

Class B Accident Report

NZL41

Injury to Passenger

Auckland 27 November 2004

KEEPING YOUR SEA SAFE FOR LIFE



Maritime Safety

MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY OF NEW ZEALAND
Kia Maanu Kia Ora



REPORT NO: 96 329

***NZL41* – INJURY TO PASSENGER**



Details of Vessel, Owner & Management, Classification, Navigational Equipment, Manning & Crew:

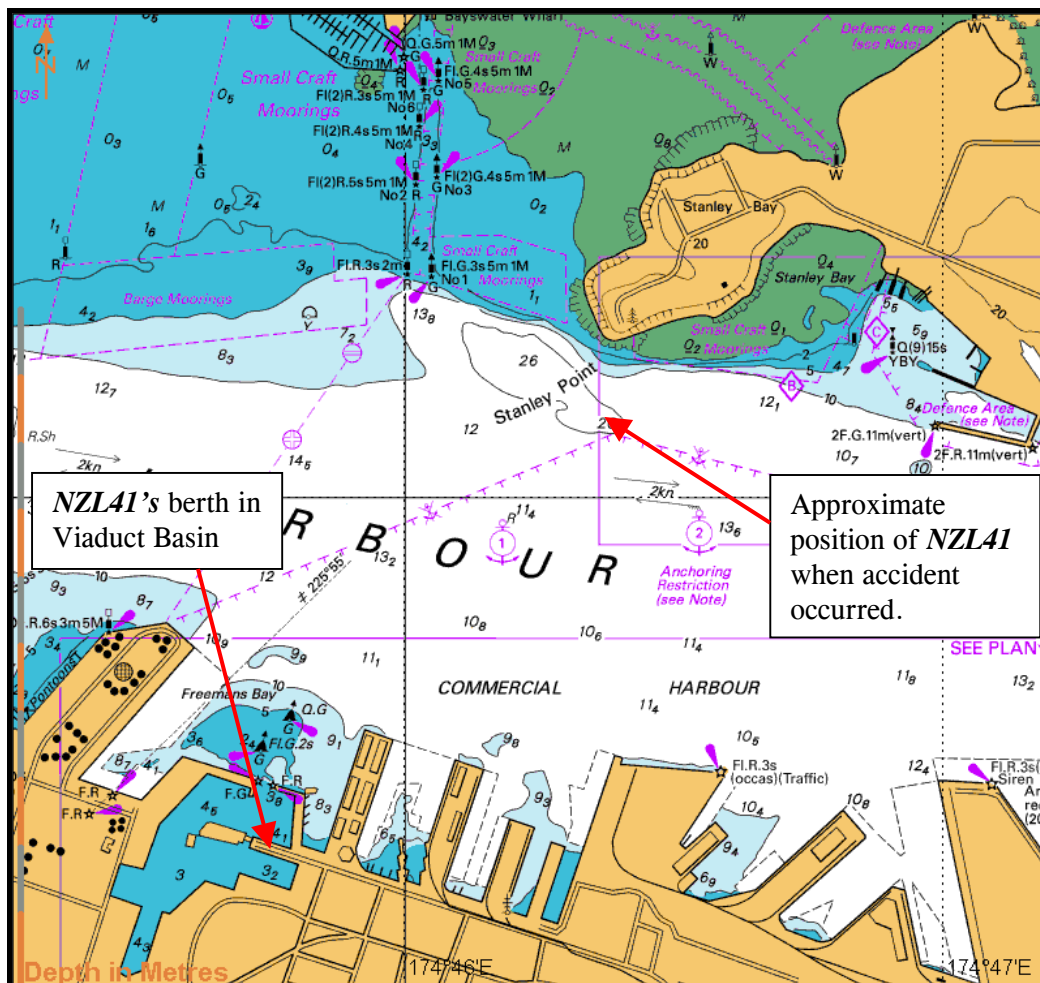
Name of Vessel:	<i>NZL41</i>
Vessel Type:	Restricted Passenger Ship
Port of Registry:	Auckland
Flag:	New Zealand
IMO/MSA/Official No.:	130103
Built:	1994
Construction Material:	Fibre reinforced plastic
Length Overall (m):	23.99
Maximum Breadth (m):	4.7
Displacement:	24.85t
Propulsion:	Sail/motor
Safe Ship Management (SSM) Company:	SGS-M&I
Accident Investigator:	Andrew Hayton

- **Owner Details**
Viking Cruises Ltd.
- **SSM Certificate**
SGS-M&I issued the Safe Ship Management Certificate on 1/10/02. The certificate expires on 27/8/06.
- **Skipper Details**
The Skipper holds a Commercial Launch Masters Certificate of Competency issued in 1997. He has considerable experience in operating vessels of this type.
- **Manning Details**
At the time of the accident, the vessel was crewed by a total of four crewmembers.

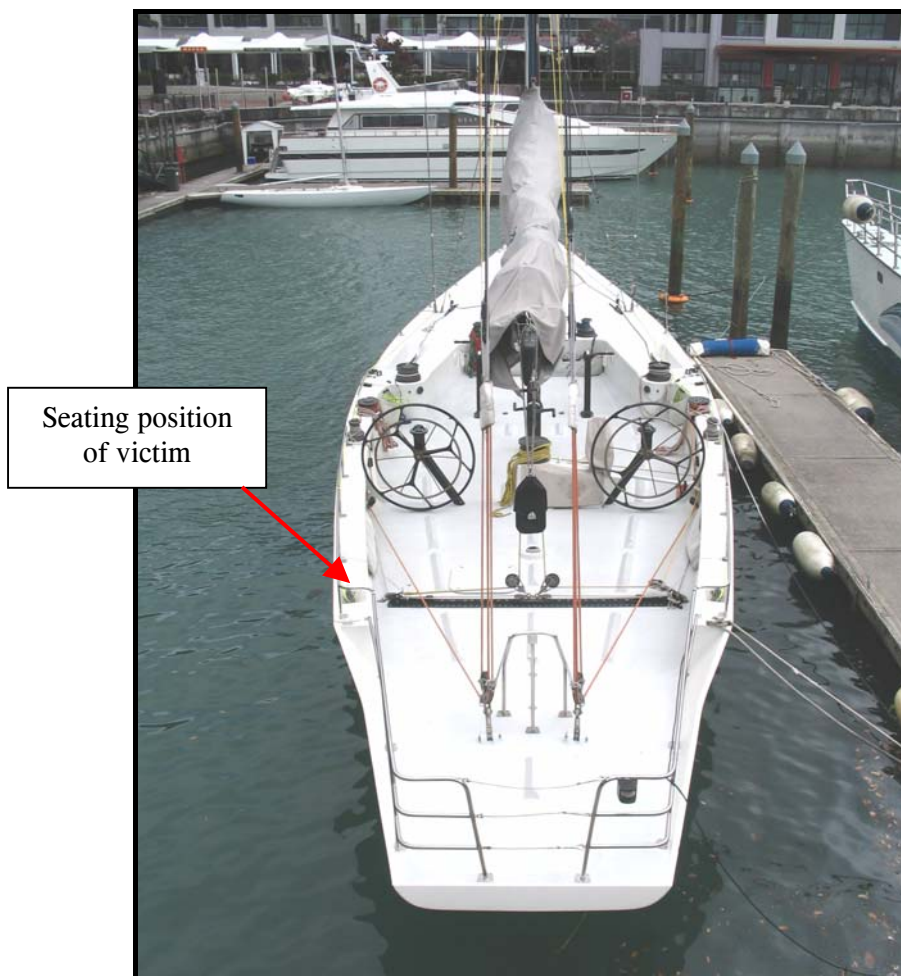
NARRATIVE

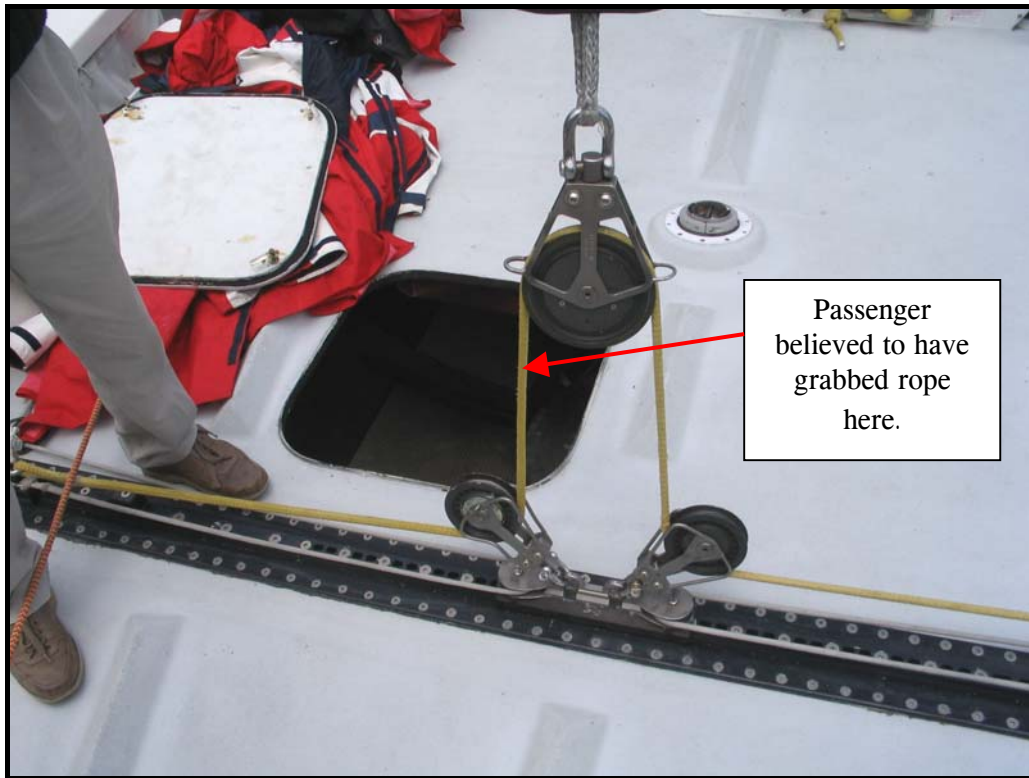
On Saturday 27 November 2004 at approximately 1450 hours NZDT (New Zealand Daylight Time), a group of 28 passengers assembled on a Viaduct Basin jetty for a safety briefing prior to joining the former Americas Cup sailing vessel *NZL41* for a cruise around Waitemata Harbour. Shortly prior to this they had donned lifejackets. The victim was amongst the last to board and the only place left to sit was on the port quarter.

The vessel hoisted sail when leaving the Viaduct Harbour and sailed east towards the Rangitoto channel.



The vessel eventually turned around and commenced tacking back towards the harbour bridge. At approximately 1530 hours, whilst on a port tack approximately 300 metres south of Stanley Point, the vessel tacked to starboard. The victims' husband stumbled over a deck stiffener and fell. The victim, who was sitting on the port side of the vessel, attempted to move across to the starboard side but had nothing substantial to hold on to. In moving, she held onto the mainsheet line. At that moment, the mainsheet moved along the traveller. The passenger's right hand entered the mainsheet block thumb first. This resulted in the right thumb being amputated and other injuries to her right hand.





The passenger's son extracted her hand from the block and crewmembers applied first aid. The Skipper called 111 on his cell phone and arranged for an ambulance to meet the vessel at the berth in the Viaduct Basin.

At approximately 1545 hours, *NZL41* berthed and the injured passenger was disembarked into the care of the ambulance service. They transferred her to hospital for treatment.

FINDINGS

The passenger instinctively grabbed hold of the mainsheet to steady herself whilst moving from the port side to the starboard side of the vessel during a tack. At that instant, the mainsheet moved along the traveller causing the mainsheet, which the passenger was holding, to run through the block. The passenger suffered major injuries to her hand as a result.

At the time of the accident, the mainsheet block was uncovered, with nothing to prevent a person's hand being caught in it.

The Passenger cannot remember exactly where she grabbed the rope or which block her hand became caught in.

Whilst at the pre-voyage safety briefing, the victim was still trying to don her lifejacket and missed some of the safety information. The briefing was carried out verbally, with a crewmember standing on the vessel and the passengers on the pontoon. When the victim boarded the vessel, a crewmember ran through the safety briefing with her again after being asked to do so.

The marine weather forecast for 27/11/05 was for winds increasing to 40 knots in the afternoon.

The Skipper states that the actual wind at the time of the accident was southwesterly averaging 25 knots gusting to 35 knots. The sea state was choppy. The Skipper estimated the wave height to be between 0.5 and 0.8 metres. The vessel was shipping water over the bow. The victim states that the wind was stronger at the time of the accident.

The company has a policy of cancelling cruises if the wind speed is averaging or likely to average above 30 knots. It is also policy not to operate a cruise if the sea state exceeds one metre in height.

The victim lost 90 percent of her right thumb and has since undergone surgery. She has experienced severe pain and the loss of normal use of her right hand. She is having ongoing physiotherapy and faces further surgery.

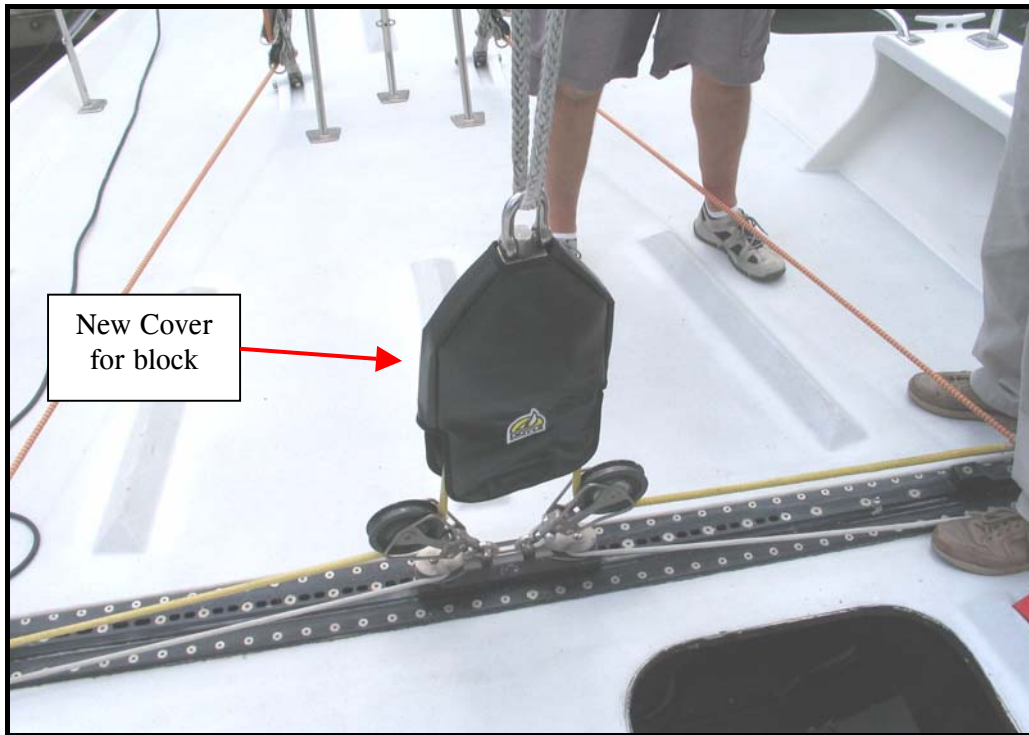
A vessel of this type is highly manoeuvrable. As a racing vessel, there is an obvious need for it to be able to manoeuvre quickly. Passengers need to be able to transfer from one side of the vessel to the other relatively easily and promptly.

There is also an obvious need for exposed lines and blocks that are potentially dangerous. These hazards cannot be eliminated but can be minimised to a degree.

As a tourist 'soft adventure' operation, it is acknowledged that there is a fine line between offering passengers an exhilarating experience and offering a harbour cruise.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the accident, the owners of *NZL41* have fitted a cover over the mainsheet block (see photo below). This cover enables the block to function fully but also provides a degree of protection to passengers.



The cover has since also had an unambiguous sign added to it as below.



It is recommended that the company review its safety briefing procedures in regard to its audibility. It can be hard to hear what is being said especially with background noise and wind. The crew member giving the safety briefing should stress the importance of passengers keeping their limbs away from the ropes and blocks.

As a tourist venture, the owners should consider producing a handout in various languages for non-English speaking passengers, highlighting the safety procedures onboard the vessel.

It is recommended that the company review its policy for the carriage of elderly passengers in marginal wind and sea conditions. They should stress to such passengers what conditions are likely to be encountered and what is required of them when the vessel is operating in such marginal conditions, thus giving them the option not to sail.