

# JTSB Newsletter

Special edition  
*Marine Accidents*

## Japan Transport Safety Board

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### Introduction

Kanmon Kaikyo (Strait), located in the westernmost part of the Seto Inland Sea, links the latter with the outer sea. Most of it consists of the Kanmon Port Area—the regional center of commodity distribution. The port, which is divided into seven sections, has several passages and a large number of berths. Consequently, Kanmon Kaikyo serves as a vital spot for marine traffic. On the other hand, it is also known as a difficult strait for vessel navigation for such reasons as its restricted navigable width (It is only about one nautical mile at the widest point, and 500 meters at the narrowest.) and the presence of sharp bends and strong tidal streams.



Kanmon Kaikyo  
(vicinity of the Kanmon Bridge)

Of the marine accidents the Japan Transport Safety Board (JTSB) investigated since its establishment (in October 2008) till December 2009, 40 cases (involving 60 vessels) occurred in Kanmon Kaikyo. By the type of accident, they are divided into 17 groundings, 10 collisions, 7 contacts and 6 other types. By the type of ship, they are composed of 29 cargo ships/oil tankers, 8 pushers/tugs, 6 pleasure craft, 2 passenger ships, 2 fishing boats, and 13 other types. Of those, 18 were foreign-flag ships. It is worth mentioning that, in October 2009, in Hayatomo Seto, the narrowest part of Kanmon Kaikyo, a serious collision—which resulted in a closure of the passage—occurred between a destroyer of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and a foreign-flag cargo ship.

In Kanmon Kaikyo, various safety measures have been taken, such as the extension of length and widening and deepening of passages, the establishment of the Kanmon Kaikyo Traffic Advisory Service Center (Kanmon MARTIS), and introduction of a navigation aid system using the AIS (automatic identification system). Still, accidents continue to occur, involving vessels unfamiliar with the special nature of Kanmon Kaikyo, including weather and sea conditions, and vessel navigational rules. In the present condition, new maritime traffic rules were put in place on July 1 this year. (See P. 18.)

With this situation in mind, we have decided to run major features on Kanmon Kaikyo in this special edition. Taking up accident cases which occurred there—from among the investigation reports the JTSB has publicized—we highlighted points which will help improve the safety of vessel navigation.

This year is the centenary of the commencement of the development of the Kanmon Passage. With this in mind, we hope that this special edition will help those concerned with maritime affairs deepen their understanding of vessel traffic rules in Kanmon Kaikyo and other relevant matters, leading to the prevention of marine accidents there.

Situation of marine accidents in Kanmon Kaikyo  
(investigated cases which occurred from October 2008 to December 2009)



\*The broken line marks the boundaries of Kanmon Port, port sections and passages.

\*The numbers (1 to 4) show the case number taken up in this special edition.

