



**ROYAL CANADIAN MARINE  
SEARCH & RESCUE**  
*Saving Lives on the Water*

## **Lessons Learned Report 2016-01**

### **Incident:**

A station recently had a man overboard incident while attempting to transfer a sick crewmember between two vessels. They had just completed a JRCC tasking and decided to continue with some training while on the water. A new crewmember onboard became seasick and the decision was made to transfer them to the station's secondary vessel 1.5nm offshore so the other vessel could continue training. While the two vessels were coming together, the crewmember attempted to step to the other vessel and fell into the water. A man overboard scenario was carried out and the crewmember was retrieved without further incident. The crewmember was not injured in the event and was wearing the proper PPE.

The weather conditions at the time were a 2-4ft southwesterly swell with 20-25 knot winds. It was clear and daylight at the time.

### **Root Causes:**

There were two main factors that contributed to the incident that were identified by the station:

- Communication. A plan for the transfer was not clearly established between the coxswain and the crewmember. The crewmember also attempted to step onto the other vessel before the vessels were properly alongside and before the coxswain gave the order.
- Inexperience. The crewmember involved was new and unfamiliar with transferring between two vessels.

### **Lessons to be learned:**

- Communication. Practice closed loop communication onboard in all circumstances. Establish a plan and ensure that all crew involved acknowledge that plan and repeat the order to close the loop. During a stressful situation in rough seas this is even more important.
- Situational awareness. A personnel transfer should not be attempted in 4ft seas unless absolutely necessary. The vessels could damage each other and a number of accidents could occur.