Jersey Harbour Authority
Maritime House, St Helier, Jersey, JE1 1HB

PORTS OF JERSEY

Safety Bulletin 02 of 2026: Diving Operations

Incorporating Safety Bulletin 04 of 2024

This Jersey Safety Bulletin is issued to improve awareness of best practice for the operation of diving from vessels.

Diving is an adventurous activity with inherent risks. While risk can never be eliminated entirely, it can be significantly reduced through proper equipment, thorough training, regular practice, accumulated experience, self-awareness, and maintaining a safety-first mindset.

Diving Operations and Risk Assessments

- ✓ Plan your dive in advance and make sure you have a simple risk assessment and backup plan.
- ✓ Check the weather and surroundings before diving. Bad conditions, injuries, or problems with the boat can create unexpected risks.
- ✓ Make sure you are properly trained or supervised by a qualified Dive Manager.
- ✓ Log your dive and know what to do in an emergency, including incidents of Decompression Illness (DCI).
- ✓ Only dive if you are medically fit and feel confident.
- ✓ Use diving equipment that is suitable, well-maintained according to manufacturers' requirements, and stored safely on board so it does not become a hazard.
- ✓ If diving commercially, ensure you are appropriately qualified and medically fit, and that the activity is properly planned, risk assessed and supervised in accordance with Jersey health and safety requirements and recognised commercial diving standards, with all necessary licences and permits in place. Any vessel used must be appropriately certificated for its intended commercial use by the Jersey Harbour Authority.

Operating Vessels with and near Divers

- ✓ Always keep a proper lookout for divers, as required under COLREGs and display the 'Alpha' flag.
- ✓ The dive vessel's 'lookout' shall include continual monitoring of VHF Ch 16 and, when within St Helier port limits, VHF Ch 14 so that other vessels may be given early warning of the presence of divers.
- ✓ Post a dedicated lookout to warn the helm of surfacing divers and help avoid collisions.
- ✓ Stay aware of your vessel's speed and the dangers posed by propellers.
- ✓ Support vessels should keep a safe distance from divers in the water and only move over the dive site when recovering divers.
- ✓ When several vessels are operating in the same area, maintain frequent communication and proper lookout by all available means to reduce risks.
- ✓ Dive vessels should gain any prior permission to dive from VTS where required General Direction 03 this allows any deconfliction required by St Helier VTS to be arranged and broadcast in a timely manner.

Duties of owners, masters and others in relation to accidents

Under the Shipping (Jersey) Law 2002 and the Harbours (Inshore Safety) (Jersey) Regulations 2012, owners, masters, and others must report marine accidents involving Jersey ships or ships in Jersey waters. For the requirements of accident reporting, please refer to the appendix of this Safety Bulletin

Previous incident and local experience

MAIB investigation into a fatal accident involving a dive support vessel and a diver in the UK: Fatal injury to a recreational diver following contact with the motor vessel Karin operating as a recreational dive support vessel - GOV.UK

Since the Jersey Safety Bulletin 04 of 2024 was published, local incidents and near misses have further highlighted the risks associated with vessels operating around divers and reinforced the importance of maintaining a proper lookout, good communication and clear awareness of the location of divers in the water.

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APPENDIX I: Incident and accident reporting requirements in Jersey

1. Shipping (Jersey) Law 2002, Chapter 1 part 11

What constitutes an "accident"?

Under Article 165, an accident concerns a Jersey ship or its boat, or a ship/ship's boat (including) a life-raft or a painting punt in Jersey waters, and includes circumstances where:

i. a ship is lost, presumed lost, abandoned or involved in a collision;
ii. a ship or marine infrastructure suffers material damage, of a severity affecting structural integrity, performance or operational characteristics and requiring major repair or replacement of a significant component;
iii. a ship becomes disabled, including being not under command for more than 12 hours, or for a shorter period where assistance is required to reach port;
iv. a ship is stranded and cannot immediately refloat;
v. a person is killed, seriously injured or lost overboard; or
vi. there is a hazardous situation meaning the safety of a ship or person is imperilled, or serious damage to another ship, structure or the environment might ne caused.

A very serious marine casualty is an accident involving total loss of a ship, death of a person, or severe environmental damage.

Reporting under Article 169

Article 169 applies:
- to Jersey ships involved in a reportable accident under Article 165(b)(i)-(v), excluding a hazardous situation alone.
- In Jersey waters: where reported to the Harbour Master, the Harbour Authority must forward the report to the Minister as soon as practicable and by the quickest available means.
- Outside Jersey:
    - Very serious marine casualty: owner, master or senior surviving officer must report it as soon as practicable and within 24 hours of the accident.
    - Other reportable accidents: the master must report as soon as reasonably practicable and within 24 hours of next arriving in port.
- Relevant evidence, including charts, logbooks, electronic records and equipment, must be preserved.
- Failure to report, provide required information or preserve evidence is an offence punishable by £10,000 fine.

2. Harbours (Inshore Safety) (Jersey) Regulations 2012

Regulation 10 applies where a ship is involved in a serious incident, except where that incident is already required to be reported under Article 169 of the Shipping (Jersey) Law 2002 or other Regulations made under that Law.

A "serious incident" includes:
- loss or presumed loss of a ship or loss of life;
- abandon ship;
- disablement, stranding, collision or serious damage;
- serious injury to a person on board;
- a person being lost from the ship or ship's boat; and
- any other hazardous incident.

Who reports?

The owner of the ship must:
- report the incident to the Harbour Master as soon as possible; and
- if requested, provide whatever further details the Harbour Master may reasonably require.

Failure to report, or providing materially false or misleading information, is an offence punishable by a £10,000 fine.