



# SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



## Inmarsat Report Aims to Drive Maritime Safety Improvements

Leading global and mobile satellite communications firm, Inmarsat, has released a 52-page report aimed at provoking discussion as to how the maritime industry might adapt to prevent serious incidents from occurring on vessels at sea and ultimately save lives.

Published by the [Inmarsat Research Programme](#) and written by Intent Communications, "[The Future of Maritime Safety Report](#)" analysed Global Maritime Distress and Safety Services (GMDSS) alerts from ships sent free on the Inmarsat network between 2018 and 2020.

"Significant contributions" were also made to the report by:

- International Maritime Organization secretary general Kitack Lim
- International Chamber of Shipping secretary general Guy Platten
- BIMCO maritime safety and security manager Ashok Srinivasan
- Intermanager secretary general Kuba Szymanski
- UK P&I Club loss prevention director Stuart Edmonston

Inmarsat Maritime senior vice-president of safety and security Peter Broadhurst says, where safety is concerned, "data should be shared to create a level playing field for the entire industry".

"We believe that the creation of an online anonymised data lake of safety information will allow us to identify weak spots and solutions, allocate resources and measure progress towards enhanced safety," he says.

"This report establishes significant trends that merit close scrutiny by all stakeholders and offers a powerful example of the potential for analytics and new technology to provide the basis for a data-driven and more proactive safety.

"Today, a ship's captain can often be seen as a single point of failure. This is in stark contrast to the 'Swiss-cheese' model of risk maritime regulators now accept, and the goal-based and proactive approach that puts rapidly-evolving technology at the heart of better supporting the safety of life at sea."

Detailed analysis of the three years' data revealed tankers overtaking fishing vessels to generate the highest number of GMDSS alerts – 122 of 834 calls in 2020. The high frequency of alerts from vessels in coastal waters was interpreted as relating to the operation of older tonnage.

Alerts from deep sea tankers were relatively scarce, where it was noted charterers require higher standards and younger tonnage is deployed. Fishing distress calls remained frequent, which was interpreted to reflect there was "still a lot of work to do in this sector to raise overall safety for fishers and fishing vessels under individual flag state control".

The number of distress calls from bulk carriers and containerships remained largely consistent over the period. Although, the former witnessed a "distinct cluster" in the Yellow Sea between China, North Korea and South Korea, while the latter saw a spike in East Asia as COVID-19 unfolded in 2020.

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