

We've Struck an Iceberg!

First Officer Murdoch, having already seen the iceberg orders the ship "Hard a starboard". About half a minute after the Titanic starts to turn, Fleet and Lee and others aboard the ship feel a shudder. The Titanic has rubbed alongside a submerged portion of the iceberg. Far beneath the waterline, the ship's one-inch thick steel hull splits open.

Captain Smith has been sleeping soundly in his berth. Alerted to the collision, he hurries immediately to the bridge. Perhaps wishing to check for damage to the propellers or rudder, he orders the stopped engines to be set at half ahead, resuming the ship's forward movement. Within moments, however, he decides that all forward motion should be stopped. This will reduce the speed at which any seawater will flood into the ship. The three main engines are stopped.

Captain Smith orders the ship's carpenter to sound the ship for damage. Thomas Andrews, the managing director of Harland and Wolff's design department, conducts his own inspection. It does not look good. Just 10 minutes after the collision, the water in the bow has risen 14 feet above the keel.

Fifteen minutes after the collision, the post office on lower Deck G, one level above the boiler rooms, is flooding. Andrews, who had full responsibility for the design of the Titanic, knows the ship better than anyone. He concludes that the ship is doomed and estimates that it will sink within two hours. Captain Smith issues the order to abandon ship and the crew begins to alert the ship's passengers to the impending danger.