STEWARTS

THE DISPUTES FIRM

Who Is Responsible?

Choosing the right defendant in maritime injury claims

Becky Huxford | Senior Associate, International Injury

November 2026

The Agreements Behind the Claim

Employment and personnel supply agreements

Who employs or supplies the injured worker, and on what terms

Charterparties

Vessel use and responsibilities between owner and charterer

Project and service contracts

Relationships between project interests, contractors and equipment or service suppliers

Indemnity and insurance provisions

Knock-for-knock provisions generally sit within the relevant agreements.

STEWARTS

When the Obvious Defendant Is Not the Whole Answer

Who is liable, and who will deal with the claim?

1. Start with the apparent employer
2. The claim is denied or redirected
3. The contractual arrangements remain out of sight



Is the new party being identified because of liability, indemnity, or both?

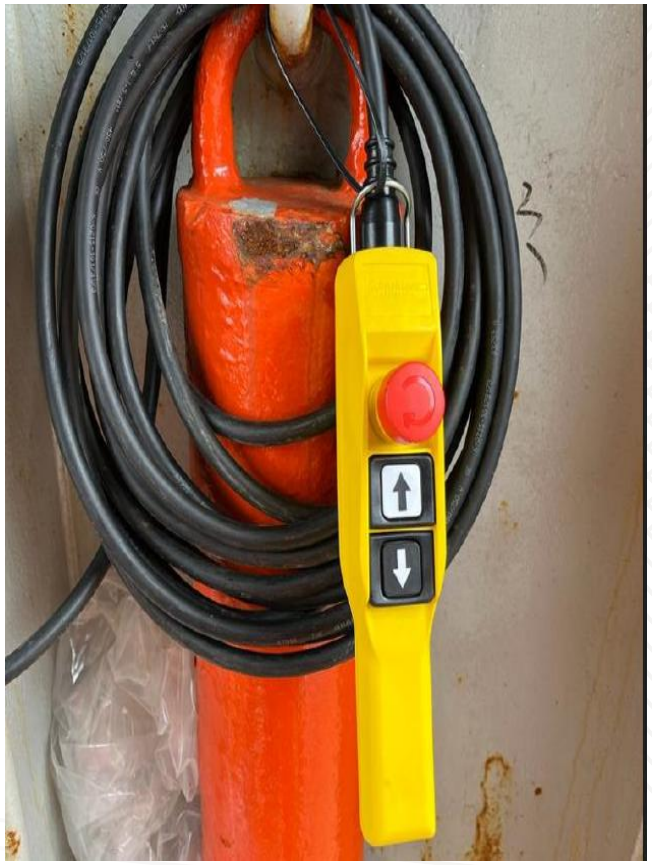
STEWARTS

Case Study 1

An apparently clear route…..

Offshore geotechnician

- Scottish claimant
- Engaged through a UK personnel agency
- Working aboard a Norwegian-registered vessel
- Vessel chartered and operated by a Dutch company
- Accident in Danish waters
- Electrocuted by faulty work equipment



Permanent peripheral nerve injury

Compromised arm function and unable to return to offshore work

The agency initially directed the claimant to its own settlement scheme.

The Route to Compensation Changes

The agency points the claim elsewhere

01 APPARENT ROUTE

Agency settlement scheme

Interim payments
Rehabilitation funding
Claim already being handled

02 CHANGE OF POSITION

Agency steps away

Employment disputed
Funding withdrawn
Dutch operator identified
Claim redirected to them

03 CLAIMANT RESPONSE

Keep both routes alive

Pursue both companies
Press for the contract
Protect forum and limitation

AGENCY **Undisclosed contract / possible indemnity** **DUTCH OPERATOR**

STEWARTS

Case Study 2

One accident, several potentially responsible parties

Offshore wind technician

- UK claimant employed by GE Energy UK, now part of GE Vernova
- Working on the Dogger Bank offshore wind project
- Based aboard the MV Edda Boreas
- Crossing to a turbine using a Walk-to-Work gangway
- Gangway retracted while the claimant was crossing
- Fell approximately 25 metres into the sea

Significant physical and psychological injuries

Unable to return to his former offshore role

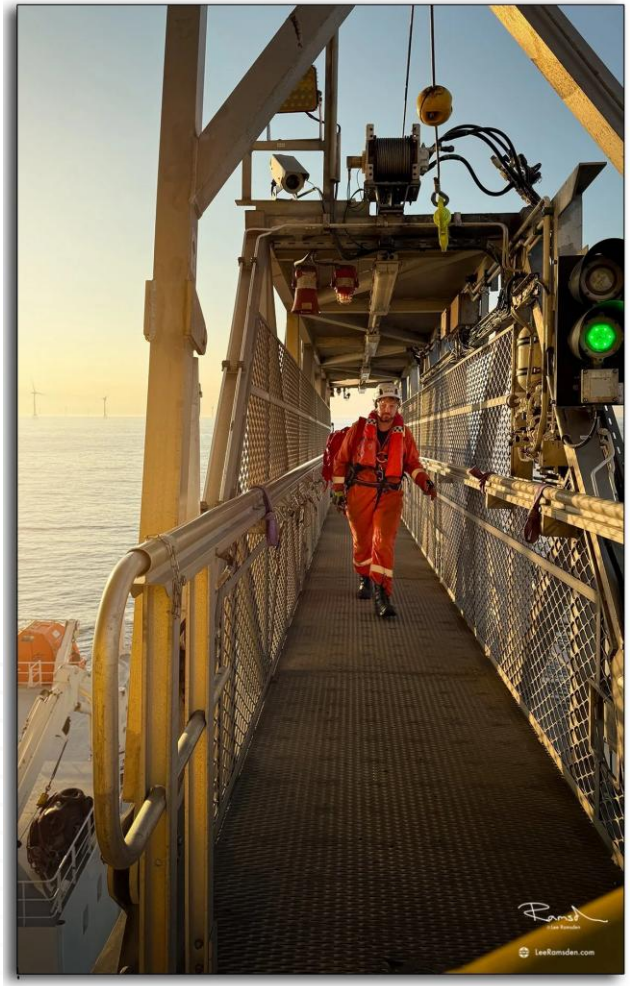
The investigation pointed particularly towards the vessel interests, but did not necessarily provide the complete defendant answer.

The Indemnity Question Drives the Claim

While liability remained unanswered

1. Claim directed to the employer
2. No early substantive liability response
3. Wider operational and contractual chain investigated
4. Issue and serve proceedings in good time

The contractual arrangements were shaping the claim before they had been explained to the claimant.



STEWARTS

Finding a route through the contractual uncertainty



STEWARTS

STEWARTS

Thank You

