

# **MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 74 OF 2004**

(Navigational and Seamanship Safety Practices)

## **Notice to Owners and Masters of all Fishing Vessels**

### **The Accident**

A serious accident happened on board a fishing vessel on 10 December 2003 in the approximate position of 19 miles south of Dangan Dao which is beyond Hong Kong waters, resulting in the loss of two fishermen. The accident took place in rough sea when the fishing vessel was engaged in pair trawling with another fishing vessel. While shooting the net, the legs of one fisherman were entangled by a towing warp. As a result he was dragged overboard. Another fisherman, while attempting to save the fisherman from the sea, lost his balance due to heavy rolling of the vessel and also fell overboard. The two fishermen struggled for some time in the water and despite the efforts of other crewmembers, the rescue to bring the two persons back on board was not successful. Both fishermen subsequently disappeared in the heavy seas.

### **Lessons Learnt**

2. Important lessons that should be learnt from the incident are:
  - (i) Personnel involved in handling net should always be aware of the danger associated with moving wires or ropes, especially when hauling up or shooting net. Masters of fishing vessels should ensure there is proper coordination between crewmembers engaged in such operation.
  - (ii) Trawling operations in adverse weather conditions poses significant risk to personnel working on board and appropriate safety measures such as wearing of lifejacket should be adopted.
  - (iii) When attempting rescue operation under adverse weather conditions, it is of paramount importance that involved personnel should first address their own safety.
  - (iv) Lack of radio communication equipment causes delay in alerting the appropriate authority for search and rescue. Fishing vessels operating beyond Hong Kong waters should therefore be provided with appropriate radio communication equipment on board. Presently in many of the fishing vessel groups operating within East China Sea and South China Sea, each leader vessel is fitted with Single Side Band (SSB) radiotelephone installation and each vessel of the rest of the group is fitted with one Citizen Band Transceiver; while the smaller fishing vessels or fishing sampans operating along the Mainland coast of the region are equipped with VHF radios. Any vessel which is presently not fitted with any radio communication equipment is advised to follow the abovementioned practice.

3. Owners and masters of all fishing vessels are requested to take note of the above lessons learnt for their operation .

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**Director of Marine**

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Government of the HKSAR  
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