

[Joanna C report and safety flyer published](#)

News story

Capsize and sinking of a scallop dredger off Newhaven, England, with the loss of two lives.



Today, we have published our fatal accident investigation report after the fishing vessel Joanna C (BM265) snagged its gear on a line of whelk pots and capsized rapidly on 21 November 2020. Only one of the three crew survived.

The report contains details of what happened, subsequent actions taken and recommendations: [read more](#).

Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, Andrew Moll OBE, said:

The MAIB's investigation into the loss of Joanna C set out to answer two key questions: why did it capsize, and why did only one of the three crew survive? Today, we are publishing the report that answers both these questions. Joanna C capsized because it had insufficient reserves of stability to recover from the heel created when the fishing gear became snagged. This happened because of modifications to the vessel that had severely eroded its stability characteristics, and this went undetected.

Of equal importance today, I want to highlight the findings of our investigation regarding Joanna C's liferaft; this issue reaches beyond the fishing industry to any vessel carrying a 'non-SOLAS' liferaft. Lifesaving appliances are just that – for saving life, so it is vital that such equipment will function correctly in the event of an emergency. Unfortunately, Joanna C's 'float-free' liferaft arrangements did not work as expected. Although the liferaft was released from its cradle as the vessel sank, it did not come to the surface and inflate. This significantly impacted

the chances of survival for the two crew in the water, only one of whom survived. The MAIB's investigation found that the uninflated liferaft had insufficient buoyancy to trigger the gas inflation system, leaving it suspended mid-water still attached to the sunken vessel (see headline image). Furthermore, the liferaft had not been manufactured to meet any specific standard, although this was acceptable for a small fishing vessel at the time. Prior to publication of today's report, an immediate MAIB recommendation was made to amend the International Standard Organisation's standard for non-SOLAS liferafts (known as ISO-9650) to ensure they have sufficient buoyancy in the uninflated state to activate the inflation mechanism, where 'float-free' arrangements are in place.

The safety message is that it is vital to ensure that lifesaving appliances will work as expected. Where 'float-free' arrangements are in place, the liferaft must have sufficient buoyancy to trigger the inflation mechanism once it has been released from the cradle as the vessel sinks.

A [safety flyer](#) to the fishing industry summarising the accident and detailing the safety lessons learned, has also been produced.

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