



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
INTO THE
COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL MASTER
KINGSTON (1044386), LOSS OF LIFE IN THE
GULF OF AMERICA
ON OCTOBER 08, 2024**



MISLE ACTIVITY NUMBER: 8017533

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

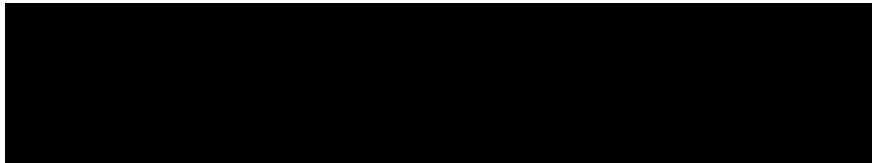
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16732/IIA #8017533
22 October 2025

**FALL OVERBOARD AND SUBSEQUENT LOSS OF ONE LIFE FROM THE
COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL MASTER KINGSTON (O.N. 1044386), IN
THE GULF OF AMERICA APPROXIMATELY 6 NAUTICAL MILES SOUTH
OF SHIP ISLAND, MISSISSIPPI ON OCTOBER 8, 2024**

ACTION BY THE COMMANDANT

The record and the report of investigation completed for this marine casualty have been reviewed by the Office of Investigations & Casualty Analysis. The record and the report, including the findings of fact, analyses, and conclusions are approved. This marine casualty investigation is closed.



E. B. SAMMS
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis (CG-INV)



16732

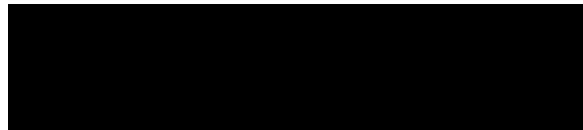
**COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL MASTER KINGSTON (1044386), LOSS OF LIFE
IN THE GULF OF AMERICA ON OCTOBER 08, 2024**

**ENDORSEMENT BY THE COMMANDER,
COAST GUARD HEARTLAND DISTRICT**

The record and the report of the investigation convened for the subject casualty have been reviewed. The record and the report, including the findings of fact, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations are approved. It is recommended that this marine casualty investigation be closed.

COMMENTS ON THE REPORT

1. I extend my deepest condolences to the family and friends of the Master who lost his life in this tragic accident.
2. The investigation and report contain valuable information which can be used to address the factors that contributed to this marine casualty and prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.



J. B. WHEELER
Commander, U.S. Coast Guard
Chief of Prevention
Coast Guard Heartland District
By Direction



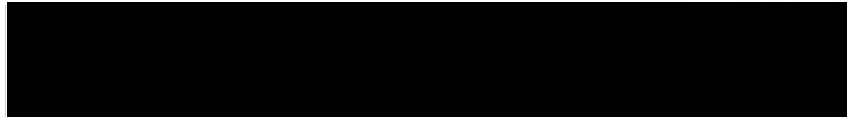
16732
September 30, 2025

**COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL MASTER KINGSTON (1044386), LOSS OF LIFE
IN GULF OF MEXICO ON OCTOBER 08, 2024**

ENDORSEMENT BY THE OFFICER IN CHARGE, MARINE INSPECTION

The record and the report of the investigation convened for the subject casualty have been reviewed. The record and the report, including the findings of fact, analysis, conclusions and recommendations are approved subject to the following comments. It is recommended that this marine casualty investigation be closed.

COMMENTS ON REPORT



M. O. Vega
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection



16732
September 30, 2025

COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL MASTER KINGSTON (1044386), LOSS OF LIFE IN THE GULF OF AMERICA ON OCTOBER 08, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 07, 2024, the U.S. flagged uninspected commercial fishing vessel (CFV) MASTER KINGSTON (Official Number 1044386) departed Bayou Marine Products, Bayou La Batre, AL, with 04 persons onboard, enroute to conduct shrimping operations in the Gulf of Mexico. The vessel transited to fishing grounds, anchored, and rested for the night.

On October 08, 2024, at approximately 0600, the crew woke up and started shrimping as planned approximately 06 nautical miles off Ship Island in the Gulf of America. The Master and 03 deckhands were on the aft deck working the rigging equipment. At approximately 0806, the Master climbed aloft on the port side outboard rigger to install a bib cable when he fell off and entered the water. Deckhand 1 immediately tossed a rope for the Master to grab on to but was ultimately unsuccessful. The Master was seen going underwater and not resurfacing. The crew recovered deployed fishing gear and began searching for the Master.

At approximately 0846, Deckhand 1 made a cellular call to notify the owner of the vessel that the Master had fallen overboard. Sector Mobile Command Center received a call from the owner of the MASTER KINGSTON at approximately 0906 where he reported the Master had entered the water without a personal floatation device. The Coast Guard initiated search and rescue operations deploying assets from Station Gulfport, Station Dauphin Island, Air Station New Orleans, CGC DOLPHIN, and other government agencies. The search for the missing Master continued until it was officially suspended at 1859 CDT on October 08, 2024, with negative results. No body was recovered, and the Master of the MASTER KINGSTON was missing and presumed deceased.

As a result of its investigation, the Coast Guard determined that the most likely initiating event for this casualty was when the Master entered the water, which subsequently led to him missing and his presumed loss of life. The causal factors that contributed to this casualty were: (1) Master's decision to climb aloft, and (2) Failure to don a personal flotation device.



16732
September 30, 2025

**COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL MASTER KINGSTON (1044386), LOSS OF LIFE
IN THE GULF OF AMERICA ON OCTOBER 08, 2024**

INVESTIGATING OFFICER'S REPORT

1. Preliminary Statement

1.1. This marine casualty investigation was conducted, and this report was submitted in accordance with Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subpart 4.07, and under the authority of Title 46, United States Code (USC) Chapter 63.

1.2. No individuals, organizations, or parties were designated a party-in-interest in accordance with 46 CFR Subsection 4.03-10.

1.3. The Coast Guard was the lead agency for all evidence collection activities involving this investigation. No other persons or organizations assisted in this investigation.

1.4. All times listed in this report are in Central Standard Time using a 24-hour format and are approximate.

2. Vessel Involved in the Incident

Official Name:	MASTER KINGSTON
Identification Number:	1044386
Flag:	United States
Vessel Class/Type/Sub-Type	Uninspected Commercial Fishing Vessel
Build Year:	1996
Gross Tonnage:	159 GT
Length:	83.6 Feet
Beam/Width:	25 Feet
Draft:	12.5 Feet
Main/Primary Propulsion:	Inboard Engine
Owner:	MASTER KINGSTON, LLC
Operator:	MASTER KINGSTON, LLC



Figure 1. MASTER KINGSTON moored in Bayou La Batre, AL

3. Deceased, Missing, and/or Injured Persons

<u>Relationship to vessel</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Status</u>
Master	Male	59	Missing/Presumed Deceased

4. Findings of Fact

4.1. The Incident:

4.1.1. On October 07, 2024, the Master of MASTER KINGSTON and 03 deckhands departed Bayou Marine Products, Bayou La Batre, AL, for shrimping operations in the Gulf of America.

4.1.2. The vessel made way to fishing grounds in the Gulf of America, anchored, and rested for the night.

4.1.3. On October 08, 2024, at approximately 0600, the crew began shrimping operations approximately 06 nautical miles south of Ship Island in the Gulf of America.

4.1.4. At approximately 0806, the Master climbed aloft on the port side outboard rigger to install a bib cable where he subsequently fell into the water.

4.1.5. Deckhand 1 threw a rope for the Master to grab, but the attempt was unsuccessful.

4.1.6. The Master was seen by the deckhands going under water and not resurfacing.

4.1.7. The deckhands began to recover deployed fishing gear and conduct a search for the Master.

4.1.8. At approximately 0846, the crew made a cellular call to notify the owner that the Master of the MASTER KINGSTON had fallen overboard.

4.1.9. At approximately 0906, Sector Mobile Command Center received a report from the owner of the vessel that the Master had entered the water without a personal floatation device.

4.1.10. At approximately 0911, Sector Command Center launched multiple assets to support search and rescue operations.

4.1.11. At approximately 0906, Sector Mobile Command Center received a report from the owner of the vessel that the Master had entered the water without a personal floatation device.

4.1.12. At approximately 1859, the Coast Guard suspended the search with negative results, and the Master was presumed deceased.

4.2. Additional/Supporting Information:

4.2.1. The Master had been in the fishing industry for approximately 30 years, six of which were spent employed onboard the MASTER KINGSTON. The Master was not a credentialed mariner.

4.2.2. The practice of bibbing a cable is used to raise the nets higher in the water to catch larger brown shrimp.

4.2.3. According to the owner, the crew were not authorized to climb the rigging while it was deployed overboard. There were no written standard operating procedures or safety management systems in place.

4.2.4. Because the crew was not considered directly involved in the Master's decision to climb aloft and the subsequent events that followed, drug and alcohol testing were not required.

5. Analysis

5.1 *Master's decision to climb aloft.* The Master chose to climb aloft on the port-side outrigger while the vessel's shrimping gear remained deployed. The purpose of this was to "bib the cable," a practice in which an auxiliary line is secured to the trawl nets to modify their vertical orientation within the water column. This adjustment is intended to cause the nets to ride higher, thereby targeting larger shrimp species typically located above the depth range of standard trawl operations.

Ascending a deployed outrigger in an attempt to bib the cable presented significant and avoidable hazards. The safer and more appropriate method would have been to recover the deployed gear and conduct the evolution from the working deck, where conditions are more controlled and the risk of falling or entering the water is substantially reduced. By proceeding aloft while the gear remained deployed, the Master introduced unnecessary exposure to environmental forces, vessel motion, and the dynamic strain of the trawl rigging.

It is likely the Master's decision to climb the rigging while underway was influenced by an operational desire to minimize downtime and maintain trawling operations. This decision prioritized efficiency over safety and directly increased the probability of casualty. Had the Master conducted the bibbing procedure from the deck, after recovery of the gear, it is reasonable to assume he would not have climbed aloft and therefore would not have entered the water.



Figure 2. Port side rigging of the CFV MASTER KINGSTON.

5.2 Failure to don a personal floatation device. The Master was not wearing a personal floatation device (PFD) at the time he entered the water. A properly donned PFD gives a person additional buoyancy, increasing both afloat time and survivability. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that, had the Master been wearing a PFD, he could have remained on the surface long enough to affect self-rescue or be recovered by the crew.



Figure 3. Starboard side of the CFV MASTER KINGSTON moored at homeport in Bayou La Batre, AL.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Determination of Cause:

6.1.1. The initiating event for this casualty was Master of the MASTER KINGSTON entering the water. The causal factors leading to this event were:

6.1.1.1. Master's decision to climb aloft while the port side rigger was extended over the water.

6.1.2. The subsequent event for this casualty was the death of Master. Contributing factors that may have prevented this were:

6.1.2.1. Failure to don a personal floatation device.

6.2. Evidence of Act(s) or Violation(s) of Law by Any Coast Guard Credentialed Mariner Subject to Action under 46 USC Chapter 77: There were no acts of misconduct, incompetence, negligence, unskillfulness, or violations of law by a credentialed mariner identified as part of this investigation.

6.3. Evidence of Act(s) or Violation(s) of Law by U.S. Coast Guard Personnel, or any other person: There were no acts of misconduct, incompetence, negligence, unskillfulness, or violations of law by Coast Guard employees or any other person that contributed to this casualty.

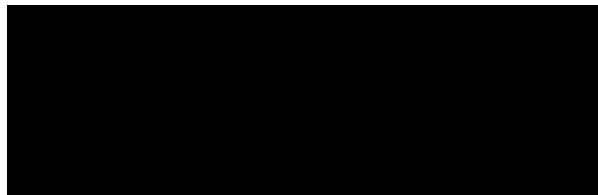
6.4. Evidence of Act(s) Subject to Civil Penalty: This investigation did not identify any evidence of acts that would warrant a civil penalty.

6.5. Evidence of Criminal Act(s): This investigation did not identify violations of criminal law.

6.6. Need for New or Amended U.S. Law or Regulation: This investigation identified no matters requiring new or amended U.S. law or regulation.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Safety Recommendation: There were no proposed actions to add new or amend existing U.S. law or regulations, international requirements, industry standards, or U.S. Coast Guard policies and procedures as part of this investigation.



Lieutenant, U.S. Coast Guard
Investigating Officer