# Titan submersible’s 2019 near-implosion footage raises fresh safety concerns



Dramatic revelations have emerged regarding the ill-fated Titan submersible, which tragically imploded during a dive to the Titanic wreck site, claiming the lives of five individuals, including prominent British adventurer Hamish Harding and father-and-son duo Shahzada and Suleman Dawood. The Titan, operated by OceanGate Expeditions, was on its journey when disaster struck in June 2023, sparking a global outcry and prompting extensive investigations into the safety of private deep-sea exploration.

A new documentary titled "Implosion: The Titanic Sub Disaster," set to air on BBC Two, unveils harrowing details from a test dive in April 2019. Footage from this exploration demonstrates a range of alarming incidents, including a horrifying noise likened to a gunshot emanating from the Titan's hull. Members of the dive team reported that the lights extinguished before they lost complete vertical thrust following a failure in one of the vessel's battery banks. Submersibles expert Karl Stanley noted the frightening proximity to catastrophe, stating, "we were within a few percentage points of implosion." This ominous experience underscores the inherent risks taken during such extreme explorations.

During the 2019 dive, which was intended to test the submersible’s groundbreaking carbon fibre hull, the crew faced a myriad of challenges. Petros Mathioudakis, an underwater electronics technician who joined the dive, recounted being acutely aware of the dangers involved, reflecting on his exchange with Stockton Rush, the CEO of OceanGate. Mr. Rush reportedly gauged the participant’s willingness to accept risk by asking about their family commitments, indicating an awareness of the potential dangers that lay ahead.

The Titan’s construction has drawn scrutiny from multiple quarters. While OceanGate claimed collaboration with aerospace leaders such as NASA and Boeing, reports suggest that this involvement was limited and that crucial independent reviews of the vessel were neglected. This lack of rigorous assessment has since raised serious concerns regarding the safety protocols observed in the development of the submersible, leading to calls for heightened regulatory oversight in emerging deep-sea tourism.

On June 18, 2023, an acoustic recording released by the U.S. Coast Guard captured what is believed to be the moment of Titan's implosion. This incident has incited discussions on the urgent need to reform safety measures in the private exploration sector, particularly in one marked by minimal regulation and oversight. Experts stress that the Titan disaster should serve as a crucial learning point for the industry's future, to avoid repeating such catastrophic errors.

The aftermath of the Titan's disaster has further unveiled alarming evidence concerning its operational history. In September 2022, during a marine board investigation, details emerged that Stockton Rush was warned about potential flaws in the vessel after previous dives. Notably, shortly after dive 47, a crew member discovered a crack in the hull, indicating problematic delamination in the carbon fibre layers. Such findings exemplified the lack of effective communication regarding safety hazards, as Mr. Stanley lamented his persistent yet seemingly fruitless warnings to Rush over a year leading up to the tragedy.

As public interest in extreme deep-sea tourism grows, so too does the imperative for rigorous safety regulations. This incident highlights a broader issue of an industry grappling with its own ambitions amid perilous ventures. As Howard Lee, president of Discovery Networks, articulated, "we will probe into the fascination with exploration, the risks that we are willing to take, and the ultimate price one can pay when pushing the limits of technology." The forthcoming documentary, alongside ongoing investigations, aims to illuminate these themes and explore how the Titan’s story encapsulates broader implications for deep-sea exploration.

The Titan's final expedition garnered intense media attention during the search efforts, which extended over several days, ultimately leading to the recovery of wreckage from the ocean floor. This call for reflection is not merely about the technological failures that led to the implosion but also about the ethical considerations of venturing into the depths of the ocean. As the industry continues to evolve, it remains imperative to prioritise safety and accountability to protect those drawn to the allure of the unexplored.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://time.com/6289279/titanic-tourism-sub-deep-sea-regulation/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/8aa838f7a068dde5d90b834cdd69d359), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/c7dca3a4792517ad85fabe24a5fcc93f)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://apnews.com/article/titan-submersible-investigation-91bde867ef100c769f1dbe293f2b3020)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titan%3A_The_OceanGate_Disaster), [[6]](https://apnews.com/article/titan-submersible-investigation-91bde867ef100c769f1dbe293f2b3020), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/c7dca3a4792517ad85fabe24a5fcc93f)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/c7dca3a4792517ad85fabe24a5fcc93f)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/8aa838f7a068dde5d90b834cdd69d359)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/8aa838f7a068dde5d90b834cdd69d359> - This article discusses the limited involvement of NASA and Boeing in the development of the Titan submersible's carbon fiber hull. Despite claims of aerospace collaboration, NASA's role was minimal due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Boeing's early feasibility studies were not followed by OceanGate. The piece highlights concerns about the submersible's design and safety, noting that it had not undergone independent review, leading to scrutiny over its construction and operational practices.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/c7dca3a4792517ad85fabe24a5fcc93f> - The article reports on the U.S. Coast Guard releasing an acoustic recording that appears to capture the implosion of the Titan submersible. The incident, which occurred on June 18, 2023, resulted in the deaths of all five individuals aboard. The piece delves into the investigation and the broader implications for private deep-sea exploration, emphasizing the need for enhanced safety measures and regulatory oversight in the industry.
4. <https://time.com/6289279/titanic-tourism-sub-deep-sea-regulation/> - This article examines the dangers associated with unregulated deep-sea tourism, using the Titan submersible disaster as a focal point. It discusses the lack of oversight in the industry, the high costs of such expeditions, and the minimal regulation governing them. The piece also highlights previous safety concerns raised by former passengers and the broader implications for the future of private deep-sea exploration.
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titan%3A_The_OceanGate_Disaster> - This Wikipedia page provides detailed information about the 2025 documentary 'Titan: The OceanGate Disaster,' directed by Mark Monroe. The film explores the events leading up to the Titan submersible's implosion, utilizing whistleblower testimonies, audio recordings, and archival footage. It premiered at the Tribeca Festival on June 6, 2025, and was released on Netflix on June 11, 2025.
6. <https://apnews.com/article/titan-submersible-investigation-91bde867ef100c769f1dbe293f2b3020> - The article discusses the U.S. Coast Guard's investigation into the Titan submersible's implosion, aiming to improve the safety of submersibles worldwide. It highlights the international collaboration among agencies and the ongoing efforts to understand the incident, emphasizing the complexity and importance of the inquiry.
7. <https://abc7news.com/titanic-submarine-debris-titan-submersible-al-giddings-underwater-cinematographer-found-near/13416340/> - This piece features underwater cinematographer Al Giddings discussing the Titan submersible disaster. Drawing from his extensive experience with deep-sea submersibles, Giddings reflects on the implosion's suddenness and the inherent dangers of such expeditions. He also contrasts the Titan's design with that of the Russian MIR submersible, noting the differences in construction materials and safety features.