



# South African Maritime Safety Authority

Ref: SM6/5/2/1

Date: 23 January 2018

## Marine Notice No. 4 of 2018

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### The Review of Incidents Resulting in Death in the South African Fishing Industry 2017.

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TO ALL PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, OWNERS, OPERATORS, MANAGERS SKIPPER'S & SAFETY OFFICER'S OF FISHING VESSELS AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

*Marine Notice No 1 of 2017 is cancelled*

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#### *Summary*

This notice advises the fishing industry of the incidents that lead to death in the domestic fishing industry and compares trends over the previous years. Owners, managers, skippers and safety officers are encouraged to review their operations and through the use of risk assessments and identify steps that can be undertaken to eliminate dangers.

In 2017, 13 fishers lost their lives in 4 separate operational incidents at sea;

- 2 fishers drowned when their boat was capsized by a swell outside Port Alfred River mouth ;
- 1 fisher drowned after falling overboard when a small fishing vessel capsized off Paternoster ;
- 1 fisher went missing off the deck of a fishing vessel off Kommetjie;
- **9 fishers lost their lives after their vessel capsized in bad weather outside Port St Francis.**

In 2017, 2 fishers died in non-operational instances;

- 1 fisher collapsed after experiencing chest pains and died on board a fishing vessel off Port Elizabeth;
- A crew member was suspected of jumping overboard a fishing vessel off PE and subsequently lost his life in an apparent suicide.

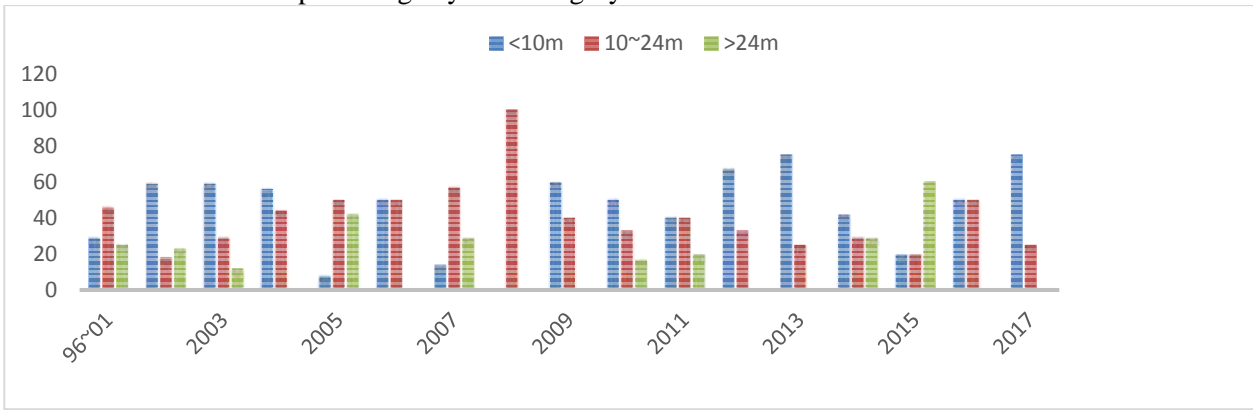
We note that the apparent suicide occurred after the fisher displayed unstable behaviour. Early detection of these symptoms and appropriate actions can avoid this type of death. **SAMSA also notes a similar apparent suicide in the first week of 2018, off a vessel near Port Elizabeth, after the fisher displayed suicidal tendencies.**

SAMSA offers trauma counselling, assistance with securing UIF, COID and insurance and the facilitation of social grants through the Welfare Office, Mrs N Dubase (021 421 6170 ndubase@samsa.org.za) . In addition community and workplace seminars are offered, at no cost to the industry on HIV/AIDS awareness and alcohol/substance abuse. Fishing operators are strongly recommended to review their Drug and alcohol policies and procedures.

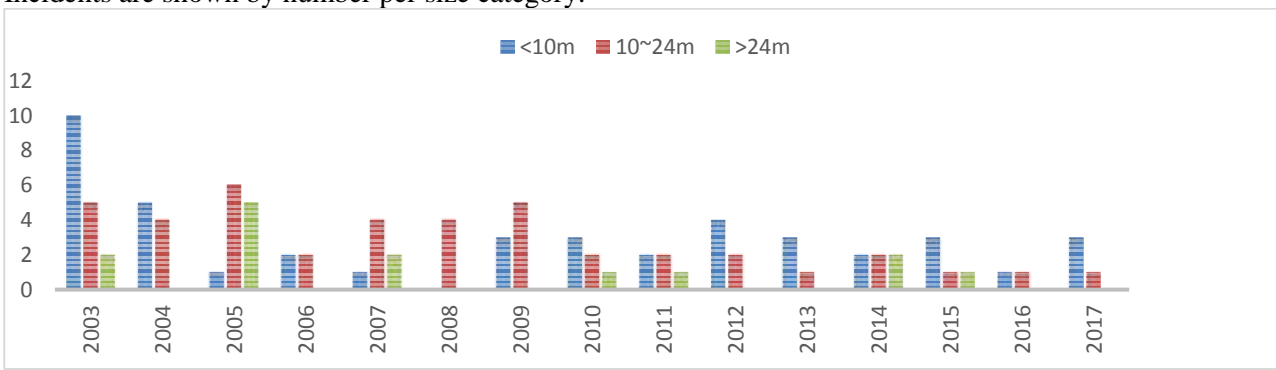
The operational incidents can be categorized as follows;

1. **Number of incidents by vessel size.**

Incidents are shown as a percentage by size category.

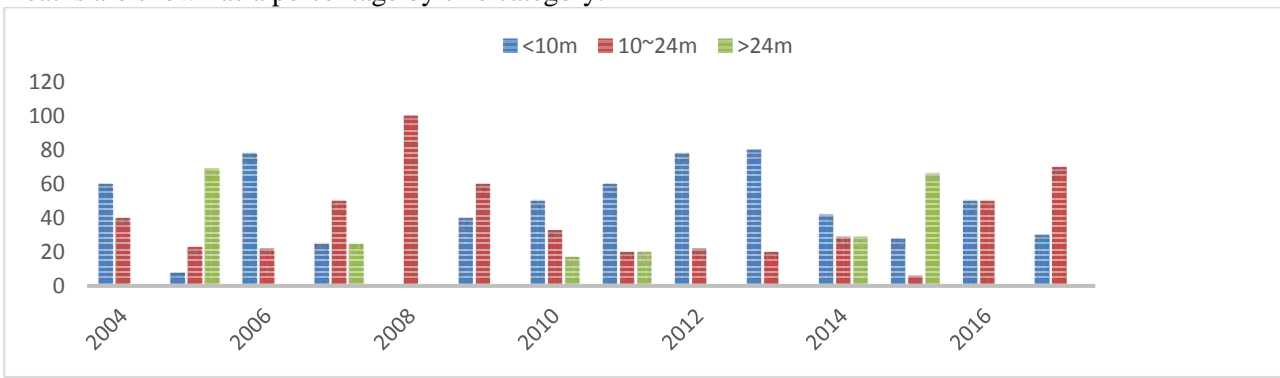


Incidents are shown by number per size category.

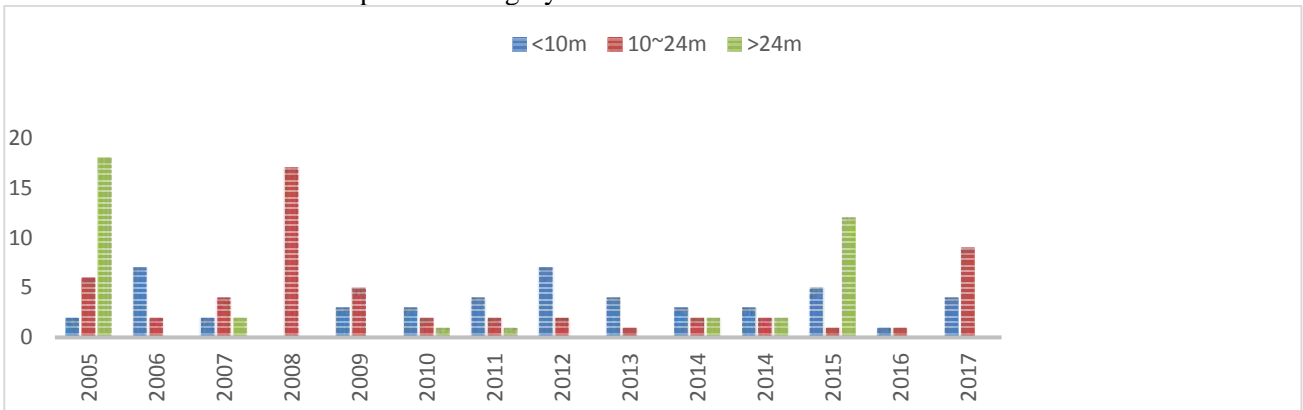


2. **Deaths by size category.**

Deaths are shown as a percentage by size category.



Deaths are shown as numbers per size category.

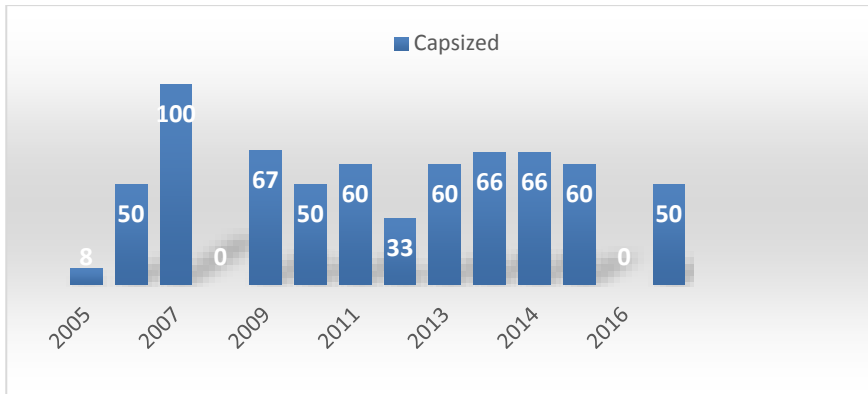


3. **Types of incidents.**

Types of incident are shown as a percentage per size category.

a. **Capsized**

Vessels <10m

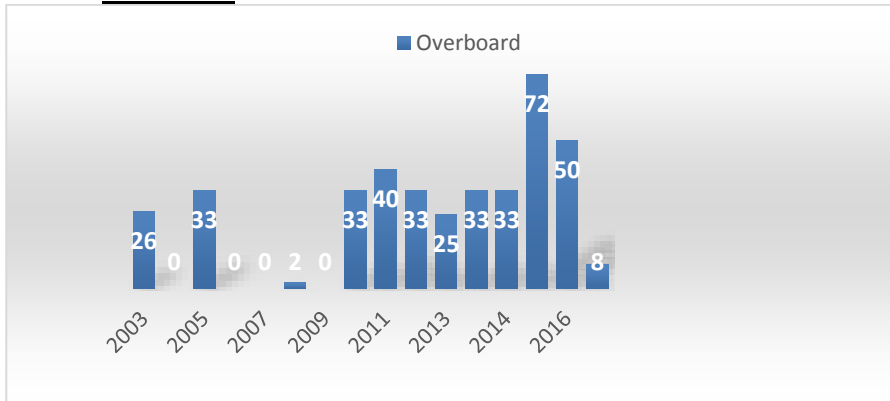


Capsize of small vessels is primarily due to 4 reasons:

- at sea in unsuitable weather conditions,
- hauling of anchors over the side and not the bow,
- too close to the shore, and
- overloading.

The requirement that flotation aids are worn within the surf zone can only reduce the number of fatalities.

b. **Overboard.**



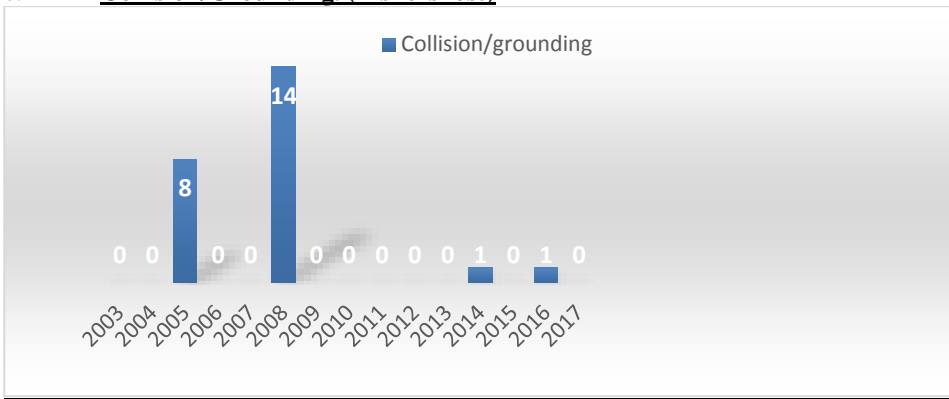
After the capsized of small vessels this is the single largest category leading to death. Crew members lost overboard are either lost:

- while shooting or hauling fishing gear
- at night when the vessel is steaming, and this year
- an unfortunate incident, after abandoning their vessel in rough seas.

To reduce this reason for death the following steps should be taken onboard:

- flotation aids are worn at all times on deck where the nature of the work can lead to a crew member being knocked overboard,
- crew members that go on deck while there is no fishing operation should never be alone. Skippers are encouraged to introduce a buddy system where there are always 2 crew members together, this is especially important at night; and
- when working near or at the side of the vessel safety harnesses should be worn.

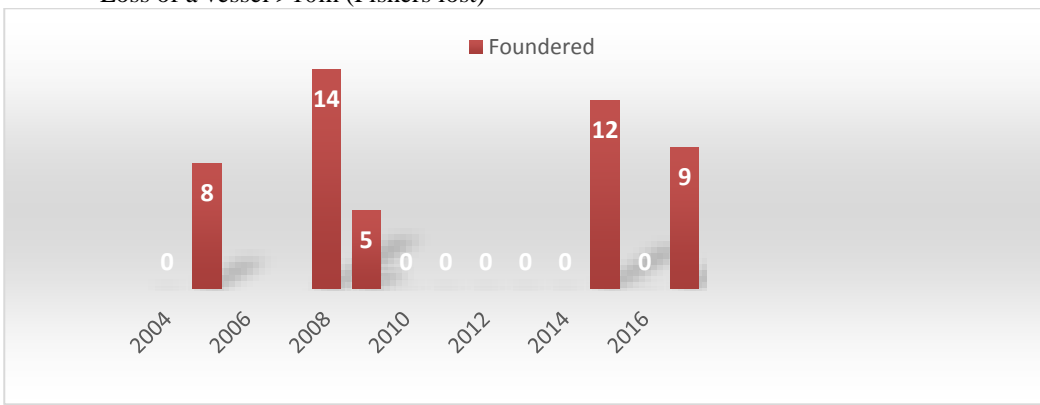
c. **Collision/Grounding. (Fishers lost)**



Groundings are totally avoidable providing the principles of good seamanship and watch keeping are adhered to.

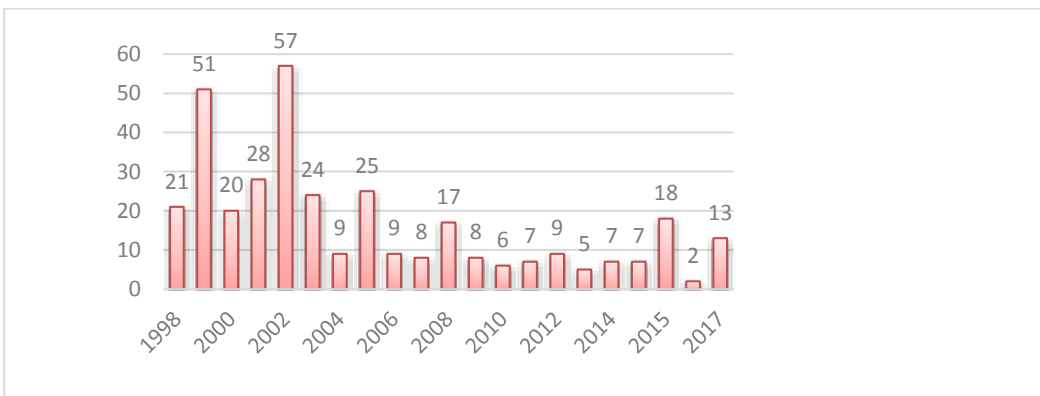
d. **Foundered.**

Loss of a vessel >10m (Fishers lost)



It is vital that skippers continually monitor all methods of receiving weather reports and consider if the fishing trip is safe in the predicted weather conditions. Early consideration should be given to seeking shelter when the predicted weather may endanger the vessel.

**4 Deaths per year**



SAMSA offers safety workshops in communities that operate small vessels. If you would like our Fishing Safety Specialist to visit your community please contact Selwyn Bailey on 041 582 2138 or [sbailey@samsa.or.za](mailto:sbailey@samsa.or.za). SAMSA will engage fishing vessel operators on the substance abuse issue on board vessels as a matter of urgency.

**5 Deaths by area**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Sald</b>	<b>C.T</b>	<b>M.B</b>	<b>P.E</b>	<b>E.L</b>	<b>Dbn</b>	<b>R.B</b>	<b>Ocean</b>	<b>Total</b>
1996	3	0	2	12	0	1	0	0	18
1997	6	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	15
1998	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	17	21
1999	0	2	2	45	0	1	1	0	51
2000	6	3	6	2	0	2	1	0	20
2001	4	7	2	10	0	0	5	0	28
2002	11	17	20	4	3	2	0	0	57
2003	16	2	2	2	0	2	0	0	24
2004	5	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	9
2005	1	3	1	19	1	0	0	0	25
2006	1	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	9
2007	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	8
2008	0	3	0	14	0	0	0	0	17
2009	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	8
2010	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	6
2011	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	7
2012	1	5	0	1	0	1	1	0	9
2013	2	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	9
2014	4	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	7
2015	3	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
2016	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
2017	1	1	0	9	2	0	0	0	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>380</b>

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