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MAIB: fatality during transfer from a workboat to a barge

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has published [Accident Investigation Report 6/2021](#) into the death of a crewman whilst transferring between the workboat *Beinn Na Caillich* and a barge at a fish farm.

What happened

The assistant manager of a fish farm drowned after falling into the water from a feed barge access ladder during a boat transfer. He stepped from the deck onto the ladder while *Beinn Na Caillich* was still moving forward, and he was crushed between the boat and the barge. A fish farm technician on board the barge attempted to stop the injured assistant manager from falling into the water by holding onto the back of his personal flotation device and oilskin jacket, but the severely injured casualty slipped out of them. Despite the assistant manager being recovered from the water and the determined efforts of the fish farm workers, emergency services, and medical staff, the assistant manager could not be resuscitated.



What went wrong?

The investigation concluded that:

- The conduct of the boat transfer had not been properly planned or briefed and was not adequately supervised or controlled;
- The transfer of personnel by workboat had not been properly risk assessed, and safe systems of work had not been put in place;
- The crew on board the workboat *Beinn Na Caillich* were not fully prepared to deal with the emergency situation. They had not conducted regular man overboard recovery drills and were not familiar with the vessel's recovery equipment;
- Neither the workboat nor the fish farm which owned the workboat had an effective marine safety management system and both lacked staff with the experience to oversee the marine operation.

Fuller details are available here: [Accident Investigation Report 6/2021](#).

Actions/recommendations

- Ensure thorough preparation, planning and risk assessment for small boat activities and personnel transfer;
- Ensure appropriate man overboard recovery drills are held and that all personnel are familiar with emergency equipment;
- Ensure there are sufficient trained and experienced crew to do the job safely.

Please see IMCA HSSE 025 [Guidance on the transfer of personnel to and from offshore vessels and structures](#)