Lifeboat Safety Fatality File

US Coast Guard Publishes Report on Fatal Lifeboat Drill Accident on Shell’s Auger Platform

The U.S. Coast Guard has issued its report from its investigation into a fatal lifeboat accident on Shell’s Auger tension leg platform in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico in 2019.

The incident took place during a routine lifeboat launch and retrieval drill on June 30, 2019. Two people inside the lifeboat were killed when it fell 80 feet, landing upside down in the water. Another person, who was exiting the lifeboat when it released, was seriously injured.

According to the report, the aft hook on the Auger platform’s Lifeboat No. 6 inadvertently opened as the lifeboat was being winched into the davit following the drill. “The lifeboat, still hanging from the forward hook, swung in a pendulum motion away from the facility. A few seconds later, the forward hook separated from the lifeboat and opened, and the lifeboat fell approximately 80 feet, landing inverted in the water,” investigators said in the executive summary.

The investigation determined that the “initiating event” for the casualty occurred when the locking shaft on the aft hook moved from the “almost open” to the open position, which in turn caused the aft hook to open under load and release from the lift ring.