

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BY CONNÉTABLE OF ST. JOHN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 31st JANUARY 2012**

Question

What action, if any, has the Minister taken to establish how the Tug Master hit rocks with the States Tug on 2nd September 2011?

How was the Tug Master employed, who was responsible for vetting his application and has that officer now been disciplined and, if so, how?

Has the Tug Master been replaced and, if so, by whom?

Has the Tug Master's position been re advertised on-Island as well as in Marine Journals and, if not, why not?

Why did the Minister not advise the Assembly of the result of the inquiry before the matter was made public?

Why, at of the time of submitting these questions, has no formal statement been made on the subject by the Minister?

Is cost saving taking precedence over safety at sea?

Given that the Tug Master did not hold UK qualifications will the Insurance Company honour the claim or will taxpayers have to pick up the bill?

Given that the content of the Minister's answers to questions on this matter on 12th September 2011 and 11th November 2011 indicate that he did not have a full understanding of the situation within his Department, will he consider his position and resign?

Answer

What action, if any, has the Minister taken to establish how the Tug Master hit rocks with the States Tug on 2nd September 2011?

Exercising my powers under Article 165 of the Shipping (Jersey) Law 2002, as Minister for Economic Development I initiated an independent external investigation on 7 September 2011. That investigation was tasked to inquire into the circumstances of the incident and I am of the opinion that the published report answers that question.

How was the Tug Master employed, who was responsible for vetting his application and has that officer now been disciplined and, if so, how?

The tug master was employed through an independent agency, SeaMariner, on a fixed short-term contract between August and November 2011, after having gone through a full selection and interview process. The agency was responsible for putting forward candidates for interview who had the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake the role.

The officer responsible for overseeing the application process has been the subject of an internal investigation, resulting in disciplinary action being taken.

Has the Tug Master been replaced and, if so, by whom?

Yes, and we have employed the temporary services of a relief tug skipper from Alderney.

Has the Tug Master's position been re advertised on-Island as well as in Marine Journals and, if not, why not?

As part of our current integration programme, Jersey Harbours will shortly be advertising for a permanent and a relief tug skipper. This will involve both on and off-island advertising in appropriate marine journals and is likely to occur in February 2012.

Why did the Minister not advise the Assembly of the result of the inquiry before the matter was made public?

Following the International Maritime Organisation's agreed Code in these matters there is an absolute need for independence and freedom from political influence whenever a safety investigation such as this is carried out. I therefore made the report available for all to access at the same time - the public and States members alike.

Why, at of the time of submitting these questions, has no formal statement been made on the subject by the Minister?

As Minister, I agreed a formal introductory statement attached to the published report. Nothing else was needed as the accident investigation is not a political matter.

Is cost saving taking precedence over safety at sea?

No. Jersey Harbours is fully compliant under the Port Marine Safety Code.

Given that the Tug Master did not hold UK qualifications will the Insurance Company honour the claim or will taxpayers have to pick up the bill?

The claim has been settled in full by the insurance company. Since the report was made public the insurance company has asked for reassurance that the recommendations in the report have been addressed. Jersey Harbours have confirmed to them that eight out of the nine recommendations were fully discussed with all of the marine management staff and appropriate action, where necessary, has been taken to amend their operations procedures and port marine safety code. The ninth recommendation, which related to a buoy location, was discussed but a decision has been taken not to implement it as according to IALA¹ the buoy is correct and should be left to starboard when approaching St Aubin's Bay from sea.

Given that the content of the Minister's answers to questions on this matter on 12th September 2011 and 11th November 2011 indicate that he did not have a full understanding of the situation within his Department, will he consider his position and resign?

No.

¹ International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities