

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 55/2025

(Navigational & Seamanship Safety Practices)

Fatal accident involving a locally licensed open cruiser in the waters of Tolo Harbour

The Incident

A swimmer (*the swimmer*) was hit by a locally licensed open cruiser (*the cruiser*) which was sailing in the waters of Tolo Harbour. The Marine Police arrived at the scene and transferred *the swimmer* to the Marine Police launch. He was then sent to hospital for emergency medical treatment. Unfortunately, *the swimmer* was declared dead due to serious injuries.

2. The investigation revealed that the contributory factors leading to the accident were that *the swimmer* might not be aware of marine traffic conditions and underestimated the risk of swimming alone at sea. When *the cruiser* was approaching at a high speed, *the swimmer* failed to detect or avoid *the cruiser* in time. Eventually, he was hit by *the cruiser* and struck by the propeller, resulting in his death from serious injuries. The investigation also found that *the coxswain* failed to keep a proper look-out at all times while steering *the cruiser*, thus was unable to detect and take action to avoid hitting *the swimmer* in time.

Lessons Learnt

3. To avoid recurrence of similar accidents in the future, coxswains of local vessels and water sports players should learn from the lessons of this incident and pay attention to the following:

- (a) in areas where people may be swimming, coxswains of local vessels should take necessary precautions and proceed with caution, especially to maintain a proper look-out at all times; and

- (b) swimmers should stay vigilant at all times, pay attention to marine traffic conditions and safe swimming areas, stay away from fairways and the routes of power-driven vessels, and avoid swimming alone.

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