



Maritime Claims at the Intersection of Law and Technical Evidence

Andy Madden | Published Jun 18, 2026

Maritime claims rarely begin as legal disputes.

They usually begin with something far more practical: damaged cargo, machinery failure, collision damage, container issues, survey attendance, class or flag concerns, missing documents, operational decisions, crew statements, repair estimates, photographs, log entries, emails, and competing versions of what happened.

By the time lawyers become involved, the facts may already have started to harden.

That is why early factual control matters.

In many maritime matters, the first legal advantage is not found in a pleading, motion, or demand letter. It is found in understanding the vessel, the equipment, the documents, the survey record, and the operational context before conclusions are reached.

This is where my dual background is particularly useful.

As a California attorney and experienced marine surveyor, with a background as a former Chief Engineer, Lloyd's Register Senior Surveyor and Lead Auditor, and maritime claims professional, I approach marine disputes from both sides of the table: the legal issues and the technical facts that often drive them.

Those two perspectives are not separate in practice.

A machinery failure claim may turn on maintenance history, operating conditions, class records, oil analysis, damage progression, and expert evidence.

A cargo or container claim may turn on stowage, securing, handling, survey timing, photographic evidence, packing, causation, and the chain of custody.

A casualty matter may turn on what was preserved, who attended, what was recorded, what was missed, and whether the early investigation was disciplined enough to withstand later scrutiny.

In each case, legal strategy is only as strong as the factual foundation beneath it.

The same is true for marine insurers, P&I Clubs, shipowners, operators, managers, and law firms handling maritime claims. A technically informed legal approach can help identify the real issues earlier, avoid unnecessary disputes, preserve privilege where appropriate, and keep the matter commercially focused.

My work through The Law Office of Andrew E. Madden, P.C, and A.M. Marine Surveys LLC reflects that practical intersection.

The legal practice provides maritime legal support, contract counsel, litigation support, casualty response, claims analysis, and evidence-focused strategy.

The survey practice provides independent marine surveying, casualty investigation, container and cargo damage inspection, condition assessment, technical review, and claims support.

The two businesses remain separate, with appropriate checks for conflicts and professional boundaries. But the experience behind them is connected by one consistent principle:

“Maritime claims require more than legal theory. They require a clear understanding of the facts, the vessel, the documents, the damage, and the commercial realities surrounding the dispute.”

In my experience, the strongest position is often built early, calmly, methodically, and without rushing to conclusions.

That is where maritime experience informs legal strategy.

When maritime claims require both legal strategy and technical understanding, early guidance can make a meaningful difference. Please feel free to contact us to discuss how we may assist you and your business.

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