

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 125 OF 2008

(Navigational and Seamanship Safety Practices)

Notice to Owners and Masters of all Local Motor Trading Boats

The Accident

On 18 October 2007 a local motor trading boat with six persons on board sank in a position about 300 metres north of Siu A Chau. The weather was fine with a gentle easterly breeze, slight sea and low swell. Three persons were rescued by a passing fishing vessel however the remaining three drowned.

2. Investigation into this accident revealed that the main factor leading to the sinking of the trading boat was the improper loading of cargo. After loading a cargo of bricks, bags of cement and sand, the trading boat with a low freeboard and heavy trim forward was swamped by the wake of a passing vessel. In addition the coxswain was qualified to operate the trading boat in sheltered waters only and not the busy shipping lane where it sank.

Lessons Learnt

3. Important lessons that should be learnt from the incident are:
- (i) A motor trading boat should be loaded properly in order to maintain a sufficient freeboard to prevent flooding of the vessel;
 - (ii) A motor trading boat must be operated by a fully qualified person at all times.
4. Owners and masters of all motor trading boats should take note of the above lessons, and are reminded to take the necessary precautions to ensure safety of their vessels and personnel on board.

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