KM News Bulletin

KEY MARINE
IT'S YOUR KEY TO SUCCESS

FEBRUARY 2026

Welcome **to this month's news bulletin compiled by Key Marine, the leading worldwide professional body for professional Marine surveyors / Ship Owners / Operators / US Coastguard.**

This monthly publication aims to keep Mariners, and those who touch the Marine profession up to date with relevant industry news, the latest marine innovations and essential information for Inspectors. For more information about the Key Marine, visit: **www.keymarine.org** to discover a company profile and be find professional tools like **KM-PARI (Key Marine-Pre Arrival risk Intelligence)** to discover a mine of valuable information - it is the most comprehensive online resource of its kind.

BROADCAST FROM THE BOW

- celebrating 35 years of excellence in marine surveying -

Dear Friends and fellow maritime professionals

You do not need me to remind you that we are surrounded by innovative, marine sector tech on all fronts, racing ahead and burgeoning, seemingly at a pace I can't recall at any point in my lifetime. And as one gets older (rather like me these days) it is easy to turn a blind eye to what's happening, and to plough on with what we know, accepting the norm, hoping it will all just go away. But of course, it doesn't, so we must try and embrace what's new and cope with the inevitable change and resulting disruption to our lives it brings.

For younger and less experienced marine surveyors, I'd suggest ignoring what is going on around them right now is dangerous, and creates knowledge voids and potential pitfalls as vessel design, hull materials, alternative fuels and evolving propulsion systems (to name but a few), present new challenges as well as opportunities. The importance of learning and continuous professional development has never been more critical.

This leads me nicely on to mention the CES® (Consumer Electronics Show), which claims to be the most powerful tech event in the world. It was held at Las Vegas from 6-9 January. So, what's that got to do with the maritime sector you may well ask? I have ignored this event in previous years, but it is clear that some of the industry's movers and shakers have not. It off s an entirely diff ent backdrop to a traditional boat show and opens up a new audience.

US based Brunswick Corporation operates at a scale that few companies in boating can ever hope to compete with. It is the world's largest marine technology company, spanning propulsion, electronics, boatbuilding, parts, accessories, and digital services.

Image credit: Brunswick Corporation

By attending CES®, Brunswick has placed boating into the broader technology conversation rather than treating it as a niche leisure market. The company returned to last month's event with its largest marine exhibit to date. Rather than focusing on a single headline product, the company's ACES approach is appearing in boats that are either in production now, or close to it.

ACES stands for Autonomous or Assisted, Connected, Electrifi and Shared boating. At CES 2026, the emphasis was on showcasing exactly how those ideas translate into hardware and software that is already fi their way into real boats.

John Kelley, Consumer Technology Association vice president and CES® show director, said, "We have certainly seen the continued evolution of boating into a technology-driven sector at CES®. The show brings together the mobility ecosystem across air, land and sea, and that convergence is creating more opportunities for marine companies to meet partners, compare solutions and bring new ideas to market."

Fascinating!

In late December I had the privilege of joining a group of surveyors, an event organised by local member, Nick Healey, on what turned out to be a foul and stormy evening weather wise. The sole topic for discussion that night was lithium-ion batteries, and the challenges they present to a surveyor - the most talked about subject of last year. We were joined by Simon Firth from locally based Pantaenius Insurance, who gave a glimpse into the concerns and issues this technology is presenting for the insurance industry.

And finally, I have just returned from a short trip, attending the annual IIMS Baltimore Conference alongside members James 'Randy' Renn and Ray Bracken, held at the MITAGS facility on the outskirts of the city. It is always a pleasure to spend time with member surveyors (and non-members) in the US. As always, the range of topics was far reaching and provoked much discussion. My thanks to James and Ray for organising a great and inspirational speaker lineup, and to all those who attended either in-person or virtually.

Survey well

Oleg Kolesnykov

Chief Executive Officer

New documentation from the MCA

Published on 12 December 2025

MSN 1908 (M+F) Amendment 2 -
The merchant shipping (control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments) regulation 2022.

This MSN provides the technical requirements of the obligations contained in the merchant shipping (control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments) regulations 2022 (SI 2022/737).

To read the MSN go to **https://bit.ly/3NbaspQ**.

Published on 16 December 2025

MGN 578 (M) Amendment 3
Use of overside working systems on vessels

This notice provides guidance on overside working systems, their use, standards, maintenance and regulations.

To read the MGN go to **https://bit.ly/49BOGD8**.

Published on 18 December 2025

MSN 1819 Prevention of air pollution from ships

Guidance and technical information on the merchant shipping (prevention of air pollution from ships) regulations 2008.

To read the MSN go to **https://bit.ly/3YyCZII**.

Published on 19 December 2025

MGN 681 (M) Amendment 1
Fire safety and storage of small electric powered craft on yachts

The guidance contained in this MGN is intended to outline best practices related to design, equipment and outfit of dedicated spaces onboard, and to increase safety for handling, charging and stowage of Li-ion batteries and craft with these in-built.

To read the MGN go to **https://bit.ly/4sGcpdZ**.

Published on 2 January 2026

MGN 710 (M) safety management systems for small workboats and pilot boats

Guidance on proportionate SMS requirements under Workboat Code Edition 3, including self-assessment, implementation evidence and the CA's assurance role.

To read the MGN go to **https://bit.ly/4jGgTNB**.

Published on 6 January 2026

MGN 589 (F) Amendment 1 ILO
Work in fishing convention: complaints

Details on the UK provisions on the MCA's handling of complaints, made to the MCA, relating to the work in fishing convention 2007 (ILO 188).

To read the MGN go to **https://bit.ly/4qOIDSx**.

MGN 601 (M) - Maritime Labour Convention: Crew Accommodation for Small Vessels of Less than 200 GT that are Ordinarily Engaged in Commercial Activities (Amendment 1)

Crew accommodation standards as a substantial equivalence to MLC standard A3.1 for new UK vessels under 200GT, ordinarily engaged in commercial activities.

To read the MGN go to **https://bit.ly/4qS38ho**.

Published on 7 January

MGN 659 (M+F) Amendment 3
(Entry into Enclosed Spaces)

Guidance on the application of the Entry into Enclosed Spaces Regulations 2022 and further supporting information on best practice, following consultation.

To read the MGN go to **https://bit.ly/4567NUr**.

MGN 331 (M+F) Amendment 4:
The PUWER Regulations 2006

This MGN provides details and guidance on interpretation of the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Provision and Use of Work Equipment) Regulations 2006.

To read the MGN go to **https://bit.ly/4qjIOFx**.

MSN 1849 (M) Amendment 1 MLC,
2006 on-board complaint procedures

How to comply with merchant shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (survey and certification) regulations 2013 in regards to regulation 13, on-board complaint procedures.

To read the MSN go to **https://bit.ly/49BHvuM**.

MGN 332 (M+F) Amendment 4:
The LOLER regulations 2006

This provides details and guidance on interpretation of the merchant shipping and fishing vessels (lifting operations and lifting equipment) regs 2006.

To read the MGN go to **https://bit.ly/4sBak2S**.

MSC Baltic III wreck poses growing environmental threat

Photo credit: Canadian Coast Guard

Heavy winter seas continue to batter the grounded containership MSC Baltic III off Newfoundland's west coast, raising serious environmental concerns as the vessel is now expected to break apart under relentless conditions. The vessel lost power and ran aground in February 2025, approximately 12 nautical miles outside the entrance to Bay of Islands. All 20 crew were airlifted to safety.

Severe weather has caused additional damage to the MSC Baltic III grounded in Cedar Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The hull has suffered significant new damage, including increased plate buckling on both the starboard and port sides, and the stern is now noticeably lower in the water.

While most cargo and fuel have been removed, worsening winter weather has slowed what officials call the largest and longest salvage operation in Canadian Coast Guard history. Oily debris and tar balls are already washing ashore, with continued monitoring underway.

Lloyd's Register engine test requirements for NOx Technical Code update

Lloyd's Register has issued details on the International Maritime Organization (IMO) NOx Code amendments, which off fl testing for modifi engines to support continued compliance.

The IMO MEPC 83 adopted a number of amendments to the NOx Technical Code 2008 in Resolution MEPC.398(83). They include Parent Engine test requirements for a marine diesel engine.

These amendments apply to any marine diesel engine that undergoes a substantial modification or is to be certified to a NOx Tier to which it was not previously certified, so requiring re-certification.

Although these changes enter into force on 1 September 2026, the MEPC invited their early application as they do not alter any existing requirements and help to mitigate risks and ensure continued compliance.

Engine test requirements

The majority of the NOx certification will continue to be based on test-bed testing, which is reflected in the existing engine test requirements. However, for an existing, installed engine subject to substantial modification, or which the owner/operator now requires to be additionally certified to NOx Tier III, there will not be, in most cases, a comparable engine available for that test-bed testing.

Consequently, these NOx Technical Code amendments provide some flexibility regarding aspects of the NOx certification Parent Engine test requirements. They will allow for that testing to be undertaken on an installed engine without affecting the overall rigour of the process. Therefore, following such testing, a new Engine Group will be established in this case and other so altered comparable engines could then be certified as Member Engines following the usual procedures without requiring emission measurements.

MV Estonia investigation closed as incident due to bow failure

Authorities have concluded the investigation into the 1994 sinking of the MV Estonia citing the failure of the ferry's bow section as the cause of the incident.

On September 28, 1994, the Estonian-fl ferry Estonia sank during the regular route from Tallinn to Stockholm.

There were 989 people on board - only 137 survived. 852 people died in the accident and the bodies of 95 drowned people were found. Most of the victims were Swedish (501) and Estonian (285) citizens.

"The damage on the starboard side of the wreck has originated from contact with the seabed. Our work also delivers comprehensive up-to-date documentation of the wreck's condition, the sequence of events, and the wider systemic factors that caused the accident," states Märt Ots, director of the Estonian Safety Investigation Bureau (OJK).

The wreck has significant damage and it has shifted remarkably on the seabed during the decades. The shape of the starboard-side damage corresponds well with the exposed bedrock close to it. The wreck's condition will continue to deteriorate over time, making the occurrence of new deformations possible.

"Although the wreck covering operations in the mid-nineties have been heavily criticized, archived documents from those surveys have been valuable evidence for the PA. Based on those documents, we managed to reconstruct the wreck's position and orientation movements on the seabed. Therefore, it is possible to demonstrate why the previously unknown damage was not visible in the nineties but was revealed later due to the wreck movement," said Tauri Roosipuu, Investigator-In-Charge of the OJK.

Findings

- No evidence of collision or explosion. There is no indication of a collision with another vessel or object when the vessel was afl nor any signs of explosive force in the starboard side or the bow area.
- Bow visor and ramp failures confi Examination of the recovered bow ramp and modelling of the bow structure collapse remain consistent with the 1997 JAIC fi the bow visor failed under wave loads, causing the ramp to open and fl to commence on the car deck.

- Sinking sequence reaffirmed. Updated modelling supports the established scenario: rapid water ingress through the bow ramp leading to capsize of the vessel. Alternative sequences, including flooding from the starboard-side opening, are incompatible with the calculations, witness statements and other collected evidence.
- Seaworthiness assessment. A combined OJK–SHK assessment states that MV Estonia was not seaworthy due to uninspected, thus unrecognized, structural weaknesses and undocumented regulatory exemptions on certifi

"The vessel had latent structural defi through all her lifetime, and was technically unsafe for trade. However, this was not acknowledged among the relevant stakeholders – neither on board nor at shore," Swedish Chair the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority (SHK), Jonas Bäckstrand, added.

- Survivor interviews: Witness statements from 68 survivors have been collected.

"The interviews indicate that some amount of water was observed coming from the car deck to the cabin area below. They also indicate that no military vehicles were loaded. Many of the witnesses expressed their reluctance to the idea of covering the wreck. In addition, they did not understand why the bodies of the deceased were not recovered," states Jörgen Zachau, Investigator-In-Charge of the SHK.

Based on all available evidence, it can be concluded that MV Estonia sank due to the failure of the bow structure, and that the new damage on the starboard side resulted from contact with the seabed. Therefore, the report concluded there is no need to reopen the safety investigation of the accident of MV Estonia.

As regrettable as the MV Estonia disaster was, it led to drafting and implementing of new common rules, especially related to bow structure and vessel stability, reinforcement of the existing ships and developing the life-saving appliances

Download the report: **https://bit.ly/4qlKNJq**

MCA: MGN 710 (M) safety management systems for small workboats and pilot boats

Guidance on how owners and operators of small workboats and pilot boats can meet the Safety Management System (SMS) requirements of the recently launched Workboat Code Edition 3 is now available.

The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has published MGN 710 (M) safety management systems for small workboats and pilot boats.

It sets out practical ways to demonstrate that an SMS is implemented and operational on board, primarily through an annual self-assessment or an equivalent method providing comparable assurance.

The MGN clarifies the role of the Certifying Authority (CA), emphasising that their function is limited to sampling evidence of SMS implementation as part of the certification process, rather than auditing or developing the system. It also outlines expectations for periodic SMS reviews, responsibilities for addressing findings internally, and specific considerations for remotely operated unmanned vessels and remote operation centres.

The guidance supports proportionate, practical safety management, encourages continual improvement, and reinforces that responsibility for the SMS remains with the owner or operator.

Workboat Code Edition 3 (WB3) came into force on 13 December 2025 – a significant update to the safety framework for small workboats and pilot boats certified in the UK.

All vessels certificated under WB3 are required to implement an SMS that is proportionate to the size, complexity and risk profile of their operations by 13 December 2026. However, all Remotely Operated Unmanned Vessels certificated under this Code are required to implement an SMS from the date WB3 entered into force.

Proportionate SMS means the system should be tailored to the specific needs and activities of each vessel and owner/operator, ensuring safety management is practical and effective without being unnecessarily burdensome.

Owners/operators are encouraged to develop their SMS to address all aspects of their operations, including the human element, drawing on best practices and lessons learned.

The CA responsible for issuing vessel code certification should sample the SMS to verify that it is implemented and operational, but must remain independent of its development or production. The CA's role is to ensure that the owner/operator can meet their responsibilities under the Code and that the SMS is implemented, without involvement in its production, consultation, or detailed auditing.

Where the vessel holds a valid certification under the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, this certification shall be accepted in lieu of the SMS requirements detailed within WB3. This acceptance is conditional upon the certification being issued by the MCA or an MCA-recognised organisation, and it applies equally to mandatory and voluntary ISM certifications. For such acceptance to apply to vessels conducting ROUV operations, the ISM SMS must ensure that it adequately covers these operations.

This notice should be read in conjunction with The Merchant Shipping (Small Workboats and Pilot Boats) Regulations 2023 (SI 2023/1216) and the Workboat Code Edition 3.

Operator modifications blamed by shipbuilder for 'Dali' blackout

The fallout following the M/V Dali accident which caused the collapse of the Francis Scott Key bridge in Baltimore in March 2024 continues to make the news headlines and is likely to do so for many months to come. Now the vessel's builder, HD Hyundai, has weighed in to respond. It says changes made after delivery bypassed critical redundancies, triggering the second blackout that left the ship without propulsion or steering in the critical moments before the bridge strike.

HD Hyundai Heavy Industries has issued a detailed and robust defence of the vessel's original design following the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) investigation into the ship's collision with Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge.

The NTSB determined that the probable cause of the collision was a loss of electrical power due to a loose signal wire connection stemming from improper wire-label banding installation, resulting in the vessel's loss of propulsion and steering near the bridge. The agency also made a recommendation to HD Hyundai Heavy Industries, the Dali's builder, to incorporate proper wire-label banding installation methods into its electrical department's standard operating procedures.

In its statement, the South Korean shipbuilder emphasized that the M/V Dali was delivered with extensive redundant systems and automatic restart capabilities designed to prevent catastrophic failures. "Container ships like the M/V Dali are, as NTSB described, floating cities'" the company stated, noting that such vessels have onboard power plants and are built with safeguards to deal with "the inevitable unpredictability of running a complex system in a harsh environment."

According to HD Hyundai, the vessel was originally equipped with four independent diesel generators, two independent transformers, and fuel supply pumps set to automatic mode that would restart without crew intervention after a power outage. These redundancies, the shipbuilder noted, are required by relevant classification societies.

However, the company alleges that "some time after taking possession of the M/V Dali, the shipowner and operator circumvented the ship's safeguards by compromising its critical redundancies." Specifically, HD Hyundai claims the operators replaced automatic fuel supply pumps with an electrical flushing pump - single-point system designed for cleaning, not fuel supply, that can only be restarted manually and lacks critical protections.

"Using the flushing pump as a fuel supply pump sacrificed both redundancy and automation of the fuel supply system and violated established classification rules," the statement read.

On the day of the incident, the vessel experienced two blackouts. The first was caused by a wire disconnecting from a terminal block in the transformer system. Because the transformer was being used in manual mode rather than automatic, the crew had to manually switch to the backup transformer. However, when making this switch, "the crew did not restart the flushing pump that had been supplying fuel to the operating generators, starving the generators of fuel and resulting in another blackout," according to HD Hyundai.

The shipbuilder contends that had the vessel's systems been used as designed and manufactured, "power would have been restored within seconds, and the second blackout, which led to the tragedy, would not have happened."

The NTSB also found fault with the vessel's operations. "Although not causal to the initial underway blackout, [the NTSB] found that the crew's operation of the fl pump as the service pump for online diesel generators was inappropriate because the necessary fuel pressure for diesel generators 3 and 4 would not be automatically re-established after a blackout," the agency said in its report.

The NTSB report further explained: "As a result, the fl pump did not restart after the initial underway blackout and stopped supplying pressurized fuel to the diesel generators 3 and 4, thus causing the second underway blackout (low-voltage and high-voltage)." The NTSB found that operational oversight by Synergy, the Dali's operator, was inadequate.

The NTSB noted that routine inspection over the past decade should have identified the loose wire, while HD Hyundai emphasized that "it was incumbent on the ship's owner and operator to engage in regular and appropriate inspection and maintenance to ensure that the systems and components on the ship remained in seaworthy condition."

The NTSB also identified contributing factors beyond the vessel's systems, including the lack of bridge countermeasures and ineffective communications to warn highway workers to evacuate. The agency issued urgent recommendations to multiple federal agencies and bridge owners nationwide to assess vulnerability and implement risk reduction strategies.

In its conclusion, HD Hyundai stated, "The M/V Dali's shipowner and operator used the vessel's systems improperly and neglected their continuing inspection and maintenance obligations. They cut corners and violated class rules, which ultimately led to the tragic incident."

Five boats sink in Canadian marina fire

Several vessels moored at Reed Point Marina in Port Moody were involved in a fire. (CityNews image)

Five boats sank in a fire at Reed Point Marina in Port Moody, British Columbia, Canada last year.

Local fire rescue service was called to the marina just before 1am on 27 December 2025 to find several vessels involved in the incident. Fortunately, the affected vessels were unoccupied, and there were no injuries reported.

The cause of the fire is unknown so far, but an investigation is underway.

Containment booms were deployed; however, the Canadian Coast Guard has since confirmed the presence of diesel fuel within and outside of the marina.

Prawn trawler Odyssey sank after crew left wash pumps running

Image courtesy of Fishing News

Six crewmembers were forced to abandon ship after prawn trawler Odyssey capsized and sank in the North Sea on 29 October 2024. Its crew were rescued from a liferaft uninjured.

According to the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB), the accident occurred after high-capacity deck wash pumps were left running unattended, while the crew recovered the fishing gear, discharging water onto the vessel's weathertight shelter deck. It is likely that a blocked tonnage valve prevented the water from escaping, resulting in rapid flooding and a catastrophic loss of stability.

Safety issues

- there was a risk of fl as the deck wash pumps were left running and unattended.
- the shelter deck had limited drainage by design, leaving it vulnerable to water build-up when the drainage became compromised.
- the crew initially mistook the developing list to be normal movement associated with recovering the fi gear.
- there was a lack of guidance in relation to fl risk from deck wash pumps and the danger had not been addressed in the vessel's risk assessments.
- emergency preparedness helped the crew successfully abandon the vessel.

Recommendations

Recommendations have been made to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) to update Merchant Shipping Notice 1872 (F) Amendment 1 to ensure that existing vessels without the independent pumping capability outlined in 4.3.2.1 (iii) have additional measures in place to adequately address the risk of water accumulation on weathertight shelter decks due to blocked, seized, or shut tonnage valves or other water freeing arrangements, and to update its Marine Survey Instructions for the Guidance of Surveyors and relevant aide-memoires. The MCA has also been recommended to provide guidance on the additional measures that can be implemented to adequately address the risk of water accumulation on weathertight shelter decks caused by blocked, seized, or shut tonnage valves or other water freeing arrangements.

The MAIB has also shared a safety flyer of lessons to the fishing industry about the risk of rapid capsize from wash water accumulation.

Download the full report:
https://bit.ly/3NyEluH

The dry dock danger zone: Why a shipyard safety plan must be bulletproof

Shipyards are singular industrial environments, combining the hazards of heavy construction, manufacturing, and complex marine operations into one sprawling, high-stakes location. For any vessel owner, operator, or contractor, the yard represents a necessary but incredibly risky dry dock danger zone. The complex nature of repair, maintenance, and construction, often conducted under tight deadlines, elevates the potential for catastrophic accidents.

A shipyard is a constantly evolving workspace. One moment, a section of the hull is being pre-fabricated in a clean workshop; the next, it is being hoisted by cranes over active work zones to be welded into place many meters above the dry dock floor. This dynamic, multi-hazard environment necessitates a safety culture that is not merely compliant, but proactively rigorous.

The core dangers of the shipyard

The potential dangers within a working shipyard are layered and severe. Recognizing these primary hazards underscores the urgent need for comprehensive safety controls:

1. **Working at height and heavy lifting**
   The scale of shipbuilding and repair means that workers are frequently operating high above the ground on temporary scaff gangways, or vessel decks. Falls from height remain one of the leading causes of fatality and serious injury. Simultaneously, the routine use of massive gantry cranes and mobile lifting equipment to move multi-ton blocks or machinery introduces severe risk of crushing injuries, structural collapse, and dropped objects. Proper rigging, competent personnel, and inspected equipment are non-negotiable.

2. **Confined spaces and atmospheric hazards**
   Vessels are labyrinthine structures defined by tanks, voids, and cargo holds. Entering these confined spaces carries the immediate risk of oxygen depletion, engulfment, or exposure to toxic, explosive, or flammable gases that may have accumulated. Strict Permit-to-Work (PTW) systems, atmospheric testing, and continuous ventilation are essential to save lives.

3. **Hot work and fire**
   Hot work – including welding, cutting, grinding, and burning – is constant in a shipyard. This activity creates immediate ignition sources near flammable materials, lubricants, and fuel residue on the vessel, particularly within the engine room or on tankers. The complexity of the vessel structure means fires can spread rapidly and be difficult to access, making robust fire watches, hot work permits, and isolation protocols mandatory.

4. **Simultaneous operations (SIMOPS)**
   Perhaps the most complex hazard is SIMOPS, where multiple independent activities occur in the same area. For example, a crane lift might be happening over a scaffolding crew while hot work is ongoing inside a tank nearby. The risk of one activity negatively impacting another – like a falling object from a lift injuring a welder – is extreme. Effective coordination, communication, and clear demarcation of work zones are critical for mitigating SIMOPS hazards.

The necessity of a strong safety framework

A robust safety framework is not an administrative burden; it is the fundamental mechanism for protecting personnel, assets, and schedule integrity. When an accident occurs, the direct costs of medical care, equipment damage, and investigation are quickly overshadowed by the indirect costs of work stoppage, project delays, legal liability, and irreparable reputational damage.

The goal of a strong safety system is to establish a shared, non-negotiable standard that spans the entire project – from the shipyard's native staff to the vessel owner's team and every third-party subcontractor. This includes:

- Clear lines of responsibility.
- The use of formalized tools like Risk Assessments and Lock Out/Tag Out (LOTO) procedures.
- Empowering every individual with Stop Work Authority (SWA).

A mature safety program ensures that risks are identified, communicated, and controlled before work begins, not after an incident occurs.

Introducing guidance for safer operations
Recognizing the criticality of aligning safety standards between vessel operators and shipyards, the International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) has developed a comprehensive resource.

To assist vessel owners and contractors in navigating these complex, high-risk environments, IMCA has published the Guidance on Safety in Shipyards (IMCA HSS032, M221 – Rev. 2). This document serves as an indispensable tool, providing a structured, phased approach to safety management from initial planning and auditing through to operational execution and final project closeout. It offers practical checklists and procedures to help companies establish a unified safety standard, bridge documentation requirements, and ultimately ensure a safe and successful project delivery.

Download the guidance: **https://bit.ly/49ouO6f**

The Superyacht Builders Association (SYBAss) announces important changes to its leadership structure

Jan-Bart Verkuyl, CEO of Feadship Royal Van Lent, is the new president of SYBAss. Verkuyl succeeds Michael Breman, who will remain on the board as past president. The new vice-chair is Bas Peute of Vitters, who was recently elected to the board to represent sailing yacht builders. Michelle Jones of Delta Marine has been re-elected and will continue to serve as the association's treasurer. Giovanna Vitelli of Azimut|Benetti and Massimo Perotti of Sanlorenzo have also been re-elected to represent the members' interests for the next three years. Theo Hooning was re-elected and will continue as a non-executive board member next year, having announced that he will step down as secretary general at the end of 2025.

New executive director
Robert van Tol is the new executive director of SYBAss effective 1st of January 2026. Following his past 7 years successfully establishing and scaling up the Water Revolution Foundation, a non-profit organisation dedicated to driving environmental progress within the yachting sector, he brings fresh energy and a modern perspective to SYBAss.

Robert van Tol stated, "It is an absolute privilege to take on this exciting role. New builds are a key driver of innovation, maximising both opportunities and responsibilities that come with each new project to continuously move the needle, both for product and process. I look forward to working with such a prominent group of builders to ensure a resilient future."

Italian marine industry forecast reveals positive outlook for 2026

At the annual members' assembly in December, Confindustria Nautica shared its latest sector forecast based on the research department's data-based outlook for the industry. This analysis, drawn from a survey of member companies in early December, points to a cautiously optimistic outlook for Italy's recreational boating and superyacht sectors.

The superyacht segment ended 2025 in a strong position. Half of surveyed companies saw their turnover grow compared to last year, and another 25 per cent reported steady results. Order books show growth rates are returning to normal, with half of yards keeping order levels steady and a quarter seeing more orders than last year.

Production for boats under 24 meters, such as motorboats, sailing yachts, and inflatables, has been more unpredictable. In 2025, 54 per cent of businesses expect their turnover to drop by anywhere from 5 to over 30 per cent. At the same time, 23 per cent expect things to stay the same, and another 23 per cent predict growth, which is similar to what happened in 2024.

Looking ahead to the 2025/26 maritime year, companies are more optimistic. Now, 46 per cent expect growth, 31 per cent think things will stay stable, and 23 per cent still see a possible decline. The sales network for recreational boats shows a similar pattern. For 2025, 62 per cent of respondents expect a negative result, while 38 per cent think things will stay the same. But the outlook is better for the current nautical year: only 37 per cent expect a negative outcome, 50 per cent predict stability, and 13 per cent see a return to growth.

In the marine engine segment, forecasts for 2025 are evenly split: 25 per cent expect growth, 25 per cent expect a decline, and half predict stable turnover. For the nautical year, the outlook improves, with 37 per cent now expecting growth and 50 per cent still seeing stability.

The components and equipment sector is seeing a lot of variation. In 2025, 40 per cent expect things to stay stable, while 30 per cent expect growth and another 30 per cent predict a decline, with changes ranging from plus 20 per cent to minus 30 per cent compared to 2024. This wide range shows just how diverse the sector is, covering everything from superyachts to small boats and aftersales.

For 2025/26, the number of positive responses goes up from 30 per cent to 39 per cent, which suggests that confidence is growing. Leasing and rental companies are among the most positive. In 2025, 57 per cent report turnover growth, 14 per cent see stability, and 29 per cent expect only moderate declines of up to 10 per cent. The outlook for the nautical year is even better, with 64 per cent expecting growth and just 7 per cent predicting a decline.

Early signs of a wider recovery, expected in 2026 and 2027, have already appeared at autumn boat shows like the 65th Genoa International Boat Show, helped by new product launches and changing market trends.

Cargo vessel Genius Star XI after the fires. Source: NTSB

NTSB says improperly secured lithium-ion batteries caused fires on cargo ship

Heavy weather and an improperly secured cargo of lithium-ion battery energy storage system (BESS) units led to two fires on board the cargo vessel Genius Star XI - causing $3.8 million in damages, according to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

What happened

On December 25, 2023, at 0830, while the cargo vessel Genius Star XI was transiting the North Pacific Ocean in heavy weather with a cargo of lithium-ion battery energy storage system units on board, a fire was discovered in a cargo hold.

Crew discharged the vessel's fixed gas (carbon dioxide) fire extinguishing system into the hold, and the vessel proceeded to the nearest port, Dutch Harbor, Alaska, for assistance.

On December 28, about 0215, while the vessel was en route to Dutch Harbor, a fire started in a second cargo hold. The crew externally cooled the cargo hold using fire hoses, and, after the vessel anchored in Dutch Harbor on December 29, the fire was determined to be extinguished. There were no injuries, and no pollution was reported. Damage from both fires was estimated at $3.8 million.

Findings

Investigators determined that the probable cause of the two (December 25 and Dember 28, 2023) fires aboard the Genius Star XI was the breakaway of 41 battery energy storage systems (BESS) units in the cargo holds during heavy weather conditions due to improperly secured lashing belts, which resulted in internal structural deformation of these units and thermal runaway of lithium-ion battery packs in three of the BESS units.

Ensuring Proper Cargo Securing

In addition to following a vessel's cargo securing manual and implementing the approved vessel storage and lashing plan, a vessel's crew must also conduct a thorough inspection of all the cargo-securing arrangements both during and after cargo loading. Such inspections are critical to identifying improper attachments or other concerns with cargo securement that could compromise the assumptions planners make in implementation of the plan. Not ensuring cargo is properly secured can result in cargo breakaway. Special attention should be placed on examining fitment of components, such as lashing belt hooks, wire, or chain falls used to secure the cargo to ensure they are properly seated (fully engaged) on the D-rings or other points of securement.

Proper inspection and verification are critical to preventing cargo movement, structural damage to battery units, and potential thermal runaway events during heavy weather.

Report released on fatal mooring incident aboard motor tanker

Source: HM Government of Gibraltar

The HM Government of Gibraltar has published an accident report into the death of a pumpman on board a motor tanker at the Port of Gibraltar.

On the afternoon of the 20 May 2025, the pumpman of the Gibraltar Registered tanker Nisyros was fatally injured whilst operating the port forward mooring winch during heaving in excess rope becoming entrapped in the mooring rope around the winch and sadly died of multiple injuries.

At the time of the accident the pumpman was alone on the fo'c'sle as the AB (Deck) had moved to a position further down on the main deck port side in preparation to receive a heaving line which would then be attached to the forward spring.

As no one witnessed the accident it is difficult to reach a firm conclusion as to what exactly happened. However, the Mooring System Management Manual stipulates that there should always be a minimum of two experienced persons at each mooring station throughout the operation, apart from the Officer in charge of the mooring station. The role of the officer is to supervise and keep an overview of the mooring operation. On this occasion there was not an officer undertaking this role. In effect the only person on the fo'c'sle was the pumpman who was operating the Port forward mooring winch by himself, at the same time as possibly ensuring that the mooring rope was correctly feeding and winding onto the winch's drum.

The investigation concluded that:

- The composition of the forward mooring party was not in compliance with the requirements of the mooring manual.
- Page 8 of the owner's preliminary assessment of the incident states that, no officer was assigned to the mooring station forward in order to maintain compliance with hours of work and rest.
- The pumpman was operating the winch at the same time as ensuring that the mooring rope was possibly correctly feeding and winding on to the mooring winch's drum.
- Due to repetitive nature of the work undertaken, the crew may have become complacent.
- It is possible that the mooring winch actuator lever had been incorrectly secured in the running position by using the safety clip or external device.
- At this time, he may have become entangled in the slack rope, in all likelihood by standing too close to the winch's drum subsequently resulting in being dragged in feet first under the rotating drum.

MT Nisyros's management company, MM Marine Inc, has undertaken their own internal investigation and have taken actions by reviewing the relevant SMS and Mooring System Management Plan and procedures. Safety flashes and safety alerts were issued to all fleet vessels. Fleet personnel were instructed to complete additional training on mooring risk assessments and management and safe mooring practices.

Safe mooring practices will be audited fl wide to ensure compliance. Furthermore, current manning levels considering available cabin space capacity on each vessel was reviewed with the outcome of increasing the crew compliment by one offi and additional OS on Qingdao -type vessels and by one OS on Fujian-type vessels.

This report makes safety recommendations aimed at increasing crew awareness of the guidance on mooring operations, as set out in Section 26.3 of COSWP and in OCIMF Effective Mooring, and also emphasising the importance of adherence to the vessel's operating procedures.

The Marine Accident Investigation Compliance Officer, Neil Atkinson MNM, said: "This tragic accident could have been avoided had the correct number of seafarers been stationed at the forward mooring station and that the correct procedures for mooring operations been followed. Furthermore, it is imperative that safety devices are not disabled or tampered with."

Gard - Beware of backflush filter failures

P&I club Gard has warned that a serious source of engine damage can come as a result of automatic backflush filter failure.

Automatic backflush filters are designed to protect engines by keeping fuel and lubricating oil clean. The filters generally consist of one or more chambers with a set of candles of fine wire mesh that the oil flows through. Larger particles get stuck on the surface while smaller particles flow through the filters and back into circulation.

Gard highlighted that several claims have shown this fine filter mesh has disintegrated in use, resulting in pieces of the wire mesh entering the lube oil system and severely damaging engine bearings.

Differential pressure concerns
Pressure-triggered rinsing cycles are an inherent risk. If the filter candle mesh start disintegrating, the mesh becomes riddled with holes. With enough ruptures, the differential pressure drops, as the oil will follow the easiest route through the mesh. This will lead to a free flow through the housing, with oil potentially carrying wire mesh parts directly into the engine. From the cases seen there have been no warning of this prior to engine taking damage.

The damages
The small wires of the mesh break off and can travel through the entire lubrication system, causing severe damage. This damage will be primarily located on bearing surfaces on camshafts and crankshafts. This will in turn create severe surface deterioration and breakdown that can damage the engine even further and lead to dangerous situations. Replacement of main bearings and even the crankshaft itself can be very expensive and time consuming.

In one Gard case, replacement of a crankshaft is expected to cost 2.2 million USD with an 8-12 week period just to source the new equipment.

Where deterioration of the mesh is found, mechanical and chemical cleaning of the entire system affected will be required prior to operation. If the cleaning process is substandard, new damages may arise swiftly after repairs have taken place.

Gard Recommendations
To maintain backflush filters and prevent damage due to deterioration:

- Ensure the correct manual and procedures for the actual filter system installed are available onboard the vessel and that the crew have been adequately familiarised and trained.
- To ensure safe operation of the backflush filters, procedures on manual handling adherent to makers recommendations should be in place, together with clear procedures on when filters are to be taken out of use due to damage and risk of failure.
- The engine crew should be trained to spot even minor damage to the candles. Training on how to handle the filters with care during cleaning is vital. We recommend having cleaning tools onboard like an ultrasonic cleaner unit or cleaning gun which blows horizontally onboard,
- If not already installed, a strainer or in-line filter should be installed after the backflush filter to ensure debris from candle disintegration is captured before it contaminates the oil system.
- Use OEM parts. If in doubt, contact your filter manufacturer for advice.

RMI investigation into enclosed space death in tanker

Source: RMI Maritime Administrator

The Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Administrator has released an investigation report into the death of a crewmember from tanker TRF Kashima after the sailor and two other crewmembers had entered an enclosed space and fell unconscious.

What happened

On 14 July 2024, the Republic of the Marshall Islands-registered oil/chemical tanker TRF Kashima, managed by Anglo Eastern Shipmanagement (Singapore) PTE. LTD., was underway in the South China Sea en route to the Republic of Singapore, where the ship was due to arrive on the morning of 16 July 2024. Work being done on board included cleaning of the ship's cargo tanks.

At 1646, either the Pumpman or OS2 reported by radio that the C/O had collapsed inside No. 6 S CT. The Master immediately directed the OOW to sound the general alarm and to make an announcement for crewmembers to proceed to No. 6 S CT for an enclosed space rescue.

The Master and other crewmembers arrived at the No. 6 S CT dome at 1649. They found the access hatch open and saw the C/O lying on the upper platform and the Pumpman lying on the second platform inside the cargo tank. The OS2 could not be seen.

A rescue was conducted in accordance with the ship's enclosed space rescue plan. By 1705, the C/O, Pumpman, and OS2, who had been found lying under the Pumpman on the second platform, had been removed from the cargo tank. When they were each removed from the cargo tank, all three were unconscious but were breathing and had a pulse, however the OS2's pulse was weak. Crewmembers started administering CPR and medical oxygen to the OS2 before moving him to the ship's hospital, where crewmembers continued to administer CPR and medical oxygen. The C/O regained consciousness within a few minutes after being administered medical oxygen before being taken to the ship's Hospital. The Pumpman remained unconscious after being administered medical oxygen and was also moved to the ship's Hospital where crewmembers continued administering medical oxygen.

The Master sought shoreside medical advice and then diverted the ship toward the nearest port so that the C/O, Pumpman, and OS2 could be disembarked for medical treatment. By 1750, the Pumpman had regained consciousness but was continuing to have difficulty breathing and, by 1755, the C/O was determined to be in stable condition. The OS2 remained unresponsive and at 2000, crewmembers stopped administering CPR after the shoreside medical doctors determined he was deceased.

TRF Kashima rendezvoused with a SAR vessel shortly before 0300 on 15 July 2024. A rescue team, which included a medical doctor and a police officer embarked the ship. The rescue team members examined the C/O, Pumpman, and OS2 and at 0322 confirmed that the OS2 was deceased. The rescue team, along with the C/O and Pumpman, safely disembarked to the SAR vessel, which immediately proceeded to shore, where the Pumpman was admitted to the hospital for medical treatment.

The marine safety investigation conducted by the Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Administrator determined the C/O had entered the No. 6 S CT to take pictures required by the Charterer and that the OS2 and Pumpman entered the cargo tank to aid the C/O after they saw him lying on the upper platform. The entry into the cargo tank by the three crewmembers was not conducted in accordance with the ship's enclosed space entry procedures and without taking any required precautions. It was also determined that the C/O had previously made multiple entries into the ship's cargo tanks, also to take pictures required by the Charterer, while cargo tank cleaning operations were conducted on 9–11 and 13–14 July 2024. Evidence of a lack of oversight by the Master, crewmember fatigue, and that records of work and rest hours were not being accurately maintained were also identified.

The following lessons learned were identified.

- Enclosed spaces should never be entered for any reason, including to assist a fellow crewmember, without implementing established shipboard procedures.
- Masters and other senior officers must place safety above all else, and through both their words and actions, provide a positive example for junior officers and ratings.
- Deviations from established procedures increase the risk of accidents.

Conclusion

Causal factors that contributed to this very serious marine casualty included:

- the C/O's entry of No. 6 S CT and subsequent entry by the OS2 and Pumpman without implementing the Company's enclosed space entry procedures or otherwise taking necessary precautions;
- the lack of oversight by the Master and Company of the cargo tank cleaning operations that were conducted on the ship on 9–11 and 13–14 July 2024;
- onboard normalization of deviation from established procedures and requirements during the cargo tank cleaning operations that were conducted on board on 9–11 and 13–14 July 2024 as evidenced by:
  - > the C/O making multiple entries into the ship's cargo tanks to take pictures without implementing the Company's enclosed space entry procedures;
  - > opening cargo tank access hatches without cargo tanks being gas freed, using cargo tank access to add the citric acid solution to the cargo tanks, and the cargo tank tagging system which was not implemented; and
  - > the deviation from the Company-approved plan for cleaning the cargo tanks.

Testing and inspection of oil filtering equipment guidance update from AMSA

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority has issued an essential amendment to its guidance on the installation, testing and correct operation of oil filtering equipment (oily water separators).

This update was issued to support compliance with resolution MEPC.107(49) under MARPOL Annex I Regulation 14.

AMSA continues to identify defective oily water separators, or systems being operated in a non-compliant manner, during port State control inspections. In some cases, crew are not familiar with correct operating procedures.

Resolution MEPC.107(49) sets the international approval standard for oil filtering equipment under MARPOL Annex I Regulation 14. It is given effect in Australian law by Marine Order 91 (Marine pollution prevention — oil) 2025.

This marine notice provides guidance on the installation, testing and correct operation of oil filtering equipment (oily water separators) to support compliance with these requirements.

What's changed:

This marine notice supersedes 2024/03 as it:

- clarifies AMSA's expectations for testing and operating oil filtering equipment
- adds detail on sample line flow and alarm response times
- explains how port State control officers assess system performance and compliance
- highlights where non-compliance(s) with MEPC.107(49) and the ISM Code will result in deficiencies
- clarifies requirements for managing and sealing sample line valves
- reinforces that the alarm and stopping device must trigger during clean-water flushing.

Marine surveyor hit with US$70000 settlement after subcontractor error

Mark Brattman (pictured)

A single technical error by an uninsured individual has resulted in the marine surveyor being hit with US$70000 settlement and prompted International Transport Intermediaries Club (ITIC) to warn ship and marine surveyors of the financial exposure they face when relying on third-party data without contractual protection.

The dispute arose after a marine surveyor was appointed by a prospective buyer to confirm that a commercial fishing vessel met the requirements of the relevant maritime safety authority. As part of the survey, the surveyor instructed a third-party naval architect to provide technical information needed to calculate the ship's freeboard. The data supplied was wrong, which led the surveyor to report the wrong freeboard and conclude that the vessel's recorded lightweight in the existing stability book was inaccurate.

Mark Brattman, Claims Director at ITIC, said: "Surveyors rely on a wide range of technical data and much of it comes from third-party specialists who work on a subcontracted basis. When that information is wrong, the surveyor may be left carrying the liability, particularly where the subcontractor has no insurance of their own. This case shows how quickly a simple error can escalate into a claim that includes indirect losses."

As a result of the incorrect information, the surveyor advised the buyer that the vessel required a full re-survey before it could enter service. In reality, the stability documentation was accurate. The buyer subsequently incurred the cost of the unnecessary second survey and missed three fishing trips while awaiting clearance, leading to claims for both the survey expense and the loss of income during the delay.

ITIC assessed whether earnings from those missed trips could be claimed and considered the possibility that a court might decide the surveyor was responsible for profit loss that could have been anticipated.

The situation was made more difficult by the fact that the naval architect responsible for the incorrect data had no insurance and no formal contract with the surveyor, leaving little chance of recovering any contribution. The claim was eventually settled for US$70,000, covering the cost of the second survey and an agreed amount of the lost income.

"Many standard trading conditions exclude liability for consequential losses, such as loss of profits, but in this case, the surveyor was not operating under any such terms. Surveyors should check the credentials and insurance position of any subcontractors they work with and ensure their own terms include a limit on liability, an exclusion for consequential losses, and potentially an exclusion that states the surveyor is not responsible for inaccuracies in third-party information they have reasonably relied upon, all of which should be agreed in writing. It is also important to take care when advising buyers about follow-up surveys and the operational impact of those recommendations. Clear documentation and robust contracts remain central to reducing the risk of costly disputes," Brattman added.

MCA lithium-ion battery update to fire safety MGN 681 (M)

The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has updated and replaced guidance on fire safety and storage of small electric powered craft on yachts.

MGN 681 (M) Amendment 1 includes clarification for the functionality of storage and charging cabinets or boxes where these are used as part of the solution for the carriage of li-ion batteries used on personal vehicles.
Small electrically powered craft and other vehicles (such as personal watercraft) are becoming more commonly used in place of similar petrol-powered craft or vehicles stowed on yachts. Whilst electric craft do not necessarily represent a greater fire risk than petrol craft, there are considerable differences in best practice for fire prevention, storage, fire detection and fire suppression of such craft, which should be considered when they are stored onboard.

Wherever possible, the specific risks associated with the charging and storage of electric personal watercraft and tenders on large yachts should be considered at an early stage of design and construction. It is recognised however, that such equipment may be supplied at a late stage of construction or during the life of existing vessels.

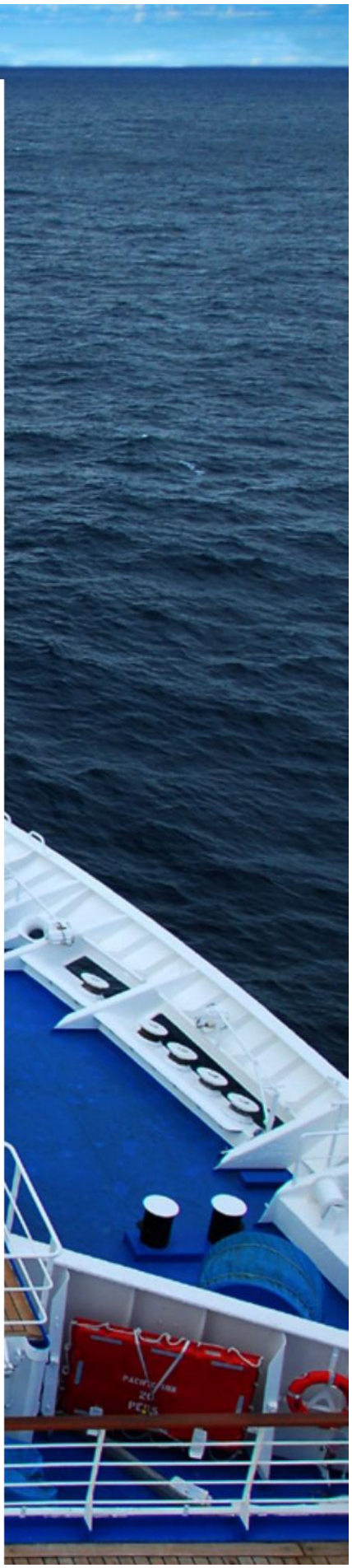
New designs should make provisions for the safe charging and stowage of such electrical supplies however these safeguards should be subject to continuous review by the Operator who should update their procedures and practices to ensure safe storage and operation of these systems.

The guidance contained in this MGN is intended to outline best practices related to design, equipment and outfit of dedicated spaces onboard, and to increase safety for handling, charging and stowage of li-ion batteries and craft with these in-built.

The guidance is explicitly for li-ion batteries. Batteries with alternative chemistries may present a different risk profile during charging or stowage. Additional measures for such battery types may need to be provided depending on the specific characteristics of the batteries used and a full risk assessment should be conducted and agreed with the administration or class society before they are carried or charged on board. This guidance should be applied where there is no suitable equivalent requirement from class and should be used to inform the risk assessment and mitigations of the ships safety management system when carrying Li-ion powered small water craft and any spare batteries associated with them. This MGN should not be applied to battery propulsion systems or any other applications outside the stated scope of this MGN.

This notice should be read with the Red Ensign Group Yacht Code Parts A and B.

Read the full guidance online: **https://bit.ly/4qIn7z0**

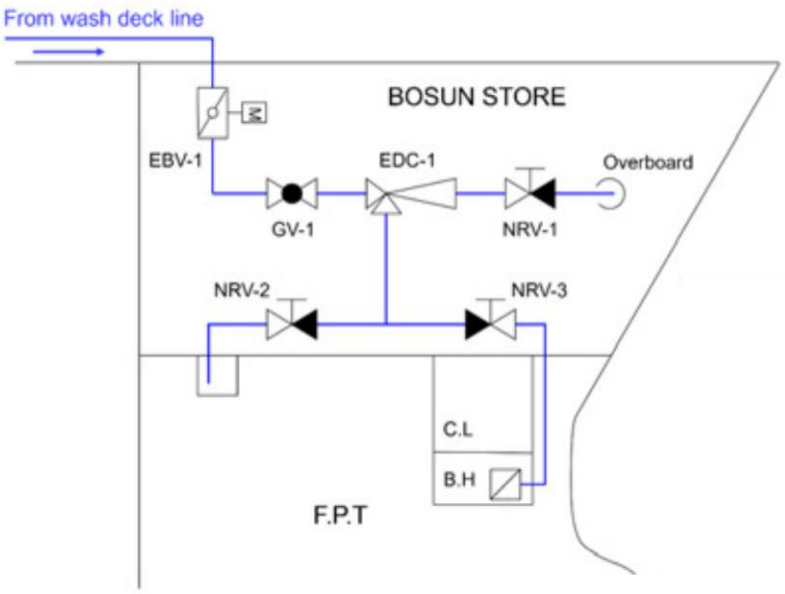


Dewatering system valves found in closed position

Thisnotice, issuedby ABS, summarizes recent observations on bulk carriers where non-compliance with the requirements of SOLAS Chapter XII, Regulation 13.1 was identified in the forecastle space dewatering system manually operated suction valves.

On bulk carriers and in accordance with SOLAS Regulation XII/13.1, MSC/Circ.1069 and IACS UI SC179, the arrangements for draining and pumping ballast tanks located forward of the collision bulkhead and the bilges of any dry space extending forward of the foremost cargo hold, shall be capable of being brought into operation from a readily accessible enclosed space. This enclosed space shall be accessible from the navigation bridge or the propulsion machinery control position without the need to walk across open-deck areas (i.e. exposed free board or superstructure decks).

During recent inspections on two different bulk carriers from different owners/managers, the following cases in forecastle dewatering systems manually operated suction valves were observed:



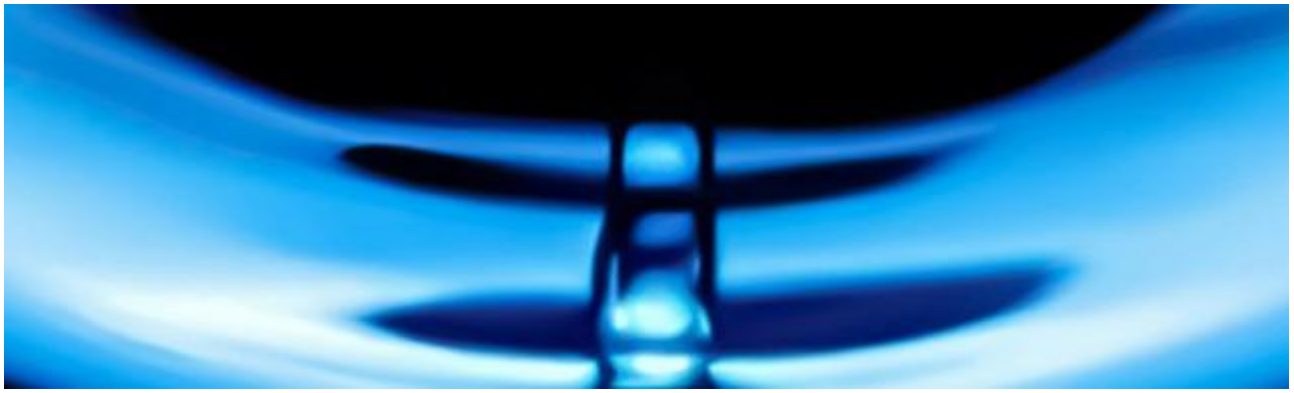
Components	
EBV-1	Electric type Butterfly valve
GV-1	Globe valve
EDC-1	Eductor
NRV-1 to 3	Non – Return valves
Notes	
(1)	EBV-1 shall be remote-controlled from navigation bridge or engine control room
(2)	All other valves (except EBV-1) should be normally open with locking devices

Figure 1: Typical Arrangement for Dewatering System *Credit: ABS*

- First case: The suction valve was found in the closed position with a warning sign instructing the crew to keep it closed while in port to avoid accidental discharges.
- Second case: A label above the dewatering valve stated: "DO NOT OPEN WITHOUT CHIEF OFFICER'S PERMISSION".

ABS commented that both cases violate the intent of SOLAS XII/13.1 as they restrict immediate operation of the dewatering system when needed. The valves must remain open at all times.

ABS recommends that the manually operated suction valve of the forecastle space dewatering system must remain in the open position at all times. A clearly visible and appropriately worded warning notice should be posted in the vicinity of the valve.



DNV and WMMF collaborate on net-zero guide for shipping companies

DNV and the World Maritime Merchants Forum (WMMF) have worked together to create the Net-Zero Guide: Practical approaches for shipping companies.

The maritime industry is entering a decisive decade of transformation, driven by evolving regulations, commercial pressures, and a general global shift towards reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The report provides a structured framework to help shipowners, operators, and managers translate decarbonization objectives into actionable strategies. It focuses on how to align fleet operations, investments, and value-chain partnerships with emerging regulatory and market expectations.

As regulatory and commercial frameworks grow increasingly complex and fragmented, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, the Guide introduces a clear three-step approach to help companies plan and implement decarbonization measures across short-, medium-, and long-term horizons.

In its executive summary, the guide recommends a three-step framework to help shipping companies translate decarbonization objectives into executable actions across their fleets including assessment, strategic planning, and implementation and monitoring.

Download the report:
https://bit.ly/49HTI1Y

Top 10 classification societies in 2025 revealed

According to Lloyd's List, the 2025 ranking of world-leading classification societies brings a notable shift in the maritime industry's landscape. For the first time, American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) overtakes DNV to become the largest class society in terms of gross tonnage in service — a milestone that reflects both growing capacities and changing dynamics. Meanwhile, China Classification Society (CCS) climbed from sixth to fifth place, replacing Bureau Veritas (BV) in the top five.

This reshuffling underscores a broader transformation. Classification societies are no longer just certifiers of seaworthiness, they are becoming central actors in the shipping industry's technological, environmental, and regulatory evolution.

What's driving the change

Innovation and new propulsion paths

Under the leadership of ABS's outgoing chairman and CEO, Christopher Wiernicki, the society pushed for bold innovation. At the 2025 London International Shipping Week, Wiernicki urged the maritime sector to ask, "Does it make us safer?" — a guiding principle that underpinned new technical notations. In 2025 ABS updated its containership lashing-system notation (CLP-V(PARR)) to include a seasonality factor, giving operators better flexibility under varying sea conditions.

More strikingly, ABS granted "Approval in Principle" (AiP) for two nuclear-powered vessel designs: a 15,000 TEU containership concept using molten salt reactor technology, and a floating nuclear-power barge for port support or coastal power supply. ABS also floated proposals for offshore "floating nuclear data centers" to serve burgeoning AI and cloud-computing infrastructure needs.

Simultaneously, ABS advanced other fuel pathways: dual-fuel solutions for LNG, methanol or ammonia, and safety advisories for ammonia as marine fuel. It also developed simulation models to address lithium-ion battery thermal-runaway risks aboard vehicle carriers.

Sustainability, decarbonisation & digitalisation across the board

Other societies in the top 10, such as DNV, ClassNK, BV, Korean Register of Shipping (KR), and Rina, reaffirmed their commitment to supporting decarbonisation, regulatory compliance, digital transformation, and new-technology adoption.

DNV forecasts substantial growth in vessels delivered with alternative-fuel capabilities, projecting that by 2030, such ships could consume roughly 50 million tonnes of non-oil fuels annually — a major step toward global emissions reduction.

ClassNK opened a Tech Expertise Centre in Piraeus, Greece, expanding its presence in a key maritime hub and boosting support for emerging technologies, emissions-based certification, and "smart ship" solutions.

BV and others are enabling next-generation technologies such as ammonia bunkering vessels, hydrogen/fuel-cell propulsion, and wind-assisted propulsion, highlighting how classification societies increasingly serve as enablers — not gatekeepers — of maritime innovation.

Broadening advisory and lifecycle services

Ranking societies are also evolving beyond traditional survey roles. For instance, DNV and others emphasise advisory services, regulatory forecasting, and alternative-fuel readiness assessments, acknowledging that the shipping industry now requires more than certification: it needs strategic guidance.

What it means for shipowners, regulators and the industry

The 2025 ranking is more than symbolism. It reflects real shifts in where power and influence lie in global shipping. With ABS at the top, backed by bold moves into nuclear propulsion and aggressive support for alternative fuels, the maritime industry may be entering a new era. Classification societies are increasingly acting as architects – influencing design, technology adoption, and fuel decisions – not just auditors.

For shipowners, this could mean broader options: more flexible notations, earlier access to new fuel- and propulsion-technologies, and classification societies offering advisory services across the lifecycle of vessels. For regulators and policymakers, it may signal a need to engage more with class societies, given their growing role in shaping which technologies become mainstream.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the shift reflects the maritime industry's adaptation to global demands: decarbonisation, sustainability, regulatory complexity, and the pressures of digitalisation. Classification societies, once dependably conservative, are becoming innovation enablers.

A sea change indeed

The new 2025 ranking of the top 10 classification societies captures a moment of transformation. The dominance of ABS, and the rise of CCS, shows that influence is realigning. But more broadly, it reveals that classification societies are pivoting from traditional certifiers of safety and seaworthiness, to strategic partners in sustainability, technology and design.

In a shipping world confronting climate change, regulatory overhaul, and rapid technological progress, class societies are reinventing themselves, and by doing so, helping steer the future of maritime transport.

New Maritime and Coastguard Agency Non-Executive Directors appointed

Three new Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) will join the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Board to provide challenge and support to the agency, overseeing strategy and operational performance.

The Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP, has appointed three new non-executives to join the Board of the MCA, effective 1 January 2026. They are:

- Vice Admiral Sir Martin Connell, the outgoing Second Sea Lord in the Royal Navy.
- Britt Pickering from the Shipowners Protection and Indemnity Club and the International Group.
- Kevin Daffey from Rolls Royce, and chairman of the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology.

MCA Chairman Lord Simon Stevens said, "Our new directors bring deep expertise and extensive leadership experience covering many of the MCA's wide-ranging responsibilities, both in the UK and internationally.

"I am delighted we've been able to make these high-calibre appointments to the MCA Board at a time when the agency is both modernising its operational delivery and increasingly supporting innovation across the wider maritime sector."

The new non-executives join a further recently appointed MCA NED and chairman of the Audit and Risk Committee, Andre Katz. He took up post in September 2025 and is a Chartered Accountant and Certified Member of the Institute of Risk Management, with over 25 years' experience as a leader in risk management, assurance and audit.

ABS shares guidance on revised recommendations for entering enclosed spaces aboard ships

The American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) has provided an overview of IMO Resolution MSC 581 (110) - Revised Recommendations for Entering Enclosed Spaces Aboard Ships.

These new recommendations supersede and revoke Resolution A.1050(27), replacing them with updated safety measures, definitions, and procedural requirements aimed at reducing fatalities during enclosed space entry.

The IMO recognizes that many enclosed space accidents stem from a failure to systematically identify hazards, assess risks, and implement appropriate entry procedures. Investigations further highlight that the complex structural arrangements of certain spaces can hinder ventilation, illumination, and safe movement.

Key points to consider
The hazards from lack of oxygen (O2) and the build-up of gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2) and carbon monoxide (CO) are well known, but their relationships are not always fully understood. More recent studies show that, as well as oxygen levels, the levels of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide should be checked before entry is made to any enclosed space or adjacent connected space. To emphasize this, CO2 is now explicitly included in the revised recommendation.

CO2 is a potent asphyxiant and can cause rapid loss of consciousness and death. Its behavior in cargo spaces justifies CO2 monitoring before and during enclosed space entry, in addition to CO and other toxic gases.

The following points provide additional clarifi on specifi elements of the revised Recommendations and address common questions regarding atmospheric monitoring, cargo-related hazards and gas detection equipment.

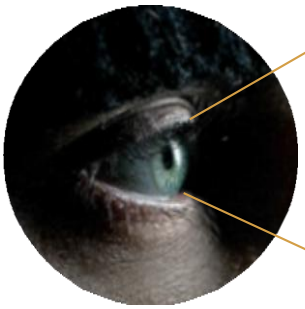
- **Risk Assessment.** A risk assessment should be conducted by the competent person prior to opening an enclosed space. The competent person should be appropriately trained. The risk assessment should assess the likelihood of a dangerous atmosphere being present or subsequently developing within the space along with any other potential hazards in the space as identified in the vessel's Enclosed Space Register, and the need to ventilate adjacent spaces.

- **Cargo-related gas emission risks.** There is no general published list of cargoes that may produce flammable, toxic, corrosive or asphyxiant gases (such as CO2). Instead, hazard information should be derived from: the shipper's declaration; Safety Data Sheets (SDS); the IMDG Code; the IMSBC Code (including individual cargo schedules); the IBC Code; the IGC Code. The revised Recommendations highlight several cargoes that have caused fatalities due to fire, explosion or asphyxiation.

- **Number of portable gas detectors.** MSC.581(110) does not change existing SOLAS or IGC Code requirements regarding the quantity of portable gas detectors. However, Paragraph 7.3 reinforces that all ships must carry at least two sets of gas detection equipment as per SOLAS XI-1/7. Ships carrying cargoes capable of generating hazardous vapor and requiring regular entry must carry two additional sets. Moreover, detectors must be supplied with sufficient spares and calibration means and may use flexible hoses or fixed sampling lines to test remote areas safely.

- **Gas detection capabilities of portable gas detectors.** The requirements remain consistent with previous minimum requirements as detailed in MSC.1/Circ.1477. Paragraph 8.2 details that personal detectors should measure: oxygen (O2); any other gases identified in the risk assessment.

Download the full news update: **https://bit.ly/4q3QKuy**



What caught my eye…

Capt. Oleg Kolesnykov casts his eye back over last month's eye-catching and eventful marine new

For my first two stories this month. The first story is shocking as you are about to find

Archaeologists unearth ancient "Party Boat" in Alexandria's harbour

Photo credit: Christoph Gerigk/Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation

Beneath the shifting waters of Alexandria's eastern harbour, on Egypt's Mediterranean coast, lie the drowned remnants of a once-splendid city. Submerged by earthquakes and a rising sea level, these lost monuments have become the focus of survey and excavations by the European Institute for Underwater Archaeology, in conjunction with Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Much of their recent work has centered around Antirhodos Island, revealing a temple to the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis which was renovated by Cleopatra VII, and the

Timonium – a palace built by her partner, the Roman general Mark Antony.

The most recent excavations have revealed a shipwreck dating to the early Roman period. Buried beneath the sand were the remains of a thalamagos. This is a type of Nile yacht with a very colourful reputation in Roman literature as "party boat". But the discovery of such a vessel in a busy commercial harbour was unusual.

The wrecks in the Royal Port were discovered through a new high-resolution sonar survey of the seabed. This produced enormous quantities of data that was fed into a machine learning algorithm trained to recognise the "signatures" of shipwrecks. The initial results were promising, with excavations on targets generated by the algorithm revealing a small boat and a 30m-long merchant ship

Canada's Harbour Quay
Marina renamed Alberni Lighthouse Marina

Let's end this month on a gentle note. I have never seen Alberni Lighthouse at Port Alberni on Vancouver Island, Canada for myself, but what a beautiful and iconic structure it clearly is.

It seems that as of 1 January 2026, Harbour Quay Marina has officially been renamed Alberni Lighthouse Marina. The press release informs me that the new name reflects a natural and familiar fit, inspired by the iconic lighthouse that serves as a local landmark and trusted way finder in the Alberni Harbour. For decades, it's been how boaters and locals alike describe the marina's location, and now the new name makes it official.

One wonders why it took the authorities so long to make this obvious and welcome name change.

Key Marine News Bulletin Prepared by Oleg Kolesnykov
February 2026