



**National Transportation
Safety Board**

Memorandum

Date: October 9, 2018
To: Director, Office of Marine Safety
From: Eric Stolzenberg, Chief, Product Development Division [REDACTED]
Subject: Close-out memo regarding the explosion and fire on board 37-foot Bahamas tour boat

Accident no.	DCA18RM027
Accident type	Explosion and Fire
Vessel	Unnamed 37-foot catamaran-hulled tour boat
Location	Near Exuma Island, Bahamas, 23°40.68' N, 76°03.85' W
Date	June 30, 2018
Time	About 0910 eastern daylight time (coordinated universal time – 4 hours)
Injuries	One death, two serious injuries, and seven minor injuries
Damage	Total loss of vessel
Environmental damage	None reported
Weather	Fair with good visibility, light winds, sunshine
Waterway characteristics	Shallow bay surrounded by numerous small islands (cays); water depth about 4 feet.

AUTHORITY:

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) participated in the investigation of this accident under the International Maritime Organization (IMO) *Code of the International Standards and Recommended Practices for a Safety Investigation into a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident* (Casualty Investigation Code). When a flag State and/or investigating State designates the United States a substantially interested State, the US Coast Guard represents the US Administration. The NTSB may join the Coast Guard in its role as a substantially interested State.

In this investigation, the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) represented the flag/investigating State and the United States participated as a substantially interested State represented by the Coast Guard. Two NTSB investigators, one from the Office of Marine Safety and the other from the Office of Research and Engineering, assisted the Coast Guard in this investigation.

ACCIDENT DESCRIPTION:

On June 30, 2018, about 0900 local time, the Bahamas-flagged small passenger vessel, owned and operated by Four C's Adventures, departed the dock at Barratarre, Great Exuma, for an excursion, with 2 crew members and 10 passengers on board. All of the passengers were US citizens. Approximately 10 minutes after departing, when the master of the catamaran-hulled vessel was moving the throttles of the vessel up to full speed, an explosion occurred in the starboard pontoon.

Two passengers were ejected from the vessel by the force of the explosion. One of the two passengers later died as a result of her injuries. Two other passengers sustained very serious injuries, and seven other passengers sustained minor injuries. Nearby charter boats assisted with rescuing the passengers and transporting them to shore. Following the explosion, a fire started on the vessel and continued to burn until the vessel sank in shallow water. The vessel was a total loss.

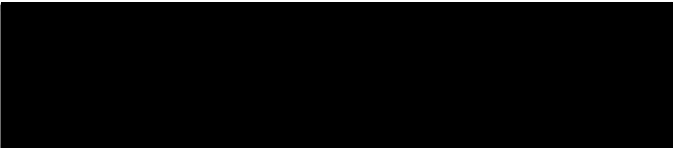
INVESTIGATION:

Following the salvage of the vessel, personnel from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; the US Coast Guard; the NTSB; the Royal Bahamas Police Force; and the BMA attended the vessel to conduct an on-scene investigation. Initial findings determined that an explosion occurred within the enclosed starboard pontoon forward of the vessel's starboard fuel tank. During the initial investigation, the BMA determined that the vessel was never registered with the Government of the Bahamas to operate as a commercial passenger vessel, the vessel was hand built, and it did not meet any standards for vessel construction.

The BMA has produced a report of investigation; the Coast Guard is not expected to produce a separate report. Following the practices in the IMO Casualty Investigation Code, the NTSB and the Coast Guard Office of Investigation and Analysis made joint comments to the draft BMA casualty report prior to its final release. The NTSB has posted the final BMA report to the NTSB public docket.

CONCLUSION:

Because the Bahamas Maritime Authority has produced a robust report and the Coast Guard will not pursue a separate investigation, I have determined that this accident does not warrant further investigation and therefore recommend that we close this investigation.



Director, Office of Marine Safety

VESSEL PARTICULARS:

Vessel	<i>Unnamed 37-foot tour boat</i>
Owner/operator	Four C's Adventures
Port of registry	Not registered
Flag	Bahamas
Call Sign	None
Type	Passenger vessel
Year built	2016
IMO number	N/A
Classification society	N/A
Construction	Aluminum
Length, overall	37.9 ft (11.3 m)
Breadth	12.4 ft (3.8 m)
Draft	4.5 ft (1.4 m)
Gross tonnage	3.4 tons
Engine power; manufacturer	2 x 300hp Yamaha outboard gasoline engines
Capacity	33 passengers, 2 crewmembers
Persons on board (accident)	12 (2 crewmembers and 10 passengers)