

Safety Bulletin 04 of 2024

Vessel and diving deconfliction

This Safety Bulletin is issued following an investigation by the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) into a fatal accident involving a dive support vessel and a diver in the UK.

The MAIB have issued a full safety investigation report relating to this tragic accident the link to which are attached.

- [MAIB report](#)

Local occurrences relating to diving have also been considered in the drafting of this bulletin and the learning points incorporated in the below summary.

Safety Lessons

Dive Vessels

Dive vessels should, always, be fully aware of the location of all their divers. All practicable means should be used to determine the location of the divers.

Such vessels should clearly display an 'Alpha' flag so that diving operations are readily apparent to other vessels.

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

Divers

Divers should always operate with a Surface Marker Buoy, (SMB) to identify their presence.

Vessels operating nearby

Mariners should be aware of the typical markers displayed by divers and their supporting dive vessels, in particular, various types of SMBs [What is a Surface Marker Buoy \(SMB\)? | OceanTrust.org](#) , Alpha Flags and equivalent sound signals (short and long blast). Mariners should also be aware that a divers SMB may not always be positioned directly above the diver due to the set of tide or effects of wind on the buoy. Mariners should therefore give both SMB's and the accompanying dive vessel a wide berth. Vessels, where so fitted, should monitor VHF channels 16 and 14 as above so that when approaching a dive vessel any necessary deconfliction can be arranged.

Reference material

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.