



Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung

Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation

Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation • P.O. Box 30 12 20 • 20305 Hamburg

Office Building
Bernhard-Nocht-Str. 78
20359 Hamburg
Tel.: + 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 83 11
Fax: + 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 83 40
posteingang@bsu-bund.de
<http://www.bsu-bund.de>

Leitweg ID 991-14090-76

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+ 49 40 31 90 – 8311

Email: posteingang@bsu-bund.de

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The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) published the interim investigation report 138/22 on 24 February 2023. The interim report provides information on the subject, the course and the current state of the investigation. It is available on:

https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications/Publications_node.html

Very Serious Marine Casualty – Person Over Board Resulting in Fatality on the Sailing Yacht SPEEDY GO on 8 April 2022 on the Flensburg Firth

The commercially operated sailing yacht SPEEDY GO left Flensburg harbour late in the morning of 8 April 2022, manned by a skipper and five paying crewmembers. The yacht was sailing on a northeasterly course with a storm jib on the starboard bow and slightly astern winds from west to northwesterly directions (5 – 6 Beaufort, in gusts 7 – 8 Beaufort).

Around noon, the yacht approached the pair of buoys 9/10 at a speed of about 7 knots. In order to continue following the fairway of the Flensburg Firth on an east-southeasterly course towards Holnishaken, a gybe was to be sailed - a sailing manoeuvre in which the stern is turned through the wind and the sails are subsequently on the other side of the ship.

The manoeuvre failed when both jibsheets got caught on the fastening hook of the spinnaker pole stored in front of the mast and would not come untangled. Without further ado, the skipper decided to go to the forecabin himself to clear the sail and the sheets. He was not wearing a lifejacket and did not secure himself. Once at the mast,

he first tried to free the sheets himself and then yelled to his fellow sailors in the cockpit that someone should come forward to help him.

After one of the fellow sailors had freed the sheets, wind came into the foresail, which was now on port bow, so that the yacht heeled to port and picked up speed. At the same moment, the skipper straightened up on the raised deck area on that side - about abeam of the mast or a little further forward - and fell backwards over the railing into the water.

All rescue attempts by his fellow sailors were unsuccessful and the skipper could not be retrieved on deck of the yacht. Without a lifejacket, he quickly lost strength and could not actively support the rescue. About half an hour after he went overboard, he was recovered from the water by a rescue helicopter and taken to a Danish hospital, where he was pronounced dead in the early afternoon. One of the fellow sailors suffered hypothermia, as he had gone into the cold water himself (wearing a lifejacket) to assist the skipper. Due to drifting away from the yacht, he also got into danger but was rescued after about ten minutes by the other sailors.

In the meantime, the investigation of the accident has been completed and the BSU is currently in the process of preparing the related investigation report. Since the one-year deadline set by the European Union and transposed into national law by the Federal Republic of Germany for its publication cannot be met, the public is informed about the status of the investigation into this very serious marine casualty by means of the publication of an interim investigation report.

All investigation reports, safety recommendations as well as other publications of the BSU are available on

https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications/Unfallberichte/Unfallberichte_node.html

Ulf Kaspera
Director