

Lessons Learned Report 2015-002

Incident:

Earlier this spring, a station had a grounding incident while engaged on a shore-line search. A man had been reported missing and his overturned rowboat discovered soon after nearby. In cooperation with the Coast Guard, a tactical shore-line search was initiated that lasted over 24 hours. The conditions during the search were pleasant with clear skies and light winds. The area covered in the search was remote and, as the search continued, the crew ventured further away from their area of familiarity. During the second day, the crew were continuing their shore-line search when the vessel struck a submerged rock and heavily damaged both of their legs, props and shafts. At the time of the striking the vessel was proceeding at 15 knots. No crew were injured in the grounding.

Root Causes:

There were four main factors that contributed to the grounding incident that were identified by the station and crew members on board.

The immediate causes of the grounding:

- Situational awareness. The plotter wasn't ranged in enough for the vessels proximity to the shore line.
- Inexperience and unfamiliarity. The crew involved had limited local knowledge of the area they were searching and two of the three crew members on board were fairly new members with no SAR-NAV 1 training.
- Fatigue. Of the three crew members on board, only the Coxswain was fresh that day and had not participated in the search the previous day. The other two crew had both spent ten hours on the water the previous day and had been on the water for four hours when the grounding occurred on the second day. All crew had a full eight hours of rest prior to starting the second day of searching.
- Communication. The crew were not communicating regularly leading up to the grounding.

Lessons to be learned:

- Know your limits. Fatigue is a critical factor in prolonged vessel operations. The commercial marine sector has stringent regulations issued by Transport Canada pertaining to this. We need to be conscious of this when making decisions on our participation in prolonged tasking's.



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- Communication. It's difficult to maintain constant verbal communications and continuous alertness during an extensive operation, however it's very important to strive to do so. Complacency is our enemy and encouraging an open and continuous dialogue is imperative.
- When in doubt stop. All members on board are responsible for the safety of the vessel and should speak up if ever in doubt as to where the vessel is.
- Limited resources. As a volunteer organization it can be challenging to maintain a strong resource pool of properly trained crew. While the urge to participate and help our communities is strong, we have to think of our own safety first. If we are limited in resources sometimes it is better to stay at the dock than proceed out in a sub-standard capacity.

Resources:

The following are Transport Canada items aimed at the commercial marine industry and the Coast Guard. While these rules and regulations are not RCMSAR policy, it is important to be aware of what practices other mariners follow.

<http://data.tc.gc.ca/archive/eng/innovation/tdc-summary-12400-12438e-864.htm>

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-2007-115/page-87.html>