

Fatal accident arising from capsizing of a local sailing dinghy

1. The Incident

- 1.1 Sometime after 1145 on 18 August 2005, a sailing dinghy capsized in Stanley Bay to the west of Bluff Head. The weather conditions were fair with southwesterly wind of about 16-22 km per hour (8-11 knots). However, in Stanley Bay, the sea conditions were unusual, with irregular sea swell and waves.
- 1.2 Onboard the sailing dinghy were the Assistant Instructor and 3 students. After capsizing, the dinghy rolled over and became totally inverted. One of the students was trapped under the inverted dinghy. Despite attempts to rescue the student, he could not be released from the inverted dinghy. The student was subsequently freed by the attending Marine Police and was sent to the hospital. He was certified dead by the attending doctor.

2 Lessons

- 2.1 Sailing club/association should establish safety guidelines, safety measures and procedures for sailing to ensure safety especially procedures for capsize drill, rigging of trapeze wires and communication.
- 2.2 Sailing club/association in Hong Kong should exchange information from time to time with the Royal Yacht Association, other Yacht Associations and the local Leisure and Cultural Services Department to promote the safety of yacht sailing.
- 2.3 Instructors and Assistant Instructors conducting sailing courses should fully familiarize with the procedures for handling emergency situations.