

05-06-2014 Lee Gwang-wook - Civilian PSD Recovery Diver Accident Trapped

## **FERRY DISASTER: Rescue Diver Dies Searching**

[HTTP://WHOTV.COM/2014/05/05/FERRY-DISASTER-RESCUE-DIVER-DIES-SEARCHING/](http://WHOTV.COM/2014/05/05/FERRY-DISASTER-RESCUE-DIVER-DIES-SEARCHING/)

MAY 5, 2014, BY STAFF WRITER, UPDATED AT 09:37PM, MAY 5, 2014



JINDO, South Korea (CNN) — A diver searching the sunken Sewol ferry died Tuesday, according to South Korea's Government Rescue Headquarters.

"A civilian diver, Lee, lost the communication line at 25 meters under the sea five minutes into his first dive," spokesman Koh Myung-suk said.



"By the time his colleagues went to save him, Lee was unconscious and unable to breathe by himself," Koh said.

Lee, whose full name was not provided, was helicoptered to a hospital where he was pronounced dead, the spokesman added.

Park In-ho, head of the hospital where Lee died, said the diver's blood was tested and appeared normal except for high potassium.

His chest X-ray also showed no sign of irregularity.

Not including the diver, the death toll in the ferry disaster has risen to 263, with 39 people still missing, the government reported.

Over the weekend, South Korean President Park Geun-hye visited the port where the rescue operation is based to console families and encourage divers.

Nearly 130 divers are combing the ship, looking for the remaining missing bodies. The search-and-rescue operation has turned into a grueling recovery of corpses. No one has been found alive since the ferry sank April 16 with a passenger load largely made up of high school students on a field trip.

The work has become even more difficult because divers have faced closed cabin doors blocked by debris.

Corralling the debris has been difficult for search teams.

Mattresses and clothing from the ship have been found up to 9 miles (15 km) away from the accident site, said Park Seung-ki, a spokesman for the rescue operation.

Large stow and trawler nets will be set up around the sunken ship to catch items that may float away, he said. At the same time, some three dozen ships will be clearing an oil spill from the ferry, which is threatening the livelihood of the local fishermen.

The ferry sank en route from Incheon to the resort island of Jeju, off the nation's southwestern coast.

## **Civilian diver dies trying to recover bodies from sunken South Korean ferry**

[HTTP://FOX4KC.COM/2014/05/05/CIVILIAN-DIVER-DIES-TRYING-TO-RECOVER-BODIES-FROM-SUNKEN-SOUTH-KOREAN-FERRY/](http://FOX4KC.COM/2014/05/05/CIVILIAN-DIVER-DIES-TRYING-TO-RECOVER-BODIES-FROM-SUNKEN-SOUTH-KOREAN-FERRY/)

MAY 5, 2014, BY [CNN WIRE](#)

*This is an archived article and the information in the article may be outdated. Please look at the time stamp on the story to see when it was last updated.*

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**Footage from the South Korean Coast Guard shows rescue efforts from the sinking Sewol ferry off the coast of South Korea, April 16, 2014.**

Over the weekend, South Korean President Park Geun-hye visited the port where the rescue operation is based, to console families and encourage divers.

More than 100 divers are combing the ship room by room, looking for the remaining missing bodies.

The search and rescue operation has turned into a grueling recovery of corpses. No one has been found alive since the ferry sank April 16, with a passenger load largely made up of high school students on a field trip.

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The ferry sank en route from Incheon to the resort island of Jeju, off the nation's southwestern coast.

*CNN's Stella Kim reported from Jindo; Ed Payne wrote from Atlanta*

## Rescue Diver Dies Looking for Bodies on Sunken South Korean Ferry

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2014/05/06/civilian-rescue-diver-dies-looking-for-bodies-on-sunken-south-korean-ferry/>

6 May 2014 by [AWR HAWKINS](#)

**On April 29th, a 53-year old diver taking part in the search for bodies aboard the sunken South Korean Sewol ferry became unconscious and later died after descending 25m into the water.**

The diver was known as "Mr. Lee" [According to BBC News](#), the deceased diver was "a veteran crew member of Undine Marine Industries, which specializes in maritime engineering and rescue work." This was his first rescue dive around the sunken ferry.



"Fellow divers lost communication with [Mr. Lee] five minutes into his dive and later pulled him to the surface," the report stated.

South Korean Prime Minister Chung Hong-won "has since ordered government officials overseeing the rescue operation to thoroughly check divers' health conditions."

## South Korea ferry disaster: Diver dies trying to recover bodies from sunken ship

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/south-korea-ferry-disaster-diver-3501177>

6 MAY 2014 BY [SAM ADAMS](#)

He lost consciousness during the search operation for victims still missing after last month's disaster.

A diver has died trying to recover bodies from the sunken South Korean ferry. He lost consciousness during the search operation for victims still missing after last month's disaster.

The diver was diving to fix guideline ropes on the fifth deck of the sunken ferry, according to Ko Myung-seok, spokesman for the government's emergency task force.

He was unable to breathe by himself when he was brought to the surface, and his death was later confirmed at a hospital.



**Operation: Divers have been searching for bodies on the ferry (file picture)**

The dead man had been working for Undine Marine Industries, the company brought in to lead search efforts on the Sewol ferry, which capsized and sank about 20 km (12 miles) off the southwest coast of South Korea on April 16 with 476 passengers and crew on board.

Among the passengers were 339 children and teachers on a high school outing to the southern island of Jeju.

Only 174 people have been rescued. The confirmed death toll is 263, with 39 still missing.

An investigation is ongoing and amid rising indignation over the government's handling of the disaster, President Park Geun-hye voiced criticism on Tuesday of the role played by the ferry operator and government officials.

"Safety rules that must be observed were not followed because of worldly desires and irresponsible acts that tolerated those injustices have resulted in death," she said during her address at a temple in Seoul on Tuesday to celebrate Buddha's birthday.

She promised to fundamentally change national policies and systems to improve safety and to clean up malpractices to ensure businesses and government officials comply with requirements.

President Park visited the families of the ferry victims on Sunday afternoon in Paengmok port in Jindo for the second time since the tragedy.

Her approval rating had slipped to 53 percent as of May 5, 12 percent down for the two weeks after the disaster, according to Seoul-based polling company Realmeter.

## **Diver who took part in search operation on sunken ferry Sewol dies**

<http://tass.com/world/730561>

May 06, 2014



© EPA/KIMIMASA MAYAMA

SEOUL, May 6. /ITAR-TASS/. During the search and rescue operation carried out April 16 on the sunken South Korean ferry Sewol, one diver died, the National Maritime Police Agency (Coast Guard) on the island of Chindo reported.

During regular submersion 53 -year-old diver, surnamed Li lost consciousness. At 07.12 am local time he was rushed to a nearby hospital in the port of Mokpo in the southwest of the country, but the doctors could not do anything and soon announced that he had died.

Communication with lifeguard, who worked for the company Undine Marine Industries, was lost five minutes after his dive to a depth of 25 meters.

262 dead bodies were found for 19 days of search and rescue operations on the sunken ferry. Another 40 people are unaccounted for, said the government's operational headquarters on the island of Chindo.

## Civilian diver dies in South Korea ferry search

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/06/diver-dies-in-south-korea-ferry-search>

May 6, 2014 Associated Press in Seoul

### Civilian was pulled to surface unconscious after beginning his first dive to look for bodies on wreck of Sewol

A civilian diver has died while helping to search for bodies on the sunken Sewol ferry in South Korea.

The 53-year-old had been pulled to the surface unconscious by fellow divers after losing communication about five minutes after he began what was his first dive on the wreck, government task force spokesman Ko Myung-seok said. He was pronounced dead at a hospital.'



**Children in Seoul offer prayers in front of paper ships bearing messages for victims of the Sewol disaster. Photograph: Ahn Young-joon/AP**

It is the only death so far in the recovery operation, according to the coast guard.

Despite the death divers were continuing to search on Tuesday, with the authorities saying most of the remaining missing people were in 64 of the ship's 111 areas. Ko said divers had searched all those 64 areas at least once and planned to revisit them to look for more victims. Efforts were assisted by better weather and easing ocean currents.

The Sewol carried 476 people, most of them students from a single high school near Seoul, when it sank off South Korea's southern coast on 16 April. There were

174 survivors including 22 of the 29 crew members. The sinking left more than 260 people dead, with about 40 others still missing.

Darkness, floating debris and the maze of corridors and cabins on board have made the search difficult.

Investigators have made their first arrests of people who were not on board the Sewol when it sank. The three arrested on Friday and Sunday are suspected of negligence in their handling of cargo on the vessel, according to prosecutors.

In all 19 people have been arrested in the investigation, 15 of them crew members accused of abandoning passengers. An executive with ties to Chonghaejin, the company that owns the ferry, was detained on suspicion of malpractice related to company finances.

Improper stowage and overloading of cargo is suspected as a possible cause. The Sewol had been carrying an estimated 3,600 tonnes of cargo, more than three times its safe limit. A ferry loaded too heavily could overbalance when making even a small turn.

## **Diver dies at S. Korea ferry disaster site**

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/599939/south-korea-diver-dies-in-sunken-ferry-searches>

May 6, 2014 [Agence France-Presse](#)

SEOUL – A diver died Tuesday while working at the scene of South Korea’s ferry disaster, as investigators disclosed that the ship was carrying nearly four times its legal limit of cargo.

Lee Gwang-Wook, 53, **(a diver working for Undine Marine Industries died during the search.<sup>[160]</sup> )** suffered breathing difficulties after reaching a depth of 25 meters (82 feet), said coastguard spokesman Ko Myung-Suk.

Lee, who was making his first dive at the scene, lost consciousness and was pronounced dead in hospital.

Lee lost contact with surface controllers after five minutes in the water. His air hose was found entangled with other lines, a coastguard official was quoted as saying by Yonhap news agency.

“He was a veteran diver, who used to work up to 60 meters below the surface,” his brother-in-law Kim Hyun-Chul told journalists, adding Lee had no health problems. He was the first victim among scores of divers engaged in the grim and dangerous task of finding and retrieving bodies from the sunken ship, while fighting strong currents and low visibility in silty water.

Some 10 others have received treatment for exhaustion and decompression sickness since the operation began.



It has been 20 days since the 6,825-ton Sewol capsized and sank with 476 people on board — most of them schoolchildren — off the southwest coast.

The confirmed death toll rose to 264 on Tuesday afternoon, while 38 people remain missing.

### **Overloaded and unbalanced**

Yonhap, citing investigators, said Tuesday the ferry was overloaded on 139 out of its 241 voyages between the western port of Incheon and the southern resort island of Jeju since beginning the service in March last year.

When disaster struck it was carrying 3,608 tons of cargo — more than half its own weight — including 108 vehicles, the news agency quoted investigators as saying. The legal limit, according to Yonhap, was 987 tons.



**People weep during a rally to pay tribute to the victims of the sunken ferry Sewol in Seoul, South Korea, Saturday, May 3, 2014. Divers battled strong currents and wind Saturday to search unopened rooms in a sunken South Korean ferry for dozens of missing passengers, officials said Saturday. AP**

The ferry was carrying just 580 tons of ballast water — only 37 percent of the legal requirement — in order to carry more cargo. This made the ship dangerously unbalanced, Yonhap said, citing investigators.

President Park Geun-Hye on Tuesday issued a fresh apology for her government's failure to prevent the tragedy and renewed a pledge to eradicate "corruption and wrongdoing" blamed for the disaster.

"As the president who should protect the lives of the people, I don't know how to express my condolences to the bereaved families. I feel sorry and my heart is heavy with grief," she said.

"Greed for material gain prevailed over safety regulations and such irresponsible behavior resulted in the loss of precious lives."

Park previously apologized for her government's failure to combat systemic and regulatory "evils" that may have contributed to the accident and vowed to sternly punish culprits.

The ferry sinking is one of South Korea's worst peacetime disasters, made all the more shocking by the loss of so many young lives.

Of those on board, 325 were students from the same high school in Ansan city just south of Seoul.

All 15 of the surviving crew including the captain who were responsible for sailing the ferry are in custody, facing charges including negligence and abandoning passengers.

Prosecutors also arrested three officials from the ferry operator — Chonghaejin Marine Co — last week on charges of loading the ferry well beyond its legal limit. Investigators said on Monday that the crew had failed to alert passengers to the imminent danger for 40 minutes after sending distress signals. They became the first to leave the ship aboard a rescue boat, leaving hundreds of passengers trapped inside the sinking ship.

Criticism has also been directed at the government, as more evidence emerges of lax safety standards and possible corruption among regulators.

The independent Hankyoreh Shinmun daily said enforcement of safety regulations remained lax despite earlier incidents. In 1993, 292 passengers perished when an overloaded ferry sank off the west coast.

## **Diver dies at S. Korea ferry disaster site**

<http://www.rappler.com/world/regions/asia-pacific/57329-dive-dies-south-korea-ferry-disaster>

May 6, 2014 BY AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A coast guard official says the diver lost consciousness and was pronounced dead at a hospital after suffering difficulty of breathing in his first dive

SEOUL, Korea (UPDATED)— A diver died Tuesday, May 6, while working at a ferry disaster site in South Korea as further details emerged about how deception and negligence contributed to the April 16 tragedy.

The 53-year-old was on his first dive at the site and suffered breathing difficulties after reaching a depth of 25 meters (82 feet), coastguard spokesman Ko Myung-Suk told journalists.

The diver, Lee Gwang-Wook, lost consciousness and was pronounced dead at a hospital, Ko added. He was described as a veteran crew member of private firm Undine Marine Industries, a specialist in maritime rescue work.

Lee lost contact with surface controllers after 5 minutes in the water. His air hose was found entangled with other lines, a coastguard official was quoted as saying by Yonhap news agency.



**SEARCHING. South Korean Navy's SSU members prepare to search for missing passengers near the buoys installed to mark a capsized ferry at sea off Jindo on April 18, 2014. Jung Yeon-Je/AFP**

Lee was the first victim among scores of divers who have been engaged in the grim task of finding and retrieving bodies from the sunken ship in hazardous and challenging conditions such as fast currents and silty water.

Some 10 other divers have received treatment for exhaustion and decompression sickness since the operation began.

It has been 20 days since the 6,825-ton Sewol capsized and sank with 476 people on board – most of them schoolchildren – off the southern coast.

President Park Geun-Hye on Tuesday issued a fresh apology for her government's failure to prevent the tragedy. The [confirmed death toll stands at 263](#), while 39 people remain missing.

"As the president who should protect the lives of the people, I don't know how to express my condolences to the bereaved families. I feel sorry and my heart is heavy with grief," she said.

"Greed for material gains prevailed over safety regulations and such irresponsible behavior resulted in the loss of precious lives", she added.

Park had apologized for her government's failure to combat systemic and regulatory "evils" that may have contributed to the accident and [vowed to "sternly punish" any culprits](#).

### **All crew arrested**

The ferry sinking is one of South Korea's worst peacetime disasters, made all the more shocking by the loss of so many young lives.

Of those on board, 325 were students from the same high school in Ansan city, just south of Seoul.

All the 15 crew including the captain have been arrested for abandoning the ship while hundreds were trapped inside.

Prosecutors also arrested 3 officials from the ferry operator – Chonghaejin Marine Company – last week on charges of loading the ferry well beyond its legal limit. Yonhap news agency, citing investigators, said Tuesday that the Sewol ferry was loaded with just 580 ton of ballast water – only 37% of the legal requirement – in order to carry more cargo. This made the ship dangerously imbalanced.

Investigators said on Monday that the crew had failed to alert passengers to the imminent danger for 40 minutes after the crew sent distress signals and became the first to leave the ship aboard a rescue boat, leaving hundreds of passengers trapped inside the sinking ship, according to Yonhap.

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The independent *Hankyoreh Shinmun* daily said enforcement of safety regulations remained lax despite earlier incidents. In 1993, 292 passengers perished when an overloaded ferry boat sank off the western coast. – [Rappler.com](#)

 THE KOREA TIMES [Editorial](#)

### **Diver's death**

[https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinon/2016/04/202\\_156728.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinon/2016/04/202_156728.html)  
2014-05-07

As was feared, a diver died early Tuesday morning while working at the scene of the sunken ferry Sewol off the southwestern coast. It's horrible to witness another tragedy because of the failure to observe safety rules at the very place where a catastrophe took place only three weeks ago due to a disregard for safety.

Lee Gwang-wook lost contact with surface controllers five minutes after jumping into the waters during his first dive. His air hose was found entangled with guidelines between the vessel and the barge above. It's suspected that Lee lost consciousness while trying to untangle the ropes.

A veteran diver with 30 years experience was assigned to dive only a day after he

arrived at Paengmok Port as one of 15 new divers deployed to replace existing ones who withdrew because of decompression sickness and exhaustion. He was the first victim among scores of divers engaged in search and rescue operations.

Lee's death was reminiscent of the late Navy Chief Warrant Officer Han Joo-ho who died while participating in a rescue operation for missing sailors aboard the warship Cheonan sunk by a North Korean torpedo in March 2010. The causes of the two mishaps are quite similar as divers were in a hurry to search for and rescue the missing in violation of safety regulations.

In the latest case, the government deserves harsh criticism. To begin with, the divers reportedly worked without enough rest as the operations entered their final stretch, but the authorities turned a blind eye to their violation of rules, apparently conscious of negative public sentiment about the government's search operations.

Most unbelievable is that the barge didn't have any emergency medical staff and facilities despite calls for safety measures since the ferry disaster that left more than 300 people dead or missing. So Lee had to be rushed to a hospital in Mokpo by helicopter without due first aid at the rescue site. It also defies our understanding that Lee whose father was also a diver began to dive without having an adjustment period.

Divers have been engaging in search operations at the risk of their lives, braving strong currents and winds and high waves. They routinely break safety rules and dive beyond permitted limits, sympathizing with the grief and sorrow of the families of the victims, but this should be halted immediately in order to prevent any more accidents.

With more than 30 bodies yet to be recovered, Prime Minister Chung Hong-won on Wednesday told the rescue authorities to wrap up their search for bodies from the doomed ferry by the weekend. But it's stupid to set a deadline, given that such instructions will cause the rescue team to once again rush operations.

## **Korea recognizes three Sewol heroes**

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20140512001255>

2014-05-12

For the legal recognition of a 53-year-old diver who died in the search operations, the ministry postponed the evaluation process, citing insufficient documents. The ministry asked the recognition applicant, Namyangju municipal government in Gyeonggi Province, to submit supplementary documents.

Civilian diver Lee Gwang-wook lost consciousness Tuesday within a few minutes of entering the water and died while receiving treatment. Pneumocephalus, a presence of air within the cranial cavity, was confirmed as the cause of the death, hospital officials said.

## Condolences for Two Divers Killed While on Duty in Ferry Sewol

[http://www.peoplepower21.org/index.php?mid=English&page=7&document\\_srl=1169981&listStyle=list](http://www.peoplepower21.org/index.php?mid=English&page=7&document_srl=1169981&listStyle=list)

2014.05.30

### **We mourn for two divers who died while searching the sunken ferry Sewol.**

(30 May 2014, Seoul) Another diver fell unconscious during ferry disaster search and was taken to hospital but he died on May 30. The veteran crew member was being involved in cutting open the hull of the sunken ferry Sewol. He was the second who fell victim during search and rescue work after another civilian diver died on May 6. We are deeply saddened to hear that two more lives have been taken after the April 16 ferry disaster. We, People's Committee on the Sewol Ferry Disaster, would like to mourn for two civilian divers who shared the pain and tried to rescue the missing victims at the risk of their own lives and to pray for their bereaved families.

Divers have faced intense pressure to retrieve as many of the missing as possible and take all the risks and burdens on their own. The Korean government, bearing ultimate responsibility, should have tried to minimize risks involved with the overall search operation and to provide safety for the divers. It was revealed when Lee Gwang-wook, a diver, died while on duty on May 6, that no medical staff were standing by on the barge where divers rest and resupply. The government should set up measures to ensure that divers could rest enough after underwater search and get medical assistance immediately when they need.

Since the early stage of the ferry sinking, all the Koreans as well as the families of the victims have been shocked and become outraged at the government's incompetency and irresponsibility laid bare in handling the accident. As a private firm, not a government agency as a control tower, took on the rescue operations, the early critical moments were wasted, with failure of expeditious rescue and search. And even after the government set up a disaster management taskforce, individual divers have taken all the risks without proper support. To make matters worse, President Park Geun-hye's sudden announcement of disbanding the Coast Guard rather intensified confusion at the scene, stirring up resentment among the families of the missing. Presidential spokesman Min Kyung-wook's inappropriate remarks on "divers being paid per body" not only hurt the bereaved but also insulted divers to dampen their morale. The government has still drawn a profound distrust upon itself by resorting to temporary expedients.

No more pain should be inflicted on the families of the missing and the victims of the ferry disaster. They are now concerned about the divers' health and safety more than anyone else. The authorities should thoroughly ensure the search operations to be prompt and complete and check the safety measures for divers. We, People's Committee on the Sewol Ferry Disaster, urge the government to make sincere efforts to end suffering and tragedy that has continued since April 16.

Korean Statement >> [세월호](#) [수색](#) [민간](#) [잠수사](#) [두](#) [분의](#) [명복을](#) [빕니다](#)  
(Translated by Kyungsun Park, Volunteer)

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