

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 150/2022

(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)

Fatal collision accident involving an open cruiser during wake surfing and a swimmer

The Incident

A fatal accident happened outside the speed restricted zone of Deep Water Bay involving locally licensed open cruiser (*the cruiser*) during wake surfing. *The cruiser* was suspected of hitting a person swimming or snorkeling (*the swimmer*) in its vicinity. After the incident, *the cruiser* operator searched the nearby waters with his partner and found *the swimmer* floating on the water with face submerged. *The swimmer* was rescued from the water and transferred to a standby ambulance ashore for emergency medical treatment, but *the swimmer* was confirmed dead on the same day.

2. The investigation identified that the contributory factors leading to this accident were that *the cruiser* operator failed to wear visual aids as required by the Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate of Competency and failed to maintain proper and effective look-out to avoid collision in a timely manner; and *the swimmer* lacked awareness of the potential dangers of swimming in waters other than the designated swimming areas, thus failed to take appropriate measures to make nearby vessels aware of his position when swimming or snorkeling alone outside the speed restricted zone.

Lessons Learnt

3. The pleasure vessel operators and participants in water sports should note the following:

- (a) every vessel must at all times maintain a proper look-out by all available means appropriate to the circumstances and conditions at the time. The

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look-out is not only targeted at vessels but should also include any possible dangers on the sea. Operators of vessels (especially speedboats) in the vicinity of beaches or other water sports sites must bear in mind that there may be other water sports participants in the water (including those who fall into the water accidentally). They must also enhance look-out and operate carefully with all necessary precautions. In addition, operators of pleasure vessels should avoid using the same waters with swimmers, divers and water sports participants;

- (b) any operator holding a local certificate of competency must strictly comply with the requirements set out in the certificate; and
- (c) persons who swim, snorkel or engage in other water sports in non-designated areas must be fully aware that persons in the water are small targets and cannot be easily detected. In some circumstances, even a prudent vessel operator may not be able to spot a person in the water early enough, leaving persons in the water at the risk of being struck by vessels (including windsurfers, etc.). Those who swim, snorkel or engage in other water sports must exercise caution and take necessary safety measures such as putting on brightly colored or reflective float markers to alert nearby vessels or other persons engaging in water sports.

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Marine Department

Government of the HKSAR

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