

**Extracts from
The United Kingdom
Merchant Shipping
(Accident Reporting and
Investigation) Regulations
2012**

Regulation 5:

“The sole objective of a safety investigation into an accident under these Regulations shall be the prevention of future accidents through the ascertainment of its causes and circumstances. It shall not be the purpose of such an investigation to determine liability nor, except so far as is necessary to achieve its objective, to apportion blame.”

Regulation 16(1):

“The Chief Inspector may at any time make recommendations as to how future accidents may be prevented.”

Press Enquiries:

020 7944 3231/3387

Out of hours:

020 7944 4292

Public Enquiries:

0300 330 3000

NOTE

This bulletin is not written with litigation in mind and, pursuant to Regulation 14(14) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012, shall be inadmissible in any judicial proceedings whose purpose, or one of whose purposes is to attribute or apportion liability or blame.

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All bulletins can be found on our website:

www.maib.gov.uk

For all enquiries:

Email: maib@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 023 8039 5500

Fax: 023 8023 2459

Carbon monoxide poisoning on board the scallop-dredger *ESHCOL* in Whitby, North Yorkshire on 15 January 2014 resulting in two fatalities



MAIB SAFETY BULLETIN 1/2014

This document, containing safety lessons, has been produced for marine safety purposes only, on the basis of information available to date.

The Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012 provide for the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents to make recommendations at any time during the course of an investigation if, in his opinion, it is necessary or desirable to do so.

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch is carrying out an investigation into the deaths of two persons on board the scallop-dredger *Eshcol* on 15 January 2014.

The MAIB will publish a full report on completion of the investigation.



Steve Clinch
Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

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Background

An overnight break from fishing ended tragically when the skipper and a crewman sleeping on board the 9.95m scallop-dredger *Eshcol* died in their bunks. Initial findings indicate the men were poisoned by carbon monoxide.

Initial Findings

Before going to bed, the skipper (aged 26) and the crewman (aged 21) had lit the grill of a butane gas cooker fitted in the wheelhouse (**Figure 1**) in order to warm both the wheelhouse and the adjacent sleeping area. When they were not seen as expected the following morning, crewmen from fishing vessels tied up close by forced open the wheelhouse door. The gas grill was still lit (**Figure 2**) and the wheelhouse was full of fumes; the two men were dead in their bunks.

Eshcol was not fitted with a carbon monoxide alarm.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Safety Issues

1. Gas cookers are designed for cooking, not domestic heating. Accommodation areas need to be heated, especially during the winter months and, for this, appropriate, purpose built heaters are required.
2. Fossil fuel burning appliances, such as cookers, need to be checked and maintained to ensure they are in good condition. A yellow flame indicates poor combustion, resulting in an excess of carbon monoxide that, in a poorly ventilated space, can quickly build up to lethal levels.
3. Carbon monoxide is a lethal gas, which has no smell, no taste, is colourless and is extremely difficult for human senses to detect. Crew need to be vigilant and recognise the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning, which can include: headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, confusion, stomach pain and shortage of breath.
4. Carbon monoxide alarms are not expensive and should be fitted. When selecting a carbon monoxide alarm, preference should be given to those marked as meeting safety standard EN 50291-2:2010, which are intended for use in a marine environment.

Further guidance for fishermen on the use of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) heaters and cookers can be found in Marine Guidance Notes 312 (F) and 413(F). More detailed advice on how to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning and on carbon monoxide alarms, can be found at:
[http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/stay-safe/carbon-monoxide-\(co\)](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/stay-safe/carbon-monoxide-(co))

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