

The Icelandic Marine Accident Investigation Board

Rannsóknarnefnd sjóslysa (RNS)

STRUCTURE

The Minister of Transport and Communication appoints members of the Investigation Board for a four-year term. The Board consists of five board members and five deputies, all of whom have education and professional experience in areas relevant to the investigation of marine accidents. IMAIB employs two full-time staff members.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOARD

The purpose of investigating marine accidents is to prevent accidents from occurring on board, as well as to enhance and improve safety at sea. It is not to allocate fault or responsibility. IMAIB reports and documentation may not be used as evidence in criminal proceedings.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

The Act on Investigation of Marine Accidents No. 68/2000 entered into force on September 1st, 2000, with amendments made in 2003. The Regulation on Investigation of Marine Accidents No. 133/2001 also deals with the matter of incidents at sea.

This legislation covers marine accidents, diving accidents and other incidents occurring on or in bodies of water, as well as search and rescue operations when applicable.

IMAIB operates independently of public authorities, other parties to the investigation, the public prosecutor and the courts. The Board itself decides when there is cause to investigate accidents and other incidents over and above that which it is obliged to do in accordance with legislation. Costs incurred by IMAIB are paid from the National Treasury.

IMAIB INVESTIGATES accidents or incidents occurring on board:

- All Icelandic vessels, as well as foreign vessels sailing to and from Iceland where Icelandic interests are involved in a marine accident.
- Foreign vessels sailing to Iceland or in Icelandic waters if there is cause to do so or if requested by the vessel's flag state.

WHY AND ON WHAT GROUNDS ARE ACCIDENTS INVESTIGATED?

IMAIB investigation work focuses on answering three fundamental questions: what happened, why did it happen and what can be done to prevent such an incident from happening again.

IMAIB ACTIVITIES

IMAIB can be contacted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When IMAIB receives notification of a marine accident or serious incident on board a vessel, the appropriate information is collected, and, if this is deemed necessary, an investigation takes place.

Factors influencing which cases are investigated:

- Decisions and initiative of IMAIB.
- Notification of accidents and mishaps
- Requests of parties who believe an investigation to be necessary and present materials that meet with requirements stipulated in legislation to be taken for investigation.

Cases where investigation is not deemed necessary are recorded and classified.

Cases can be taken up again if new and important information emerges in the opinion of IMAIB.

PROCEDURE

All cases brought to the attention of the Investigation Board are examined bearing in mind that they may provide insight into how to prevent a similar incident from occurring again.

Cases are dealt with on the basis of evidence available, such as on-site research and testimony from parties including those in charge of the vessel, injured persons and witnesses. The Board entrusts appropriate and objective experts with a part of the investigation when and if there is reason to do so.

A draft report is sent to the parties involved in the case for comment, as well as to the Icelandic Maritime Association. Comments will be noted in the final report should the Board take them into consideration. Final reports are sent to the Icelandic Maritime Administration, the Maritime Council and the parties involved in the case.

IMAIB can make safety recommendations in its final report (i.e., proposals for improvements in safety measures at sea) if the investigation gives cause to do so. These recommendations are sent to the Icelandic Maritime Administration, who is responsible for ensuring that proposals for improvements submitted by the Board are formally dealt with in each instance. The Icelandic Maritime Administration shall send the Board the results of such discussion.

THE BOARD'S OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Expedite the processing of cases so that information regarding the cause of an accident can be made available to others as quickly as possible.
- Be a good point of contact between seafarers and concerned parties and enhance the flow of information.
- Be a forum worth trusting and enhancing in the minds of IMAIB's principals

WHAT ARE THOSE IN CHARGE OF A VESSEL REQUIRED TO DO?

Masters of vessels, vessel operators and others who learn that a marine accident has taken place are required to report this to IMAIB.

By law, persons in charge of a vessel are required to:

- Record the event in log or record book.
- Call the police to take reports from the vessel's master, witnesses and all injured parties in cases of severe injury or death.
- Report marine accidents and other incidents to IMAIB.
- Prepare a detailed report on incidents (injury to persons, etc.) if they occur outside a harbour,
- See to the taking of evidence for safekeeping
- Deliver reports and any objects to IMAIB upon arriving in harbour.
- Inform the Icelandic Social Insurance Administration of accidents causing personal injury

WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DOES IMAIB WANT?

In addition to a clear account of the mishap, IMAIB requests information regarding:

- Type of work (fishing, loading and/or unloading).
- Location of ship and weather report
- When and where in the ship the mishap took place
- Information on operating procedures
- Experience of injured parties and period of service on vessel
- Work hours of injured parties and hours of rest
- Security issues
- Number of crew members



ICELANDIC MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BOARD

Information brochure

IMAIB REPORTS

All cases brought to the attention of the Board are immediately made available on the IMAIB website (rns.is), and final reports are provided as soon as processing is complete. Many of these cases do not warrant special investigation but are recorded and become part of numerical data. The site offers an extensive array of search options, with mishaps classified by location, zone, type of ship, type of mishap, weather conditions, etc. IMAIB also publishes a general report each year containing details of select cases the Board considers to be of relevance to interested parties.

OUR INVESTIGATIONS IN YOUR BEST INTEREST



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