

Safety Bulletin 03 of 2025

Title: 'Things that go 'bump' in the night' – Lessons from the sinking of a 12m Sailing Vessel

On the early hours of Sunday, 26th January 2025, a 12-metre Jersey-registered sailing yacht, on a coastal passage from Athens via Poros in Greece, struck an unknown underwater object. The vessel, privately owned with the owner/skipper as the sole person aboard, quickly began taking in water, lost engine and electrical power, and eventually sank in approximately 1000m of water. The skipper, well-prepared due to appropriate training and equipped with a grab-bag, successfully abandoned the yacht, activated the EPIRB, and was rescued unharmed by the Greek Coastguard with assistance from a passing Ro-Ro vessel.



Summary

- The vessel was privately owned and sailing single-handed in calm seas with good visibility.
- The owner/skipper had undertaken appropriate training, including obtaining an RYA Coastal Skipper Certificate of Competency and completing a Proficiency in Survival Training course.
- The vessel was equipped with essential safety equipment, including a fixed VHF-DSC transceiver and an EPIRB, but lacked a battery-powered hand-held VHF-DSC radio.
- The rapid flooding left the manual bilge pump inadequate, and engine and electrical power were lost almost immediately, leaving the VHF -DSC inoperative.
- The skipper's preparedness with a grab-bag and familiarity with the equipment aboard were crucial in the emergency situation.
- The incident highlights the importance of appropriate training, carrying suitable safety equipment, and promptly reporting hazards to navigation.

Conclusion:

The vessel collided with an unknown submerged object whilst sailing in deep water and sustained un-survivable damage. The skipper's knowledge, experience, combined with the vessel's comprehensive safety equipment, enabled a safe abandonment and prompt rescue. This incident underscores the critical importance of proper training, safety equipment, and vigilant reporting of hazards to enhance maritime safety.

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