

Marine Information Bulletin

Passenger carrying on foredecks of ships

Purpose

This bulletin is an update of policy advice CVG-P 4/3/98 *Passenger Carrying on the Foredecks of Catamarans* which was raised to increase awareness of the possible hazards to passengers while on the foredecks of catamarans when underway.

Background

Policy advice CVG-P 4/3/98 was issued after several incidents had occurred where passengers were injured while travelling on the foredecks of catamarans, in one case this resulted in a fatality. The incidents happened as a result of the ships (one 7.2 m and the other 28 m) burying their bows or nose diving in following-sea conditions.

However, the potential for injury is present on all ships, not just catamarans, particularly while a ship is underway. As a result passenger access to the foredeck area should always remain at the discretion of the master and be assessed on a day to day (or voyage by voyage) basis.

Recommendation

Masters should at all times be vigilant when permitting passengers on the foredeck. Attention should be given to the speed of the ship and the prevailing sea conditions together with the wave height and direction relative to the ship.

Owners and masters should ensure that there are appropriate procedures in place covering the use of the foredeck by passengers. Specific attention needs to be paid to the foreseeable risks associated with bar crossings and related vessel operations when transiting seaways to open coastal waters. The assessment and management of these risks needs to form part of the vessel's documented safety management system.

- Sea conditions, for example wave height, wind speed, sea swell and current.
- The amount of supervision by the master and crew.
- Ship design, such as access doors, freeing ports, rail heights and so on.
- Use of signs.
- Passenger profile to minimise the risk of injury to those who may be more susceptible due to age, mobility and so on.

The operator should consider carrying out a risk assessment of passenger areas. This should be based on recognised risk assessment and management methodology such as AS/NZS 4360 *Risk Management*. It is suggested that the assessment be carried out by the operator and an accredited surveyor. The results of the assessment should also be included in the ships's documentation.

Further guidance is also available in the Operational Practices part of the *National Standard for Commercial Vessels* (NSCV) and the completed subsections of the Fast Craft standards. Copies of these standards may be downloaded from the National Marine Safety Committee website at www.nmsc.gov.au.

Information

For further information about this Marine Information Bulletin, email msqmail@msq.qld.gov.au.

Other Marine Information Bulletins covering various topics relating to the safe operation of ships can be obtained from Maritime Safety Queensland's website www.msq.qld.gov.au and from the following Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices:

Airlie Beach	(07) 4946 2200
Bundaberg	(07) 4131 8500
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Hervey Bay	(07) 4194 9600
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