

01/2026

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**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.”

Public Enquires

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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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Safety warning issued regarding the maintenance and use of working lifejackets and the maintenance and use of safety harnesses on board

Jigger fishing vessels



MARINE SAFETY BULLETIN 1/2026

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 Falkland Islands Government is carrying out a marine safety accident investigation into three serious injuries and a man overboard leading to a fatality from fishing jigger *An Fong 138*, on 7 February 2026.

The Falkland Islands Government will publish a full report on completion of the investigation.



Steuart Barlow

Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

Falkland Islands Government

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BACKGROUND

On Saturday 7th February 2026 a crew member was washed overboard from the *An Fong 138*, a squid jigging fishing vessel which also resulted in the serious injury of three other crew members. The crew were working on the bow, preparing to deploy the sea anchor parachute. As the vessel pitched, a large wave came over the bow which knocked three crew members over causing them to sustain serious injuries, and one crewmember was washed overboard but later recovered.

INITIAL FINDINGS

The investigation has so far found that the inflatable life jackets used by crew working on deck are SOLAS¹ approved lifejackets (approval number - 0474) with most being manufactured in 2024. Manufactured by Shanghai Fangzhan Fire technology Co Ltd with a buoyancy rating of $\geq 150\text{N}$ weight $\geq 43\text{KG}$, Height $\geq 155\text{cm}$ to fit a person weighing up to 140kg and with a chest girth of up to 175cm.

Note: Although these initial findings have identified safety issues, it is not deemed that these were causal factors for the accident which resulted in the serious injury and man overboard at this stage of the investigation.

The investigation has found the following defects with the inflatable working lifejackets:

- One lifejacket was found to have its automatic device activated (**Figure 1**);
- Most life jackets were found to have heavily corroded Co2 gas cylinders due to prolonged exposure to salt water (**Figure 2**);
- Many lifejackets had the pull cord retention clip missing or broken (**Figure 3**);
- Some lifejackets found to be missing one or both Co2 gas cylinders (**Figure 4**);
- A number of lifejackets were found with their Co2 gas cylinders loose which would have prevented the inflation of the lifejacket both manually and automatically;
- In a large sample of lifejackets, none of the lights worked. The lights were all in date, however prolonged saltwater exposure caused the light to be activated and the battery had run flat. Exposure to salt water can be seen by the corroded contacts on the lifejacket light (**Figure 5**);
- One lifejacket had the retaining nut missing which secures the inflation device to the lifejacket (**Figure 6**);
- One Co2 gas cylinder was found to have been used but remained in place on the lifejacket. The lifejacket in question was deflated and packed in its cover (**Figure 7**);
- Saltwater ingress has affected the adhesion of the retroreflective tape on some of the lifejackets and has also caused corrosion on the metal eyelets of the lifejackets;
- The clips connecting the lifejacket to the outer cover which is secured to a person by securing straps, were disconnected.
- A number of pull cords used to inflate the life jacket manually, were very short and were hidden under the outer cover of the lifejacket.
- Some lifejackets had been incorrectly repacked which would have affected the inflation and performance of the life jacket.

¹ SOLAS – The international Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974.





Figure 1: Automatic inflator activated and Co2 gas cylinder missing.



Figure 2: Co2 gas cylinder heavily corroded.



Figure 3: Release cord retention clip missing.



Figure 4: Co2 gas cylinder missing.

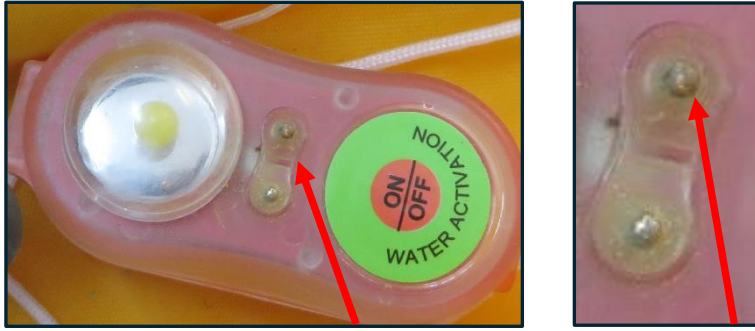


Figure 5: activation contacts on life jacket light corroded.



Figure 6: Securing nut missing.



Figure 7: Co2 gas cylinder pierced (activated).

The investigation further found that some of the harnesses used onboard were not in a serviceable state. A Port State Control inspection by the Falkland Islands Maritime Authority after the accident identified that at least 5 harnesses were in a poor condition with rips in the webbing strap and stitching coming loose (**Figure 8**).



Figure 8: Safety harness showing rip in webbing.

SAFETY ISSUES

Safety issues identified during the initial stages of the investigation included:

- Several of the SOLAS approved working lifejackets used on the vessel by the crew when working on deck were found to be defective.
- Several safety harnesses used on board were found to be defective.

FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

The Falkland Islands Government has:

- Issued this safety bulletin to inform vessel owners and operators potentially affected by the issues raised in this bulletin.
- Spoken with the local licence holder of the *An Fong 138* to inform them of the safety issues raised in this bulletin.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS

- Prior to being identified during the investigation the local licence holder conducted a check of the vessel after the accident and replaced all non-compliant lifejackets with new lifejackets and a thorough check of these new lifejackets was made before they were issued to crew members. All safety harnesses were also checked and those found defective, were removed from service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that all working lifejackets on jiggers are inspected by a competent person to ensure they are fit for use and do not endanger the wearer.

Any lifejacket onboard being used should be regularly serviced by a competent authority as per the manufacturers recommendations and the ship owners/operators should ensure that a maintenance program is in place on board the vessel to confirm that lifejackets are inspected on a regular basis.

It is further recommended that lifejackets be stowed in the appropriate manner, away from salt water and in a dry place in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The owner should ensure that all crew issued with lifejackets have been given a demonstration on the correct use and donning procedure and that it is worn correctly.

All crew issued with safety harnesses should have received safety training to ensure they are familiar with how to correctly put on a harness and understand where the safety line of the harness should be secured to on the ship.

Further recommendations are likely to follow once the final report has been published.

FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE

MGN 499 (M+F) Life saving appliances: Inflatable life rafts, Marine evacuation systems, inflatable lifejackets and hydrostatic release units – servicing requirements.

MSN 1870 (M+F) Amendment 6: Personal protective equipment regs 1999

MGN 588 (F) Amendment 2: Compulsory provision and wearing of personal flotation devices on fishing vessels

Safety recommendations shall in no case create a presumption of blame or liability

