



Report of Investigation  
into the Manoverboard Incident  
of a Passenger onboard  
Fishing Vessel "M60767C"  
on 8 June 2006



The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
Marine Department  
Marine Accident Investigation Section

## **Purpose of Investigation**

This incident is investigated, and published in accordance with the IMO Code for the Investigation of Marine Casualties and Incidents promulgated under IMO Assembly Resolution A.849(20). The purpose of this investigation conducted by the Marine Accident Investigation and Shipping Security Policy Branch (MAISSPB) of Marine Department is to determine the circumstances and the causes of the incident with the aim of improving the safety of life at sea and avoiding similar incident in future.

The conclusions drawn in this report aim to identify the different factors contributing to the incident. They are not intended to apportion blame or liability towards any particular organization or individual except so far as necessary to achieve the said purpose.

The MAISSPB has no involvement in any prosecution or disciplinary action that may be taken by the Marine Department resulting from this incident.

## **Table of Contents**

## **Page**

1	Summary	2
2	Description of the Vessel	3
3	Sources of evidences	4
4	Outline of events	5
5	Analysis of evidence	6
6	Conclusions	8
7	Recommendations	8
8	Submissions	8

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 At about 0430 on 8 June 2006, while the local fishing vessel *M60767C* (the Vessel) was returning from the South China Sea oilfield to Hong Kong, a passenger fell overboard from the starboard side of the Vessel and went missing in the approximate position 21° 28' N 114° 32' E.
- 1.2 *M60767C* conducted an immediate search for the passenger until 1400 on 8 June 2006. Daytime surface searches by Government Flying Services aircraft were conducted on 8 and 9 June 2006 while vessels plying in the vicinity were requested to post additional lookouts. No missing person was found on the above searches.
- 1.3 The cause of the accident was due to a sudden rolling of the Vessel after her port side had been struck by a heavy wave. A passenger who was standing near the starboard bulwark lost his balance and fell overboard.

## 2. Description of the Vessel

### 2.1 Particulars

License No.	:	M60767C
Type	:	Class VI Fishing Vessel
Length	:	26.2 metres
Breadth	:	7.3 metres
Thames Measurement	:	189 tons
Net Registered tons	:	132
Date of First Licensed	:	10 August 1993
Engine/Engine Power	:	2 x Cummins diesel engines/2 x 320 HP



Figure 1 – Photograph of *M60767C*

### **3. Sources of evidence**

3.1 The Master of the local fishing vessel *M60767C*;

3.2 The Hong Kong Police Force;

3.3 The Hong Kong Observatory; and

3.4 The Hong Kong Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre.

#### **4. Outline of events**

- 4.1 At about 2300 on 6 June 2006, a total of 20 persons i.e. the Master, his spouse, 2 crew members and 16 passengers on board the local fishing vessel *M60767C* (the Vessel) sailed from Kwun Tong Public Pier to South China Sea oilfield for fishing.
- 4.2 *M60767C* arrived at the South China Sea oilfield at about 1100 the next morning and the passengers commenced fishing. At about 2300, after obtaining about 100 cattles of fish, the Vessel set sail to return to Hong Kong.
- 4.3 At about 0430 on 8 June 2006, the Vessel was in position 21° 28' N 114° 32' E. Most of the passengers and the crew members were sleeping inside the accommodation on the main deck. There were 4 passengers who did not sleep and stayed outside the accommodation on the main deck. 2 passengers were sitting on a seat on the starboard side while the passenger 'A' and the remaining passenger were standing near the mid and stern starboard bulwark of the Vessel respectively.
- 4.4 The Vessel was caused to heel to starboard side suddenly with a large angle after striking by a heavy wave on the port side. The passenger 'A' had lost his balance and fell overboard from the bulwark. One of the passengers witnessed this accident and informed the Master that one of the passengers had fallen overboard. The Master stopped the Vessel instantly and threw a lifebuoy overboard. He immediately commenced conducting a search for the passenger 'A' and called the Hong Kong Police for assistance after confirming the missing of passenger 'A' .
- 4.5 *M60767C* ceased searching for the passenger 'A' at about 1400 and returned to Hong Kong. Daytime surface searches by Government Flying Services aircraft were conducted on 8 June 2006 and 9 June 2006 while vessels plying in the vicinity were requested to post additional lookouts for the missing passenger 'A'. However, the missing passenger 'A' could not be found.

## 5. Analysis of evidence

### Weather Conditions

- 5.1 According to the weather report from the Hong Kong Observatory, a southwesterly wind with a speed of 36 km/hour i.e. force 5 was prevailing in the area. Waves with a height of about 2 metres and a maximum height of about 2.5 metres were expected.

### Certification and Experience of Master

- 5.2 The Master was holding a Local Certificate of Competency as Master to take charge of a powered fishing vessel and he had about 25 years of experience in taking charge of fishing vessels. He also holds a Local Certificate of Competency as Engineer of a Class VI fishing vessel.

### Licence of Vessel

- 5.3 The licence of the Vessel was valid until 29 August 2006 and in order. However, it was stipulated in the licence that no passengers were allowed to be carried on the Vessel.

### Safety Awareness of the Missing Passenger

- 5.4 The passenger 'A' was not a crew member on board *M60767C*. He was one of the passengers who sailed on the Vessel to go for fishing and was not expected to be aware of the dangers of falling overboard when the Vessel was rolling. Under the above circumstances, the Master of *M60767C* should give prior warning to the passengers on board and asked them to put on lifejackets and not to stand too close to the bulwark when the Vessel was rolling in exposed area. According to the witnesses, a heavy wave had struck the port side of the vessel and the vessel was caused to heel to starboard side suddenly with a large angle. The passenger 'A' who was standing near to the starboard bulwark lost his balance and fell overboard (Figure 2). Although two other passengers who were in the vicinity tried to prevent him from falling overboard but in vain.



Figure 2- Diagram showing the standing position of the missing passenger and the position from where he fell overboard

#### Height of Bulwark

- 5.5 The bulwark had a height of 0.71 metre (2 ft. 4 in.) above deck (Figure 2) which might not be sufficient to protect the people from falling overboard in rough sea. When the Vessel was rolling suddenly to a large angle, a passenger who was not aware of the risk might be thrown overboard.

#### Lifesaving Appliances

- 5.6 Although there were 22 lifejackets on board *M60767C*, the 4 passengers outside the accommodation on the main deck did not make use of the lifejackets at all. Had the missing passenger worn a lifejacket beforehand, he could have probably been located and rescued under the prevailing weather conditions.

#### Physical condition of the missing passenger

- 5.7 According to the witnesses, the missing passenger was in normal physical condition and he had not taken any alcoholic drinks.

### Carrying of passengers

- 5.8 It was stipulated in the Vessel's licence that no passengers would be allowed to be carried on board the fishing vessel and this condition had been contravened.

## **6 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The incident occurred at about 0430 on 8 June 2006 at a position 21° 28' N 114° 32' E which was south of Hong Kong.
- 6.2 The sky was cloudy with a southwesterly wind of force 5 causing the vessel to roll under the action of swell.
- 6.3 A passenger on board the vessel who was standing near to the starboard bulwark of the Vessel lost his balance and fell overboard.
- 6.4 Despite searches conducted by *M60767C* and Government Flying Services aircraft, the missing passenger could not be found.
- 6.5 This incident was caused by a sudden rolling of the Vessel to starboard after her port side had been struck by a heavy wave. A passenger who was standing near the starboard bulwark lost his balance and fell overboard.
- 6.6 This incident demonstrates that a fishing vessel is not suitable for safe carrying of passengers.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 A copy of this report should be sent to the Master of *M60767C* drawing his attention on the findings of this incident and urging him to obey the law by not carrying passengers on his vessel.
- 7.2 A Marine Department Notice should be issued to draw the attention of the fishing vessel operators on the lessons learnt and advise them not to carry any passengers on their vessels as stipulated in the vessel's licence.

## **8. Submission**

- 8.1 In the event that the conduct of any person or organization is commented in an accident investigation report, it is the policy of the Marine Department to send a copy of the draft report or parts thereof to that person or organization for their comments.
- 8.2 The final draft report was sent to the Master of *M60767C* requesting him to revert with his comments to this department but no comments have been received from him.