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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Man Injured When Boat Explodes and Sinks on Richardson's Bay

SAUSALITO, CA — The [Richardson's Bay Regional Agency](#) (RBRA) is working with other authorities to investigate an explosion Sunday, February 14, that injured the occupant of a 35-foot sailboat anchored in Richardson's Bay. A man was rescued before the boat sank in waters off the Sausalito shoreline.

In the early evening hours, the Southern Marin Fire Protection District (SMFPD) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) responded to a distress call from the vessel called Folie Douce. First responders found the occupant, Mark Culver, aboard with burns and minor injuries. Paramedics took Culver to an area hospital and his status is unknown.

RBRA Harbormaster Curtis Havel said he will try to connect Culver with potential housing options once he can establish contact with him. Havel also said he is working with Southern Marin Fire to determine the cause of the explosion.

"We suspect a propane tank leak could've led to this incident," Havel said. "Mr. Culver is very lucky to have survived."

Propane leaks are one of a mariner's greatest fears, Havel said. Propane is heavier than air and tends to pool in the bilge of a vessel. If a spark reaches the pooled-up propane, "it effectively acts as a bomb," Havel said.

Although the explosion was an accident, it is the responsibility of the vessel owner to arrange for retrieval and disposal of the vessel. Havel has not been able to establish whether Culver is the vessel owner.

Because the sunken vessel is a navigational hazard and a threat to the environment due to the presence of fuels, engine oil and other hazardous materials, Havel will need to initiate summary abatement proceedings to remove it from the bay floor as soon as possible through a professional salvage company if Culver is not able to take responsibility. It will be towed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers debris yard, where it will be surveyed and properly abated.

The Folie Douce was on the anchorage prior to a vessel census of August 2019. It was inoperable and not a part of the RBRA's [Safe and Seaworthy Program](#).

RBRA's [Rules and Regulations for Anchoring in Richardson's Bay](#) allow vessels to anchor for up to 72-hours in the historic anchorage. RBRA is working to improve the management of the

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anchorage according to its [June 2020 Transition Plan](#). The plan, which aims to bring RBRA into compliance with guidance from the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, focuses on enforcing the bay's anchoring time limits, removing unoccupied marine debris vessels, connecting vulnerable individuals on the anchorage with housing alternatives, and actively protecting the bay's most important environmental resource, its eelgrass beds.

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The Richardson's Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) is a local government agency serving Belvedere, Mill Valley, Tiburon, and unincorporated Southern Marin. RBRA is dedicated to maintaining and improving the navigational waterways, open waters, and shoreline of Richardson's Bay. For more information about the RBRA, visit www.rbra.ca.gov.