

## Safety Bulletin 03 of 2024

### Lessons from a High-Speed Powerboat accident – Making use of safety devices on boats

This Safety Bulletin is issued as a result of an investigation by the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) following an accident involving a high-speed powerboat in the Cayman Islands which resulted in two fatalities.

The MAIB have issued a full safety investigation report and a safety flyer in connection to this tragic accident links to which are attached.

- [MAIB Report](#)
- [Safety flyer to the recreational craft industry and pleasure craft users Making use of safety devices on boats - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Image courtesy of Awesome's owner



*Awesome*

### Accident summary

- A high-speed pleasure craft on a birthday outing with friends suffered a catastrophic failure of the universal connection to the port driveshaft, due to lack of maintenance, whilst travelling at more than fifty knots.
- The failed drive shaft severed the steering system hydraulics causing an uncontrollable shear to port, ejecting all but one of the occupants into the water, and then causing the vessel to sink by the stern.
- The vessel was overloaded, with eleven persons aboard, including four children, despite having dedicated seating for only five persons.
- None of those aboard were wearing personal floatation devices.
- The skipper/owner, who had never undertaken any formal training, was steering the vessel in a standing position from which he could not easily reach the throttles, having allowed the five-year-old girl to sit in the 'driving seat'.
- The 'Kill cords' for the two engines were not attached to the skipper and were tied back.
- Only the immediate actions of other vessels quickly on the scene and the benign weather conditions prevented more fatalities.

## Safety Lessons

### Lifejackets & Personal floatation aids

Life jackets and personal floatation devices are only effective if they are being worn and are correctly fitted. An approved lifejacket is designed to keep an unconscious person afloat, face up, with their face clear of the water.

### Onboard Safety devices

Safety devices are designed to prevent injury and save lives.

Many boats are fitted with a 'kill cord' which should be clipped to the driver and will operate a switch that stops the engine if the driver is away from the controls or falls overboard. Many fatalities could have been avoided if 'cords had been properly used. Other safety features include appropriately designed seating, which protects from injury.

### Training

Whilst, for pleasure vessels, training is not mandatory; it is effective in raising awareness. There are local training providers in Jersey offering a variety of RYA approved training courses which will assist with giving leisure boaters confidence and experience and are strongly recommended.

### Maintenance

Maintenance is important. The manufacturer's maintenance schedule for each component should be consulted to preserve functionality and reduce the risk of failure.