took on water and sank immediately; the sole person subsequently boarded Sammy One and was transferred safely ashore, no injuries were sustained. Keith remains on the seabed near the area of the accident; there were no signs of pollution or hazards to navigation.

FINDINGS

The crew of Sammy One did not effectively assess the shipping situation after casting off from MV Al Thumama and commenced passage back to berth.

Sammy One's crew were not maintaining a proper lookout by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate to the prevailing circumstance and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and or the risk of collision.

Sammy One's radar was switched off.

Sammy One's visibility in way of the area where the collision took place may have been obscured by the existing presence of background light.

The crew member on the Keith did not effectively assess the shipping situation as he steamed south west of the detached mole heading south and in the approaches to the harbour entrance.

The crewmember on Keith, was not maintaining a proper lookout by sight and hearing appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and or risk of collision.

Keith was being operated single handedly, not fitted with a radar reflector and did not carry any safety or radio equipment

This sense of routine, combined with the lack of proper safety equipment and lookout, suggests a degree of complacency that contributed to the overall risk environment

SAFETY ISSUES

- Neither Sammy One's Boatmaster or crew member saw Keith early enough to be able to take action to avoid the collision.
- The crew of the Sammy One were solely relying on AIS. The radar on the Sammy One was switched off.
- VTS was not informed of their movements.
- The crew member on the Keith was not carrying a hand-held VHF and could not properly assess the shipping situation or vessel traffic within the commercial anchorage.
- There was a possibility that Sammy Ones's visibility may have been obscured by the presence of background light / shoreside light pollution.

- It was the intention of the Sammy One to use the Northern entrance of the Harbour, her heading and proximity to Alpha Head seemed more appropriate for a vessel intending to enter via the Southern Entrance.

SAFETY LESSONS

Navigating Near Harbour Entrances – Night-Time Hazards

Mariners are reminded of the increased risks associated with navigating in close proximity to harbour entrances, particularly during hours of darkness. A proper lookout must be maintained at all times in accordance with COLREG Rule 5.

Special attention should be paid to the potential impact of background lighting, which may impair visibility and make it difficult to distinguish navigational lights or other vessels.

All crew involved in navigation should remain vigilant, exercise caution, and ensure full situational awareness when operating in or near these areas.

DOs for Single-Handed Boat Users:

1. **File a Float Plan:**
Inform someone ashore of your intended route, destination, and expected return time.
2. **Wear a Lifejacket at All Times:**
Choose an auto-inflating type with a harness and personal locator beacon (PLB) if possible. The lifejacket should be to a recognised standard.
3. **Check the Weather and Tides:**
Always assess conditions before departure and be prepared to delay or cancel if necessary.
4. **Carry Reliable Communications Equipment:**
VHF radio with DSC, and a mobile phone in waterproof case, or satellite communicator.
5. **Ensure All Safety Gear Is Accessible:**
Flares, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, knife, should be carried and accessible. The bilge pump should be operational.
6. **Secure and Stow Equipment Properly:**
Loose gear can shift and pose hazards during rough conditions or emergency manoeuvres.
7. **Use a Kill Cord:**
Always attach the engine kill cord to yourself when underway.
8. **Practice Emergency Procedures:**
Know how to respond to fire, flooding, MOB (Man Overboard), and engine failure.
9. **Maintain Regular Engine and Hull Checks:**
Mechanical reliability is crucial when alone.
10. **Stay Well Rested and Alert:**
Fatigue impairs decision-making—plan trips that match your physical and mental stamina.

DON'Ts for Single-Handed Boat Users:

1. Don't Go Without Telling Someone:

Never set off without informing someone ashore of your plan.

2. Don't Underestimate the Risks of Solo Operation:

Emergencies are harder to manage alone—respect your limits and your vessel's.

3. Don't Skip the Pre-Departure Checklist:

Ensure fuel, systems, navigation lights, and safety equipment are all in working order.

4. Don't Take Unnecessary Risks:

Avoid dangerous manoeuvres, unfamiliar areas, or pushing into poor weather alone.

5. Don't Overload the Vessel:

Weight distribution and stability are critical—especially with no one else aboard to assist.

6. Don't Rely Solely on Mobile Phones:

Signal can fail offshore—use marine-grade communication tools.

7. Don't Leave the Helm Unattended:

Even briefly—use an autopilot or tiller lock only if it's safe to do so.

8. Don't Attempt Complex Tasks Underway:

Stop the vessel to adjust gear, check charts, or handle lines whenever possible.

9. Don't Forget Navigation Rules:

Solo operation is no excuse to disregard COLREGs or local marine regulations.

10. Don't Become Complacent:

Regularly review your procedures and learn from incidents (your own and others').

Safety recommendations shall not create a presumption of blame or liability.

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