



# 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

**Your reference**  
**Your message dated**

**My reference**  
(please state on reply)  
284/21

**+ 49 40 31 90 – 83 11**

**email: [posteingang@bsu-bund.de](mailto:posteingang@bsu-bund.de)**

**Date**

15.11.2023

## PRESS RELEASE No. 13/2023

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) hereby announces the publication of the Summary Investigation Report 284/21 on 15 November 2023. The report deals with the allision with a pier while using an automatic steering control system (autopilot) by the motor yacht SANTA CECILIA in the port of Hamburg on 5 September 2021 as well as four other accidents of recreational crafts in conjunction with autopilots and is available for download at

<https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/News>.

### **Allision with a Pier while Using an Automatic Steering Control System (Autopilot) by the Motor Yacht SANTA CECILIA in the Port of Hamburg on 5 September 2021 as well as Four Other Accidents of Recreational Crafts in Conjunction with Autopilots**

On 5 September 2021, the motor yacht SANTA CECILIA, with six persons on board, was heading from Wedel towards the port of Hamburg. After an evasive manoeuvre, the skipper switched on the autopilot while picking up an object that had fallen from the steering console. The autopilot could not be switched off again immediately afterwards. As the yacht steered back to the right side of the fairway after the previous evasive manoeuvre, the quay wall of Athabaskakai was ahead. An allision could no longer be prevented and considerable material damage was caused to the yacht. Two persons were injured.

The other accidents considered were various accidents involving recreational crafts in which the use of an autopilot had also contributed significantly to the accident. Three of them happened on the Kiel Canal in 2021. Another case from 2005, which had

already been investigated by the BSU, was presented again in order to also consider the specifics of the use of an autopilot under sail.

The Summary Investigation Report 284/21 deals with autopilots on recreational crafts in general as well as specifics on the Kiel Canal, compares advantages and disadvantages of using an autopilot and gives advice to be observed on both motor and sailing yachts. Based on the investigation, the BSU will publish Lessons Learned, which are especially aimed at skippers of recreational crafts.

All investigation reports, safety recommendations and other information published by the BSU are available at

<https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications>.

Ulf Kaspera  
Director