

Lessons Learned Report 2016-02

Incident:

There was a recent incident involving an RCMSAR asset that was tasked to assist a disabled sailing vessel. JRCC received a report from a sailing vessel with two persons on board (POB) requesting assistance in the form of a tow. With no commercial assist vessels available, the RCMSAR unit and the CCG Hovercraft Moytel were tasked. Before these resources arrived on scene, one POB suffered a serious head injury when struck by the boom of the sailing vessel.

The RCMSAR unit arrived on scene and extracted the two POB and delivered them to the Moytel, who transported the patients back to shore. The sailing vessel was then taken undertow by RCMSAR. After proceeding undertow for a short distance, the RCMSAR vessel experienced difficulty with the tow and, while in the process of changing crewmembers on the vessel being towed, had the tow line sucked into one engine, and had to let the vessel go. The CCG Moytel then came back to the scene and took the vessel under tow and safely to harbour.

The weather conditions at the time were 40-45 knot southeasterly winds with 4-6ft seas. The incident occurred late in the evening and into the early hours of the morning. It was dark with periods of rain.

Issues Surrounding the Incident:

- 1) JRCC had initially stated the vessel was in a specific location, however the RCMSAR asset found the sailing vessel in a different location and JRCC wasn't updated
- 2) Tow line caught in engine putting it out of service
- 3) Abandoning of sailing vessel before other asset arrived on scene

Incident Factors:

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

- 1) Communication.
 - JRCC unaware of actual position of vessel and could have tasked another RCMSAR station closer to the area to assist.
 - The weather on scene was greater than JRCC thought it to be.
 - The sailing vessel was left abandoned to transport the POB to the CCG Moytel but JRCC understood a crewmember was left on board.



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2) Towing procedures. ...

Lessons to be learned:

- Communication. Communication isn't restricted to on board the vessel and needs to be shared with JRCC. If any new information is obtained, this should be passed onto JRCC. When in doubt, advise JRCC anyway. The Coxswain is the On-Scene Commander of an incident until relieved by JRCC or another CCG asset. The Coxswain is therefore in charge of the incident on scene and can change plans if they feel the situation is unsafe or a better course of action would be beneficial. Don't be afraid to use a cell phone to call JRCC with more information.
- Towing....
- Abandoning a vessel....