

Information and Advice from the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) was set up in 1989 following the *Herald of Free Enterprise* disaster two years earlier when the roll-on, roll-off ferry capsized as it was sailing out of the port of Zeebrugge. Nearly two hundred people lost their lives in that accident, which was the worst UK shipping disaster for many years.

The MAIB, like its older sister organisation the Air Accidents Investigation Branch, is part of the Department for Transport. The Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, Andrew Moll, reports directly to the Secretary of State, and the Branch is entirely independent of the marine regulator, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. The Chief Inspector is responsible for investigating accidents involving UK registered shipping anywhere in the world, and marine accidents and incidents involving any vessels in UK waters including privately owned leisure craft. The sole aim of an MAIB investigation is to learn lessons that will help prevent an accident re-occurring. In short, to improve the safety of life on the water.



While the stimulus for establishing the MAIB was an accident involving a large cross-channel ferry, nearly half of the Branch's time is spent investigating near coastal and inland water accidents involving much smaller craft. In a typical year, the Branch will receive 1200 accident and incident notifications, and it will investigate around 30 accidents in depth and publish its findings. Besides telling the story of what happened, the main outputs from an investigation are the recommendations made to improve safety.

While the Branch can and does investigate accidents involving privately owned leisure craft, its main focus is on commercial operations where the operator has a duty of care to their clients. Recent investigations involving deaths on Broads boats include: an investigation into

MAIB
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carbon monoxide poisoning on board a privately owned motor cruiser (*Report 9/2017*) as a result of which

new BSS requirements regarding CO were brought in, and an ongoing investigation into a 'man overboard'. Not all MAIB reports are into fatalities, as it is much better to learn from lesser accidents and near misses. However, when the Branch has investigated a death, its report is made available to the Coroner and the lead investigator will attend the inquest to report the findings of the investigation.

Based in Southampton, MAIB investigators deploy world-wide to investigate accidents, and a multi-disciplinary team is always available at two-hours' notice to deploy to an accident scene. Investigators are marine professionals – master mariners, chief engineers and naval architects, all with extensive experience of the industry – who are trained to investigate accidents. The training can take up to 18 months, at the end of which the investigator goes through a formal accreditation process. Supporting the investigators on scene are MAIB technicians, who are experts in recovering and analysing all manner of electronic data from CCTV recordings to the marine equivalent of the 'black box'. No fewer than two investigators will deploy to an accident, but the team will be as large as it needs to be, and a complex accident can see 8 to 10 MAIB staff deployed.

As with any investigation, it is important to collect evidence while it is fresh and, if possible, before any clearing up commences, though the Branch would never aim to impede the work of the emergency services. Besides collecting physical evidence, the accident site and all craft involved will be carefully examined, and the persons involved and any witnesses to the accident are interviewed. If necessary, equipment can be taken away for further examination. Once the team has returned to



the Branch, a debrief is held that, besides looking at the circumstances of the accident, considers wider issues such as the relevant regulations and guidance, the population at risk should the accident be repeated, and the history of similar accidents. The aim of this review is to ensure that investigation resources are targeted where they can be most effective.



Once the investigation phase is complete and all the evidence analysed, the Chief Inspector will normally hold a meeting with industry experts who will assist him in developing targeted recommendations to improve safety and help prevent a re-occurrence. The scope of recommendations can range from a locally targeted recommendation to improve, for example, working practices, training or signage, to a recommendation to government to introduce or amend the regulations governing a particular activity. The important principle underlying all recommendations is that they should be achievable, effective, and result in improvements to safety, and over 97% of MAIB recommendations are accepted and implemented. While most recommendations are issued with the published report, the Chief Inspector can make a recommendation at any time if an improvement to safety is urgently required.

Finally, before an MAIB investigation report is published it is circulated to those involved and other stakeholders for a 30-day period of consultation. This is the opportunity for anyone who might be adversely affected by the report's conclusions to comment. All comments made as part of the consultation process are considered, feedback given and, if appropriate, the report is amended before it is published.

REPORTING A MARINE ACCIDENT As a rule of thumb, all commercial operators are required to report a marine accident to the MAIB, but leisure craft owners are encouraged to do so. The MAIB's **24-hour** accident reporting line is: **023 8023 2527**. See www.gov.uk/MAIB for further details.



**Captain Andrew Moll, BSc AFNI
Chief Inspector of Marine
Accidents**

was born in 1959 and educated at Wymondham College, Norfolk. He joined the Royal Navy in 1978 as a seaman officer and initially specialised as a Fighter Controller.

He served in this capacity in HMS COVENTRY from 1981 until the ship's loss in May 1982, during the Falklands Conflict.

Thereafter, Andrew's naval career was largely sea-going as both a surface and anti-air warfare specialist in destroyers and aircraft carriers. His commands included: the fast patrol boat SNV AL FULK, while on loan to the Omani Navy during the later stages of the Iran-Iraq war; the Type 42 destroyer, HMS YORK, again in the Gulf and on counter-narcotics operations; and the Type 22 frigate, HMS CHATHAM, leading NATO's squadron in the Mediterranean and patrolling the Baltic.

He was staff trained at the Joint Services Defence College, Greenwich, and completed two appointments in the Ministry of Defence: the first in the Directorate of Naval Operations, and the second as the Secretary to the Chiefs of Staff Committee, covering the period of the 2003 Iraq war.

Andrew joined the Marine Accident Investigation Branch in January 2005 as a Principal Inspector in charge of one of the Branch's four investigation teams. He assumed the post of Deputy Chief Inspector in September 2010, and was appointed as the Branch's Chief Inspector in October 2018.

Away from work, true to form, Andrew's activities involve boating. He is an RYA Powerboat Trainer and Yachtmaster; a Younger Brethren of Trinity House, and the Chairman of Trustees for Southampton Sea Cadets.

HOW TO REPORT AN ACCIDENT ON THE BROADS

Contact *Broads Control*

01603 756056

broads.control@broads-authority.gov.uk

www.broads-authority.gov.uk/contact-us