

HAZARD ALERT

WORKER DROWNS WHILE BOATING ALONE



Recommended Preventive Action

- Regulation 92-133 under the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires that employers who have an employee working alone establish a code of practice for working alone. This code of practice should be specific to the environment in which the organization operates, and should consider the hazards, time between communications, and an emergency response plan.
- Train all employees in the code of practice.



- Ensure approved life jackets are available, and that all employees wear them at all times when working on the water.
- Boats outfitted with motors greater than 115-hp. should be equipped with hydraulic steering. This eliminates “steering torque”.

A ship’s captain with over ten years experience was contracted to repair equipment on a salmon cage site. This was done aside from his primary employment, and conducted on what would be normal days off. The contracting employer met with him before he left the dock. He was next seen working on the equipment by a crew on a cage site nearby. He was seen leaving, but it was not noted if he was wearing a life jacket. Later that day when his vehicle was still on the dock and he had not been seen, the alert was sounded for a missing person. The body was found over two months later, without a life jacket or PFD.

The WHSCC investigation revealed the following:

- The captain was an experienced ship handler, well aware of the waters in the area;
- It was normal practice to use a boat alone to visit cage sites within sight of each other and the dock;
- The boat being used did not have hydraulic steering, i.e. any loss of control would result in a rapid response, as opposed to having a dampened effect such as with hydraulic steering units;
- There was no process of communication or notification should a long period of time go by without hearing from the worker; and
- There were PFDs stored on the vessel.