

## Accident Reporting

Ref. MSN 003 (Rev.2)  
Issued: 20<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024

### 1. Introduction

The IMO Casualty Investigation Code (Casualty Code) provides a legal framework for reporting and investigating marine casualties. The Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2001 (the Regulations) apply the Casualty Code in the Isle of Man. It should be noted that the Regulations pre-date the IMO Casualty Code and as such do contain several key differences highlighted in this notice that operators should remain aware of.

This shipping notice outlines the requirements of the Casualty Code and provides guidance to operators on complying with the Casualty Code.

### 2. Marine Casualty Severity

The Regulations classify marine casualty occurrences into three categories.

#### 2.1 Marine Casualties (including Very Serious)

- Very Serious Marine Casualty – A casualty involving the total loss of the ship or a death or severe damage to the environment.
- Marine casualty - An event, or sequence of events, (occurrence) that results in any of the following and has occurred directly in connection with the operations of a ship\*:
  - the death of, or serious injury to, a person; or
  - the loss of a person from a ship; or
  - the loss, presumed loss or abandonment of a ship; or
  - material damage to a ship; or
  - the stranding or disabling of a ship, or involvement of a ship in a collision; or
  - material damage to marine infrastructure external to a ship, that could seriously endanger the safety of the ship, another ship or an individual; or
  - severe damage to the environment, or the potential for severe damage to the environment, brought about by the damage of a ship or ships.

Marine casualties are the most severe type of occurrence, a very serious marine casualty will always be investigated (see section 5 below), with a view to learning lessons that may prevent a similar occurrence within the industry in future.

#### 2.2 Marine Accident

- Marine accident - any occurrence of the following type\*:
  - the fall of any person overboard; or
  - any fire or explosion; or
  - the collapse or bursting of any pressure vessel, pipeline or valve or the accidental ignition of anything in a pipeline; or
  - the collapse or failure of any lifting equipment, access equipment, hatchcover, staging or bosun's chair or any associated load-bearing parts; or
  - the uncontrolled release or escape of any harmful substance or agent; or



- any collapse of cargo, unintended movement of cargo sufficient to cause a list, or loss of cargo overboard; or
- any snagging of fishing gear which results in the vessel heeling to a dangerous angle; or
- any contact by a person with loose asbestos fibre except when full protective clothing is worn; or
- minor injury to a person

It should be noted that marine accidents are not defined within the IMO Casualty Code but are defined by the Regulations. The Ship Registry considers these marine incidents with considerably high potential to result in a marine casualty and classifies these separately to highlight incidents that potentially have learnings for the wider maritime industry.

Where any of the above results in a serious injury then the classification is upgraded to casualty. For example, a crew member falling overboard who is successfully recovered unharmed is an event classified as an accident. If, on the other hand, the person overboard dies, requires resuscitation, or dislocates his shoulder in falling overboard, then the event is classified as a casualty.

### **2.3 Marine Incident**

- Marine incident - an event, or sequence of events, other than a marine casualty, which has occurred directly in connection with the operations of a ship that endangered, or, if not corrected, would endanger the safety of the ship, its occupants or any other person or the environment.

Marine incidents are the least severe class of marine casualty occurrences and should be considered to include all occurrences that cannot be classified as a 'casualty' or 'accident'. This includes high-potential 'near-misses', where an event had significant potential to become a marine casualty or accident but did not for whatever reason. For example, swift intervention by the crew prevented a grounding or a tool dropped from a height avoided hitting a crewmember due to luck.

*\*A deliberate act or omission, with the intention to cause harm to the safety of a ship, an individual or the environment are not considered to be a marine casualty or incident within the context of the Casualty Code, however, such an act should still be reported to the Ship Registry*

### **2.4 Related Definitions**

Further terms are defined to assist operators in gauging the severity of an occurrence:

- Material damage - damage to the structure, equipment or fittings of the ship which –
  - (a) requires immediate repair before the ship is able to continue in service; or
  - (b) involves a breach of the vessel's hull, or cracking or other defects affecting the ship's structural integrity; or
  - (c) involves damage to the ship's machinery or other equipment which is safety equipment or which is essential to the operation of the ship and is such as to prevent the ship operating as designed;
- Serious Injury - An injury sustained by a person, resulting in incapacitation where the person is unable to function normally for more than 72 hours, commencing within seven days from the date when the injury was suffered.



- Minor Injury – Any injury that is not a serious injury

### **3. Application**

The Regulations are applicable to all Manx vessels wherever they may be; this includes pleasure vessels and fishing vessels.

The Regulations are also applicable to all non-Manx vessels when they are within the territorial waters of, or in a harbour of, the Isle of Man.

### **4. Reporting Requirements**

All marine occurrences must be reported to the Ship Registry using our Accident Reporting Form, ARF-1, located on the forms section of the Ship Registry [website](#) under Casualty. The form should be completed, and submitted, electronically.

The Regulations require all Casualties to be reported to the Ship Registry as soon as it is practicable by the quickest means available. In general, this means that basic information relating to a casualty should be advised via our email, [marine.survey@gov.im](mailto:marine.survey@gov.im), as soon as possible following the occurrence.

The basic information should include as much of the following information as is readily available:

- The name of the ship and its flag State;
- The IMO ship identification number;
- The nature of the marine casualty;
- The location of the marine casualty;
- The time and date of the marine casualty;
- The number of any fatalities, injured or missing persons;
- Consequences of the marine casualty to individuals, property and the environment; and
- The identification of any other ship involved.

In the case of a very serious and ongoing marine casualty, operators should contact the Ship Registry out of hours number, +44(0)7624 493467, that is manned 24/7 by one of our principal surveyors who will provide any required flag state assistance. The accident report form should follow as soon as practical once the event is over.

Marine accidents must also be reported to the Ship Registry as soon as practical by the quickest means available. If the situation worsens and develops into a casualty, the Ship Registry should be advised accordingly as soon as possible. The completed ARF-1 must be reported to the Ship Registry within 24 hours of the vessel's next arrival into port.

Marine incidents do not need to be reported to the Ship Registry as soon as practical, however, the completed ARF-1 form must be reported to the Ship Registry before the vessels departure from the next port.

#### **4.1 ARF-1 Reporting**

As detailed above, the ARF-1 reporting form can be obtained from the Ship Registry [website](#). This form provides a standard template for reporting marine casualty occurrences to the Ship Registry and allows us to quickly analyse and collate the relevant information pertaining to



casualty occurrences within our centralised database, allowing wider industry trends to be easily highlighted.

In completing the ARF-1, sufficient details to identify the following (where appropriate) must be provided:

- The location, time and weather, sea and tide conditions at the time;
- The condition of the ship - draught, loading condition, cargo etc.;
- Third party involvement - pilots, other ships, tugs, etc.;
- Ships course, track, speed, status of navigational aids and steering; and
- Main engine and auxiliary machinery status.

Where a member of the crew or otherwise is injured in a marine occurrence, the rank of the crewmember and severity of the injury should be clearly identified on the ARF-1. In cases where an injury presents as a minor injury at the time of reporting and is later discovered to be a serious injury the Ship Registry should be updated accordingly, however there is no requirement to submit a new ARF-1.

The Regulations require the master and operator of the ship to examine the circumstances behind every Casualty, Accident or Incident. In most cases submitting the ARF-1 form will satisfy this requirement however the Ship Registry retains the right to request more information if deemed necessary.

The Ship Registry does not publish the ARF-1 reports submitted to us, however where we identify safety learnings believed to benefit the wider maritime industry then relevant information may be publicised. Anonymised statistics and trends identified from our casualty reporting database are published annually in our [annual casualty summary report](#) found on the Ship Registry website.

#### **4.2 ARF-1 Transition**

It should be noted that a revised ARF-1 form has been produced by the Ship Registry and from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025, all reports must be completed using the new version of the form found on our website. Any previously printed paper copies of the old ARF-1 prior to revision should be destroyed and **must not** be used to make reports to the Ship Registry from this date. Paper submissions will no longer be accepted from this date and all forms must be submitted electronically to [marine.survey@gov.im](mailto:marine.survey@gov.im).

### **5. Investigation**

Where a vessel has been involved in a very serious marine casualty, this will always be investigated, the Isle of Man maintains a memorandum of understanding with the Marine Accident Investigation Board (MAIB) who investigate all VSMC's on our behalf. The Isle of Man Ship Registry assesses all marine occurrences reported to us and will decide whether any marine casualty, accident or incident warrants an investigation.

The fundamental purpose of investigating a casualty, an accident, or an incident is to determine its circumstances and causes with the aim of improving the safety of life at sea to avoid similar accidents in the future. It is not the purpose to apportion liability, nor, except so far as is necessary to achieve the fundamental purpose, to apportion blame.



It is therefore imperative that any officers and crew interviewed as part of an investigation are, and feel empowered to be, as open and honest with the investigator as possible. Any statements taken during part of an investigation will be used by the Ship Registry to establish the facts of the occurrence and not as the precursor to any other form of investigation intended to establish liability.

Marine occurrences investigated directly by the Isle of Man Ship Registry will be assigned a Surveyor from the Ship Registry who will oversee the investigation and act as an independent investigator to establish the facts of the occurrence. The investigator is the primary point of contact for all matters relating to the occurrence and all communication relating to the same should be directed to them once established.

Where the vessel or operator have been notified of an investigation (whether by the Ship Registry or the MAIB), the ships master and operator have a legal duty to preserve as far as possible all records, documents and other items that may be relevant to the investigation. This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Vessel log books;
- Vessel maintenance records;
- Charts – digital & paper
- VDR data

On completion of the investigation a report will be produced. The final draft of the report will be provided to interested parties prior to publication to provide an opportunity for those parties to see and comment on the report before it is released to the public. The Ship Registry will endeavour to complete the investigation process as quickly as possible without unnecessary impact on ship operations.

#### **Reference Material:**

##### **Documents referred to in this MSN:**

- **Code of the International Standards and Recommended Practices for a Safety Investigation into a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident (Casualty Investigation Code)**

Most Regulations and notices are available on the Isle of Man Government website: [www.iomshipregistry.com](http://www.iomshipregistry.com) or by contacting [marine.survey@gov.im](mailto:marine.survey@gov.im)

*Please note - The Isle of Man Ship Registry cannot give legal advice. Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from ship to ship. You should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.*

