



CAYMAN ISLANDS SHIPPING REGISTRY

Maritime Authority of the Cayman Islands

FLYER TO THE LARGE YACHT INDUSTRY

“Near Miss” Involving Watertight Door Closure.

A large yacht (>1,000 GT) recently suffered a UPS failure to the controls for the watertight doors onboard. As a result of this loss of power to the door controls, the watertight doors reverted to their “fail safe” condition of “closed”. A crew member was close to one of the watertight doors and, on hearing the local alarm for “door closing”, went to investigate.



Door Open



Door Closing



Door Closed



Visual Alarm (Door Closing)

Seeing that the watertight door was closing, the crew member attempted to stop the closure by placing their leg in the path of the closing door. Realising that the door was continuing to close, the crew member called for assistance and was released from the door by another crew member using the local door controls.

Fortunately, the crew member who had their leg trapped in the door was released without injury. In the past, others have not been so fortunate in accidents associated with watertight doors. Such accidents have led to many serious injuries and deaths.

Although the safe operation of the yacht’s watertight doors forms part of the onboard “crew familiarisation training”, the crew member “panicked” when faced with a closing watertight door and tried to stop the closure. The watertight door in this incident was of the fully electric type. Had the door been of the hydraulically operated type it is unlikely that the crew member would have escaped without serious injury.

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Safety Issues

- Although watertight doors are essential for the safety of a vessel in the event of flooding, they can pose considerable risks to persons not familiar with their function and operation.
- Under no circumstances should any person attempt to pass through a water tight door that is in motion (closing **or** opening), or when the local alarm is activated. **“If it moves – you don’t.”**
- Never attempt to physically impede the closure of any watertight door. If it is necessary to override the closure, use the local control on your side of the door.
- Proper familiarisation training is essential for ensuring the ongoing safety of all onboard. Familiarisation training should never be considered as a “joining formality” by either the onboard trainer or the trainee.
- The proper operation of watertight doors and the associated safety precautions should form part of the onboard training and drill regime. All crew members should be kept familiar with the operation of the watertight doors onboard and the safety precautions to be adopted.
- Information on the safety of watertight doors is available from P&I Clubs and industry associations. Reports of investigations into accidents associated with watertight doors along with recommendations made and “lessons learned” are available from www.maib.gov.uk.

NOTE

This document, containing urgent safety information, has been produced for marine safety purposes only, on the basis of information available to date. The sole objective of the investigation of any accident which is conducted under the Cayman Islands Merchant Shipping Law (2008 Revision) is the prevention of future accidents through the ascertainment of its causes and circumstances. It is not the purpose of an investigation to determine liability or, except as it is necessary to achieve its objective, to apportion blame.

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