

Date  
16/05/2025

Our designation  
23-05696

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Your designation  
SHK 2025:03

This document is a translation made by SHK of the original response in Swedish to the safety recommendation. In case of discrepancies between this translation and the Swedish original text, the Swedish text shall prevail in the interpretation of the response.

Swedish Accident Investigation Authority

**Action taken as a consequence of the recommendations in the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority's (SHK) report concerning the grounding of the Cypriot-flagged vessel MARCO POLO/9019080/5BJX5, in Northern Hanö Bay, Blekinge County**

In a response of 22 January 2025, the Swedish Maritime Administration has, among other things, described a number of measures linked to information in sailing directions, which is referred to.

**Safety recommendation SHK 2025:03 R3**

- Ensure that contact is made, at an early stage, with the emergency responders ashore who may need to assist in a maritime search and rescue. Where possible, this contact should be made in direct conjunction with a decision concerning a maritime search and rescue operation, in order to facilitate a dialogue about the need for measures at an early stage (see section 3.3.1). (SHK 2025:03 R3)

*Action taken by the Swedish Maritime Administration*

As an authority with a contingency remit, the Maritime Administration is responsible for ensuring there is a common focus across all parties involved and for coordination in accordance with a framework for management and collaboration from the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. As an authority that receives emergency calls, there is an obligation to share information with other authorities and organisations that in turn are responsible for dealing with the occurrence within their area of responsibility. These authorities and organisations do not necessarily need to assist with maritime search and rescue under all circumstances, as mentioned in the recommendation above, but may still need information in order to enable them to act within their own area of responsibility.

Date  
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Experience shows that shipping accidents often entail a substantial requirement for information sharing, even to land-based organisations that are not participating in the initial phase of the occurrence. The Maritime Administration sees that there are challenges associated with handling initial information sharing in a critical situation as the focus is naturally on saving lives. The Maritime Administration concludes that operational information sharing between actors is a challenge both in the event of shipping accidents and also in the event of other major accidents and societal disruptions. Development of a system for automatic information sharing would be welcome, but no such work is currently taking place, as far as the Maritime Administration is aware. A function of this nature would appreciably improve the potential for authorities and other actors to rapidly gain a shared view of the situation, but requires both collaboration between multiple actors and also financing and governance. The function should also not be limited to maritime search and rescue but should also encompass other events involving collaboration.

In the event of an aeronautical or maritime search and rescue operation, the Maritime Administration's air-sea rescue coordination centre (JRCC) already has a procedure under which contact is made at an early stage with authorities and organisations that may be affected by the emergency response in order to share information and convey any need for assistance. This is usually initiated immediately in the emergency call via SOS Alarm.

In the case involving Marco Polo, no immediate assistance was initially required in the maritime search and rescue operation and the JRCC shared information about the occurrence via SOS Alarm approximately one hour after the grounding. The fire and rescue service and medical services participated by listening in. As there was no immediate need for assistance, SOS Alarm closed the case. Assistance was only needed later during the evacuation phase, which was initiated approximately 2.5 hours after the initial alarm. Because the Swedish Coast Guard's coordination centre is in the same location as the JRCC, they received information directly in the initial alarm call and were able to initiate their parallel operation.

The Maritime Administration has taken the following action in order to comply with SHK's recommendation:

- The JRCC has developed procedures for ensuring that information is shared with actors that may need information relating to the occurrence, irrespective of any need for them to assist with maritime search and rescue. In the initial phase, information sharing has to take place as quickly as possible.
- The JRCC has developed procedures for initial information sharing through, in the event of shipping accidents, also contacting SOS Alarm's Emergency Preparedness Department (EPD) in order to create the conditions for ensuring there is a common focus across all

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23-05696

parties involved and coordination. The EPD will then share information with the county administrative board in the area in question and with relevant authorities and organisations that have a duty officer (DO). In addition, the procedure states that the JRCC, as early as during the initial alarm call, conveys to others listening in that they are to share information in their own channels.

- The JRCC is creating a new indexation in the command and control system with a plan for shipping accidents. This clarifies the importance of sharing information at an early stage with relevant authorities and organisations in addition to the developed procedures above.

#### **Safety recommendation SHK 2025:03 R4**

- Promote an update of the information in international sailing directions to ensure that it is clearly indicated that Hanö Sound is categorised as internal waters and is therefore subject to compulsory pilotage (see section 3.4.1). (SHK 2025:03 R4)

#### *Action taken by the Swedish Maritime Administration*

The Maritime Administration shares the assessment that some parts of the international sailing directions need to be revised and updated. The sailing directions that should be amended in this case are published by the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO). The Maritime Administration has made initial contact with the UKHO in order to bring about the requisite changes. At present there is no prognosis for when the changes will be implemented, but the work is ongoing.

With the currently valid sailing directions, the Maritime Administration will also review the potential to inform shipping in other ways. One example could be for appointed pilots to inform those applying for pilot exemption certificates within Hanö Bay that compulsory pilotage applies inside of Hanö.