

## **MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 200/2023**

(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)

### **Fatal capsizing of a locally licensed fishing vessel in waters off Tsing Yi South**

#### **The Incident**

A locally licensed wooden fishing vessel carrying five crew members, including the coxswain, and about 600 snake cages (a type of cage trap for fishing) sailed from Shekou, Shenzhen to Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter. When the fishing vessel was sailing southeast in the waters south of Tsing Yi Island, it encountered a suddenly strengthened easterly wind. At that time, the sea became rough and the coxswain noticed that the port side bow of the fishing vessel was rising while the stern was sinking simultaneously. Under the strong easterly wind, the vessel rapidly listed to the starboard side and capsized, causing the coxswain and three crew members to fall into the sea. They were subsequently rescued, but a crew member was found missing. The rescue units launched days of searching but the search ended without success. The body of the missing crew member was eventually found in the cabin of the fishing vessel by the firemen during salvage operation.

2. The investigation revealed that the main contributing factors leading to the accident were that the owner of the fishing vessel failed to comply with the requirements of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Safety and Survey) Regulation, Cap. 548G of the Laws of Hong Kong (“*the Regulation*”) by installing additional equipment on board and altering the hull structure without permission, thus affecting the vessel’s stability and navigational safety; the coxswain lacked knowledge of the stability of the fishing vessel and the securing of fishing gears, and failed to properly stow and lash the snake cages on the deck, or to take appropriate safety measures to prevent the snake cages from shifting or collapsing while sailing.

## **Lessons Learnt**

3. To avoid the recurrence of similar accidents in the future, owners and coxswains of locally licensed fishing vessels shall :

- (a) comply with the requirements of *the Regulation* by not installing additional equipment on fishing vessels or altering the hull structure without permission; and
- (b) enhance their understanding of the stability of fishing vessels and the securing of fishing gears.

**Ms Carol Yuen**  
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