

Multiple authorities begin Viking Sky investigation

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Maritime authorities in Norway, the UK and the US have begun investigations into the loss of power on board cruise ship Viking Sky cruise ship which nearly led to her grounding along the west coast of Norway near Molde last Saturday March 23rd.

Viking Sky had 1,378 passengers and crew on board when her four engines failed, causing her to drift dangerously close to shore near the town of Hustadvika. The ship was able to drop anchor and restart power to one engine, and that alone appears to have stopped Viking Sky running aground along the rocky shoreline. The ship then struggled against waves six to eight metres high as she slowly moved into deeper water. At the same time rescue teams on board helicopters were hoisting nearly 500 people to safety, 15 to 20 at a time, from the deck of the ship.

Eventually an ocean tug attached a tow line to the Viking Sky and helped her reach the port of Molde, Norway, where the remaining passengers were disembarked on Sunday afternoon.

The investigation is being led by the Accident Investigation Board of Norway (AIBN), with the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and UK Maritime Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) also participating.

Viking Ocean Cruises has launched its own internal investigation and said that it welcomed and would support fully the investigations that have been launched.

Torstein Hagen, President of Viking Ocean Cruises, said that “the past few days have been stressful and hectic for both guests and crew alike. I would like to personally apologize for what our guests experienced”. He added: “I would also like to say how impressed and grateful I am for the efforts of the national rescue services, rescue personnel, local authorities and the people along the Møre coast, and thank them for the concern and generosity they have showed our guests. I would also like to express my thanks to the crew on board the Viking Sky for their efforts and dedication.”

The NTSB has dispatched two investigators to support the international investigation into the event,” NTSB said, adding that “this is a Substantially Interested State investigation into the event under the International Maritime Organization rules. As such, Norway has asked the Coast Guard to support in the effort and the Coast Guard in turn has asked us

to assist. Our investigators, who should arrive in the next day, have expertise in Nautical and Engineering Operations.”

“We have deployed technical staff to support AIBN’s investigation into the loss of propulsion on the Viking Sky, 23 March 2019.” MAIB wrote in a tweet on Monday.

Hustadvika is an infamous 10nm stretch of water in the Norwegian Sea that is known for its potential hazards in bad weather. Criticism was emerging of the decision to set sail from Tromsø, when it would have been known that there was a storm, and that the ship would transit Hustadvika.

On March 25th divers were in the water to investigate the ship for damage and to ascertain whether the cooling water intake had stopped or otherwise been damaged. But apparently there were no signs of this being the case.

It has also emerged that the crew was not able to raise one of the ship’s two anchors when one of the main engines was started, and the captain wanted to sail further away from the coast. The crew had to cut the anchor to enable the ship to sail away. Nine passengers were reported still hospitalized.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=gy7J8JvIcJw