

OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENT

Very serious marine casualty: Falling over board and death

What happened?

A fishing vessel with a length of approximately 30 m, fished for crab. A fresh wind and moderate swell prevailed. The swell stood at a height of 4 m. A group of fishermen climbed on the observation deck in order to spot the next net marker buoy of the fishing gear from there. A member of this group fell overboard immediately after having reached the side of the observation deck which is opposite the access ladder. The precise course of the accident was not observed. The casualty was only detected when he was already in the water. The fishing vessel immediately returned to the scene of the accident. However, the fisherman could only be recovered unconscious. The initiated attempts at resuscitation did not succeed. The fishing vessel thereupon returned to her port of departure.

Why did it happen?

- The casualty stayed in an area of the observation deck in which the railing was constructional not completely closed.
- At the time of the accident, the casualty did not wear an inflatable lifejacket.
- The inspections carried out on board with respect to occupational safety were not conducted with reasonable care by all competent authorities. The gap in the observation deck railing was not closed.
- The vessels command did not enforce the existing obligation to wear an inflatable lifejacket on deck to a sufficient extent.

What can we learn?

- Risk analysis should take into consideration the typical operating procedures during the fishing process and fish processing. Dangerous areas recognized should immediately be changed.
- If there is a risk of falling into the water inflatable life jackets should be worn. The vessels command and every seaman is responsible for adherence.

Who may benefit?

Seamen, vessels commands, owners