



PRELIMINARY REPORT

MARINE

DCA21MM024

The information in this preliminary report is subject to change and may contain errors. It will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.

About 1541 local time on April 13, 2021, the US-flagged 175-foot-long liftboat *Seacor Power* capsized off the coast of Port Fourchon, Louisiana. Nineteen personnel were aboard the vessel, including nine crew, two galley staff, and eight offshore workers. Vessels in the area reported heavy rain, winds exceeding 80 knots, and building seas at the time of the accident. Search and rescue efforts were hampered by 30–40-knot winds and 10–12-foot seas that persisted throughout the evening and into the next day. Six personnel were rescued by the Coast Guard and Good Samaritan vessels, and the bodies of six fatally injured personnel were recovered. Seven remain missing.



Preaccident photo of the *Seacor Power*, left, in the lifted configuration alongside an offshore platform. (Source: Seacor Marine)

Liftboats are three- or four-legged, self-propelled, self-elevating vessels that provide cranes and deck space for servicing offshore facilities such as oil drilling platforms. After carrying cargo, equipment, and personnel to the work site, the vessels elevate or “jack up” out of the water to allow crews to carry out work. The *Seacor Power* was built in 2002 and acquired by Seacor Marine LLC, the vessel operator, in 2012.

About 1330 on the accident day, the *Seacor Power* departed Port Fourchon bound for “Main Pass Block 138,” an oil and gas lease area in the Gulf of Mexico east of the Mississippi Delta. The voyage was expected to take 18 hours at a vessel speed of about 4 knots. Prior to getting under way, equipment to be used by the offshore workers was loaded onto the *Seacor Power*’s main deck. A weather report emailed to the vessel at 0702 that morning predicted afternoon winds at 9–12 knots from the southeast, with 3-foot seas.

About 1530, a rain squall passed over the vessel as it transited the open waters of the gulf. Visibility dropped and the winds increased significantly, so crew decided to lower the *Seacor Power*’s legs to the seafloor to hold the vessel in position until the storm passed. When the legs began to descend, the crewmember at the helm attempted to turn the vessel into the winds. Before the turn was completed, the *Seacor Power* heeled to starboard and capsized.

Several personnel were able to escape out onto the exposed port side of the *Seacor Power* deckhouse. Good Samaritan vessels in the area responded to the stricken vessel’s location, as well as a pre-commissioning Coast Guard cutter. Coast Guard response boats, a civilian helicopter, and Coast Guard fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft joined in rescue efforts, but high winds and seas that had built to 10–12 feet prevented them from reaching the personnel remaining on the *Seacor Power*. Some who had been clinging to the vessel were washed into the water, and six were eventually rescued. One survivor suffered a serious injury.



Capsized *Seacor Power* on the evening of the accident, with a Coast Guard response boat in the foreground. (Source: US Coast Guard)

The Coast Guard declared the accident a major marine casualty on April 14, and the next day the NTSB launched a full team to the area. While on scene, investigators collected documentation and interviewed survivors, other personnel who had crewed the vessel, owner and charterer representatives, vessel inspectors and surveyors, and search and rescue responders. Investigators intend to return to the scene when the *Seacor Power* is salvaged to inspect the vessel and collect further evidence.

The NTSB is the lead federal agency for the safety investigation. The Coast Guard, Seacor Marine LLC, the National Weather Service, and the American Bureau of Shipping have been named parties to the NTSB investigation.