

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 70/2021

(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)

Fatal capsizing of a local open cruiser in waters off Tung Lung Chau

The Incident

A local licensed open cruiser (the cruiser) carrying a coxswain and three other persons for fishing capsized in the waters off the southwestern Tung Lung Chau. Strong winds were blowing and the sea was rough with the red rainstorm signal and thunderstorm warning signal being in effect at the material time. The coxswain and one person on board eventually lost their lives.

2. Investigation into the accident revealed the following contributory factors:

- (i) the weather and sea conditions deteriorated in a short period of time, and the influx of sea water caused the cruiser to lose its stability and the cruiser capsized;
- (ii) the coxswain and the person who lost their lives in the accident did not wear lifejackets at all times on board as recommended by the Code of Practice--Safety Standards for Class IV Vessels; and
- (iii) the coxswain did not pay attention to the latest weather information issued by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO), nor did he take proper precautionary measures in accordance with HKO's reminder.

Lessons Learnt

3. Operators, coxswains and other related persons of all local vessels in Hong Kong waters should always pay attention to the latest weather information, especially weather warning signals, and take effective precautionary measures at the earliest opportunity prior to proceeding to sea.

4. When on board open cruisers or similar types of vessels with high risk of falling overboard at sea, all personnel onboard should always follow the recommendations of the Code of Practice--Safety Standards for Class IV Vessels and wear lifejackets.

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