

Frequently Asked Questions

Was it claimed that Titanic was unsinkable?

The respected engineering journal 'The Shipbuilder' stated in its 1911 edition that "the captain can, by simply moving an electric switch close the (watertight) doors throughout and make the vessel practically unsinkable". The flaw in this was that the watertight bulkheads did not go right up to the main deck and also the ship could not remain afloat with more than five watertight compartments flooded.

Why didn't the lookouts see the iceberg in time?

The two lookouts in the crow's nest should have been issued with binoculars but these were not made available on the night. The sea was flat calm meaning that there was no wave wash at the base of the iceberg, which would have made it more visible on that clear moonless night.

Was the fourth funnel necessary?

The first three funnels were used to expel smoke and steam from the ship's boilers and engines. The fourth funnel was used for ventilation of the engine room. It was also felt that emigrants would be impressed by the size of the ship and they would be more likely to book a passage on a "four stacker".

Were there any ships closer to Titanic than the Carpathia?

Many vessels heard the SOS transmitted by the ship's powerful

wireless set. Even Olympic picked up the message, but Carpathia was much closer and made a full steam ahead dash to Titanic's position arriving two hours too late. Most controversy surrounds the steamship Californian, which was stopped in the ice relatively close to Titanic. Regulations did not require ships to have 24 hour manning of their wireless and Californian's set had been switched off just minutes before the collision and first SOS call. Crew of the Californian reported seeing a large ship in the distance firing off rockets until it disappeared around 2.00am. This was interpreted as the ship sailing away and the rockets as company signals to other ships. The Californian's master, Captain Lord, was blamed for not going to Titanic's rescue but even recent investigations by the Marine Accident Bureau were inconclusive, as to whether Californian was as close to Titanic as was believed in 1912.

Why did it take so long for Titanic to turn away from the iceberg?

There were several factors leading to the seeming delay from the time when the lookouts spotted the berg and the ship started to turn. The ship's rudder for all its ten-storey height was quite small relative to Titanic's great length. The officer on the Bridge ordered engines reversed which had the effect of slowing the ship thereby slowing the water flow past the rudder and slowing the rate of turn. It is possible that had the engines not been reversed Titanic might just have slipped past the iceberg without harm.

How many were lost and saved according to Class?

It is now believed that there were 2,228 people on board with a total of 1,523 lives lost. Of the 705 persons saved, a higher proportion of 1st class men were rescued than 3rd class children, a statistic that shocked the public who had believed the dictum "women and children first".

Percentage of Passengers Saved:

	First	Second	Third
Men	34%	8%	12%
Women	97%	84%	55%
Children	84%	100%	30%
Total Passengers -	38%		
Total Crew -	23%		