



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada



Integrated Action Plan

Response to Investigative Reports

F/V L'Acadien II

March 28-29, 2008

14 July, 2009



Canada

Integrated Action Plan

F/V L'Acadien II, March 28-29, 2008

INTRODUCTION:

In the early hours of March 29th, 2008, the *F/V L'Acadien II* capsized while under tow by the *CCGS Sir William Alexander*. Of the six crew members, two were rescued by another fishing vessel that had been following closely behind the towed vessel and four other crewmembers lost their lives. Of these four, one crewmember has not been found. As a result of the accident several investigations were undertaken.

Transportation Safety Board

The Transportation Safety Board (TSB), an independent agency created by an Act of Parliament (the *Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act*) immediately undertook an investigation to determine the cause of this incident and any factors that may have contributed to it.

The TSB released their final report (*Transportation Safety Board of Canada - MARINE REPORTS - 2008 - M08M0010*) on November 26, 2008 providing one recommendation to Transport Canada (TC) and one recommendation to the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG).

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) also undertook an investigation to determine if any criminal offences had occurred. In July, 2008 the RCMP notified the survivors and families of the victims that a criminal investigation was not warranted.

Girouard Report

On April 4, 2008, the then Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Loyola Hearn appointed Retired Rear-Admiral Roger Girouard to lead an independent investigation into the events and circumstances leading to and following the capsizing of the *F/V L'Acadien II*. His mandate was to determine if CCG policies and procedures had been followed and whether they were adequate.

Retired Rear-Admiral Girouard's final report (*Canadian Coast Guard - Report on the Events Related to the Capsizing & Sinking of L'ACADIEN II off the Coast of Cape Breton - 28 and 29 March 2008*) was released on December 1, 2008 and provided eight broad-based recommendations to the CCG.

Search and Rescue (SAR) Operation Report

At the request of the CCG, as provided for in the National Search and Rescue Manual, the Department of National Defence (DND) prepared a report on the search and rescue operation. A SAR Operation Report is a joint Canadian Forces/Canadian Coast Guard internal document produced to review facts and procedures. Its purpose is to record the pertinent details of an incident with a view to identifying lessons learned that could be integrated for future use into SAR standard operating procedures from coast to coast. It is also a means by which professional organizations examine how business is conducted. By reviewing processes and procedures the Canadian Forces (CF) and the CCG are able to learn from experience while maintaining excellence in service.

The recommendations made in the SAR Operations Report for the *F/V L'Acadien II* incident address both CCG and CF areas of expertise and responsibility. Although released under the authority of the SAR Region Commander, the recommendations in the report do not, and are not intended to, undergo the same level of rigour or analysis as the companion TSB and Girouard Reports. Unlike those reports, it is an operational level document whose recommendations are aimed at improving SAR capability in areas that do not involve strategic or policy implications.

The CF has a number of existing programs for addressing these types of recommendations, for purposes of clarity the initial CF actions and responses have been included in the Action Plan alongside those of the Coast Guard. Those recommendations requiring follow on actions by the CF will be dealt within CF continuous improvement processes.

The SAR Operation Report (*Department of National Defence - Search and Rescue Operation Report F/V L'Acadien II - H2008-00319*) was released concurrently with the Girouard Report.

Action Plan

Upon the release of the investigative reports, the formation of a dedicated team lead by a senior CCG officer to analyze the recommendations offered in all reports on *F/V L'Acadien II* was announced by the DFO Minister.

The CCG team compiled information from TC, DND and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Sector (FAM) of DFO to ensure that all recommendations were considered in the development of an integrated Action Plan.

The Action Plan contained in the following pages groups together related recommendations from the various reports, and provides both a general response as well as specific actions which will be undertaken. Progress reports against the plan will be provided regularly and posted on the CCG website for those items where commitments are made for delivery in the future.

TRANSPORT CANADA / CANADIAN COAST GUARD
- FISHING VESSEL SAFETY -

RECOMMENDATIONS

TSB M08-04 - "That the Department of Transport include in the proposed Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations adequate measures to ensure that all fishing vessels operating in ice, including those participating in the seal hunt are structurally suited for their operating environment."

Girouard 8 - "Coast Guard should propose a review of the regulatory process, standards and inspection regime for vessels working and operating in ice with the applicable authoritative partners in the appropriate departments."

RESPONSE

TSB M08-04 – The Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities agrees with the general intent of the recommendation.

The responsibility for safe construction and operation of a vessel is incumbent upon the designer and/or builder and ultimately on the owner and/or master of the vessel. Operating in ice-covered waters requires prudence and going astern in heavy ice is a specialized operation.

Transport Canada is developing new Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations that include revised provisions for fishing vessels that may navigate in ice-covered waters. The provisions related to vessel structure will apply to existing vessels as reasonable and practicable, based on risk, to new and/or modified vessels. These provisions apply to vessels that are over 9m in length and are expected to be pre-published in winter 2009 – spring 2010.

Transport Canada's goal is to implement regulations that promote the safety of fishing vessels and the protection of the marine environment while not placing unnecessary barriers to an economically viable fishing industry.

Girouard 8 – Under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001* regulatory reform process led by Transport Canada, proposed changes to small fishing vessel regulations, which may improve the safety of new fishing vessels operating in ice, were in progress prior to the sinking of *L'Acadien II*.

DFO Fisheries and Aquaculture Management (FAM) and CCG also have an important role in the safety of fishing vessels. Weather, ice conditions, size of vessels, assessment of the suitability of vessels for operations in ice, etc. could potentially form a part of the licensing and scheduling process for the seal fishery. As such, specialists from CCG and FAM are committed to continue working cooperatively with TC as required under the auspices of an inter-departmental memorandum of understanding to support this shared responsibility which will include activities aimed at the education of fish harvesters and increased awareness of safety issues surrounding the fishery.

What has been done in 2008-09

Transport Canada is developing new *Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations* that include revised provisions for fishing vessels that may navigate in ice-covered waters. The provisions related to vessel structure will apply to new vessels and to major modifications. Existing vessels will be required to meet the safety critical components of the Regulations as reasonable and practicable, based on risk. These provisions will apply to vessels that are over 9m in length.

What is left to be done: 2009-10

TC expects to pre-publish *Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations* in spring 2010. TC will continue to work closely with the fishing industry, through various means of consultation, to determine how regulatory requirements should be modernized to best protect fish harvesters, vessels and the marine environment.

Engagement of stakeholders is ongoing and follow-up by TC will depend, in part, on the comments received from all stakeholders when the regulations are pre-published as well as the Regulatory Impact Analysis.

**CANADIAN COAST GUARD
- ASSISTANCE TO DISABLED VESSELS -**

RECOMMENDATIONS

TSB M08-05 - *"That the Department of Fisheries and Oceans develops comprehensive safe towing policies, procedures, and practices that take into account all safety risks associated with towing small vessels in ice infested waters."*

Girouard 1 - *"The Coast Guard should conduct a full review of towing requirements, policies, processes, training and equipment."*

SAR Operation Report 3 - *"A more comprehensive set of guidelines should be developed to help operational staff define which program is responsible to provide assistance and when responsibility for an operation should be passed from one program to another. ..."*

SAR Operation Report 4 - *"Clear guidelines, detailing when a vessel in ice transitions from an Ice Assistance case to SAR case, need to be developed by Coast Guard Headquarters in Ottawa and relayed to all Regional Offices."*

RESPONSE

The CCG will develop an *"Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy"* that will include a full review of current towing policies and procedures. It is clear that towing will continue to be an appropriate response to some situations and as such, CCG will ensure that its towing policies, procedures and practices are clear and take into account the safety risks associated with towing small vessels in various conditions including ice infested waters. Concurrent with the development of the policy, the CCG will: establish clearer seamanship procedures for towing, update as required its training; review the technology and equipment for towing; and initiate research to better understand towing dynamics and associated risks. These aspects will be integral to the implementation of the revised policy.

The *"Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy"* will provide a comprehensive framework that will be used by Marine Communication and Traffic Service Centres (MCTS), Joint Rescue Coordination Centres / Marine Rescue Sub-centres (JRCC/MRSCs), ice offices, regional operations centres and CCG vessels when responding to situations involving disabled vessels. In addition to ensuring clear operational guidance (e.g. standard operating procedures, directives, checklists as appropriate) for each of the CCG operational areas above, the framework will update, as required, protocols for handing off individual cases within the CCG from one vessel, office or geographic region to another, and from one centre to another. Not all situations where vessels are disabled become distress situations, consequently a variable and escalating response will be required depending on the specific situation and its evolution.

What has been done in 2008-09

As an interim measure, a moratorium applicable to vessels less than 33 metres in length: ([CCG - Fleet Circular 07-2008 Suspension of the Towing of Small Vessels With Persons Onboard While in Ice](#)) was implemented in April, 2008.

CCG published two draft Icebreaking operations directives; ([Fishing Harbour Breakouts](#)) and ([Support to Sealing Vessels](#)) that provide guidance for CCG operations and for clients receiving these services.

What is left to be done: 2009-10

Initiate work related to developing the component parts integral to the *"Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy"*.

Consult stakeholders on a draft *"Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy"*.

Finalize the Icebreaking Program directives.

What is left to be done: 2010-11

Issue and implement the *"Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy"*.

Implementation of the policy will include:

- Amending user reference documents and manuals as necessary to reflect the new policy;
- Explaining the policy to relevant CCG staff; and
- Initiating any changes to training, technology and equipment that may be required.

**CANADIAN COAST GUARD - SAR COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONS
- COMMON OPERATING PICTURE -**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Girouard 2 - *"Coast Guard should aggressively seek, implement and apply technological methods which deliver a 'common operating picture'."*

SAR Operation Report 5 - *"There is a need for a national Coast Guard case operational computer program, similar to that utilized in Canada's Rescue Centres, which would enable all Regional ROCs, Ice Offices, JRCC/MRSCs and Headquarters to manage inter-regional incidents and share information more easily. ..."*

SAR Operation Report 17 - *"All Coast Guard vessels and CF SAR aircraft have a tracking functionality installed. There is an immediate need for real time tracking of all Coast Guard resources in the Maritimes region."*

RESPONSE

The CCG is already working on a number of initiatives that will contribute to having a common operating picture. It is upgrading its Information on Marine Navigation (INNAV) system; the system used at all eastern MCTS centres to monitor vessel traffic, to include, among other things, information from the Automatic Identification System (AIS). AIS is an internationally mandated, short range electronic tracking system that has the capability to provide real time information such as the identity, position and movements of all vessels over 150 gross tons, including, larger CCG vessels. CCG will also implement a Fleet Flight Following System for its aircraft and a Vessel Tracking System for its ships that will become a part of the common operating picture. Once implemented, these improvements will contribute to an enhanced common operating picture.

The CF will review the initiatives of the CCG with respect to asset tracking. However, until such a capability is established for CF purposes, SAR aircraft will continue to be effectively tracked through radio broadcast, and regular position and status reports to JRCC coordinators who maintain the operating picture

Over time, as electronic tracking systems evolve, this will become an area for continuous improvement as new technology is developed and implemented.

What has been done in 2008-09

CCG completed the software upgrades and deployed new INNAV equipment. Technical and operational training was also delivered.

What is left to be done: 2009-10

Completion of the implementation of AIS and the upgrades to INNAV.

CCG and DND will investigate options for enhanced information sharing to manage operational case logs.

Recommendation 5 of the SAR Operation Report will be considered in the development of an action plan to implement the recommendations of the [\(2007 SAR Needs Analysis\)](#) where similar recommendations have been made with respect to incident case management.

What is left to be done: 2011-12

Implementation of the CCG Fleet Flight Following System and the Vessel Tracking System.

**CANADIAN COAST GUARD - SAR COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONS
- JURISDICTION, DOMAINS AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING -**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Girouard 3 - *"Coast Guard should conduct a reassessment of its east coast waters' jurisdictional apportionment."*

Girouard 4 - *"Coast Guard should refine its organizational planning and risk management process for the oversight of east coast activities."*

Girouard 7 - *"Coast Guard should propose and participate in a coherent alignment of cross-departmental jurisdictional domains within Canada's east coast waters."*

RESPONSE

The CCG has already implemented a number of actions which will contribute to more effective operational co-ordination and response in situations that cross the geographic boundaries of the various CCG regions on the East Coast. The main aspects are: enhanced and integrated Fleet operational planning which will ensure that vessels are available when and where needed during critical periods irrespective of where those vessels are based. In addition, the overall fleet planning process now includes dedicated air and marine support to the seal hunt, and factors in much more clearly the likelihood that there will be an increase in the number of search and rescue cases while it is underway. These initiatives will provide for better on-water service delivery by having more CCG assets better positioned in the areas of greatest need and higher risk.

Finally, as part of its comprehensive "Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy" the CCG will update, as required, protocols for handing off individual cases within the CCG from one area or geographic region to another and from one centre to another.

What has been done in 2008-09

Fleet operational planning has been enhanced and now includes dedicated CCG air and marine support to seal hunt enforcement operations. Planning also focuses on maximizing on-water availability in support of seal hunt, SAR and icebreaking requirements during critical periods.

DFO-FAM has implemented a much more structured integrated seal hunt planning process that includes CCG Fleet and the Icebreaking and SAR programs allowing for better and more integrated operational planning, thereby mitigating risk.

What is left to be done: 2009-10:

Consult stakeholders on a draft *"Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy"*.

What is left to be done: 2010-11:

Issue and implement the *"Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy"*.

**CANADIAN COAST GUARD - SAR COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONS
- RECORD-KEEPING AND ANALYSIS -**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Girouard 5 - *“Coast Guard should promote the concept of record-keeping and analysis, as well as the value of shared professional lessons learned.”*

SAR Operation Report 18 – *“In the last ten years the JRCC has gone from paper log keeping and charts to almost total electronic case prosecution. As a result, many new technologies and systems have been introduced to the centre but no comprehensive management plan, budget or staffing has been put in place to maintain and manage these systems. It is recommended that a technology review and audit be conducted with the goal of a comprehensive maintenance, tech training and financial plan implemented nationally and at the JRCC.”*

RESPONSE

The CCG operates a number of independent systems that record data related to incident management. They include: voice recording in MCTS centres; software-based case logging and voice recording in the JRCCs and MRSCs; and electronic chart, navigational sensor, vessel movement and meteorological data logging on board ships.

As noted in both the Girouard and SAR Operation reports, the operation of these various systems had no impact on the outcome of the *L'Acadien II* incident. However, CCG and DND have accepted the intent of the recommendations and will work to improve their record-keeping practices and the sharing of best practices. These improvements will remain consistent with Federal legislation governing the handling of personal information by Government Institutions.

What has been done in 2008-09

CCG has instituted procedures to enhance the quality of the data in its SAR management information system.

What is left to be done: 2009-10

CCG will issue guidance to ensure consistent record-keeping in the Fleet and its shore-based operations.

CCG will work with the Canadian Forces to improve the compilation of SAR Operation Reports, follow-up analysis and record-keeping practices.

**CANADIAN COAST GUARD – SAR COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONS
- CLIENT ENGAGEMENT -**

RECOMMENDATION

Girouard 6 - *“Coast Guard should renew and reinvigorate engagement of the client base.”*

SAR Operation Report 1 – *“SAR representatives attend all planning conferences for Arctic and Gulf Ice seasons to discuss any change in policies and procedures that may affect either program.”*

RESPONSE

The CCG has already implemented this recommendation. In 2009 CCG officials attended national and regional seal hunt planning meetings with industry representatives and fish harvesters that were organized by DFO FAM. These sessions allowed for discussion with clients on all aspects of the seal hunt, including how the Coast Guard supports enforcement and how related icebreaking and search and rescue services would be provided. CCG will attend all future meetings of this nature.

In addition the CCG will ensure that clients have the opportunity to provide input on its directives, as it is doing with the current Icebreaking Directives. These can be found on the CCG website and are currently the subject of a consultation with stakeholders, including fish harvesters engaged in fisheries which take place in seasons where ice might be present either in harbours or on fishing grounds. CCG has also committed to consultation with its *“Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy”* that will include revised sections on towing.

What has been done in 2008-09

In January the CCG attended the 2009 Annual Atlantic Seal Hunt Advisory Committee meeting and the subsequent regional consultations held in Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Gulf and the Maritimes.

The CCG has published four draft [Icebreaking operations directives](#), two of which deal specifically with fishing harbour breakouts and support to sealing vessels. These draft directives have been developed with the intent to provide guidance in the interpretation and application of the level of service for both CCG personnel as well as clients receiving program services.

What is left to be done: 2009-10

Consult stakeholders on a draft *“Assistance to Disabled Vessels Policy”*.

Attend future Annual Atlantic Seal Hunt Advisory Committee Meetings and regional seal hunt information meetings.

Develop and implement an on-going Levels of Service engagement strategy for CCG Maritime Services.

**CANADIAN COAST GUARD - SAR COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONS
- CCG VESSEL AVAILABILITY -**

RECOMMENDATIONS

SAR Operation Report 6 - *“CCG Maritimes Region should review this issue with respect to resource levels, multi-tasking procedures and program priorities. It is imperative that the requirements of the SAR Needs Analysis are met. Otherwise, at some point a major SAR will occur off the Coast of Nova Scotia with no capable Coast Guard vessel available to respond in a timely and safe manner.”*

SAR Operation Report 7 - *“More accurate reporting of the quality of Offshore SAR coverage is required to determine the extent of the loss of Offshore SAR Coverage, to ensure Maritimes Region is meeting the requirements as stated in the SAR Needs Analysis and to reflect the realistic quality of Offshore SAR coverage provided in the Maritimes Region.”*

RESPONSE

These recommendations go beyond the specific incident and address broader issues related to the search and rescue system that were examined as part of the recently completed SAR Needs Analysis. The SAR Needs Analysis is a periodic review of the maritime SAR system conducted by CCG. It provides analysis-based recommendations for improvements to the maritime SAR system. The CCG then uses these recommendations as it plans improvements and changes to the system over subsequent planning years, and within available resources. The maritime SAR system relies not only on Coast Guard vessels, but also on CCG Auxiliary vessels and volunteers, and vessels of opportunity. The most recent analysis posted on the CCG website is the [\(2007 SAR Needs Analysis\)](#).

Multi-tasking of ships is a proven and effective way to deliver CCG programs and meet clients’ needs. As part of its planning, the CCG considers risk mitigation measures when vessels are multitasked. SAR requirements take priority at all times and vessels are deployed as required in SAR situations irrespective of what the vessel is doing.

Improvements to the Fleet Activity Information System are underway in order to meet increased demands for performance information and departmental accountability. This will provide for more accurate reporting on CCG off-shore SAR coverage.

What has been done in 2008-09

CCG has accepted the 2007 SAR Needs Analysis and is examining the most efficient and effective way to implement its recommendations within available resources.

CCG has improved and standardized Fleet Activity Information System coding that will improve the reporting of SAR activities.

What is left to be done: 2009-2010

CCG will develop an action plan to implement the appropriate SAR Needs Analysis recommendations.

The Fleet Activity Information System is being updated and modernized in order to improve the quality, reliability and timeliness of data. These improvements will result in better CCG SAR performance information allowing for better planning of resource deployment and risk mitigation. Full implementation will occur in 2012.

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE - SAR COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

SAR Operation Report 10 – SAR Aircraft Reliability – *“CF should review this issue with respect to resource levels, program demands, availability, reliability and maintenance in order to determine if there is a systemic problem.”*

SAR Operation Report 13 – SAR Tech OTV Kit – *“The SAR Tech community should evaluate the dive equipment to be used during dive operations in icy waters.”*

SAR Operation Report 14 – SAR Tech OTV Kit – *“The OTV kit should be configured to permit both parachute deployment and helicopter deployment.”*

SAR Operation Report 16 – Communications Problems – *“The CF should install satellite communications as soon as possible onboard all SAR aircraft. This equipment should provide voice, data and fax service.”*

RESPONSE

These recommendations go beyond the specific response to the incident regarding *L'Acadien II*. The suitability and effectiveness of equipment, technical systems and procedures are reviewed by CF on an ongoing basis as a routine matter of maintaining effective operational capacity.

What has been done in 2008-09

10 – CF SAR aircraft are sophisticated machines maintained to an exceptionally high order of airworthiness. Accepted and accredited measures ensure that aircraft assigned to SAR response duties are ready for SAR operations. However inevitable, some technical deficiencies do remain undetected only to be revealed during the course of flight operations. Every possible effort will continue to be made to ensure that the most appropriate fleet aircraft is made ready for SAR response duties at each SAR unit, and SAR crews will continue to evaluate the technical aspects of their aircraft prior to and throughout every mission.

The CF is confident that current management of aircraft availability and reliability will provide effective capabilities meeting the demands of SAR response. Apart from the established programs and processes that are responsible for modernization, refurbishment and replacement, there will be no additional action to review this matter as the result of the recommendations in this report.

13, 14 - The Air Force will continue to consult and work with the Directorate of Maritime Requirements (Sea), the lead organization for underwater operations, to review and update, where required, legitimate equipment deficiencies that affect SAR dive operations.

Given the significant risks associated with open water diving operations to overturned vessels, these operations are not entertained without suitable stability and monitoring of the situation by either a helicopter or surface vessel. SAR Tech teams will not operate in open water isolation without surface support. The opportunity to effectively deploy to this type of situation is considered to be so rare that there will be no formal directive or action taken to configure an air droppable OTV kit.

16 - The CF recognizes the value of and challenges associated with reliable long range communications. Technology now permits effective telephone quality communications from aircraft operating in remote settings to parent command and control centers and other important facilities at long range. The procurement of such Satellite Communication technologies, subject to individual aircraft type compatibility, is well under way.

**CANADIAN COAST GUARD - SAR COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONS
- COMPLETED ACTION ITEMS -**

RECOMMENDATIONS

SAR Operation Report 2, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 19, 20, 21. Please refer to the Annex for the full recommendations.

RESPONSE

All of the above noted SAR Operation Report recommendations have been implemented by the CCG and CF and are considered complete.

What has been done in 2008-09

2 – Search and Rescue personnel from the Coast Guard attended and, in the future will attend Arctic and Eastern Canada Ice meetings and conferences.

8 - A review of the ergonomics of the Halifax Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) was completed in 2008 and construction designed to meet the recommendations of the consultant is scheduled to begin early in fiscal year 2009/2010.

9 - A review of SAR Coordinator training was completed in 2008. The new Continued Proficiency Training for SAR Coordinators provided by the Canadian Coast Guard College includes a module on Bridge Resource Management (BRM). The course material is also included in the JRCC On-Job-Training package.

11, 12 – The outfit and carriage of SAR equipment on board CCG ships is standardized by the class and primary mission of the vessel. Equipment types and quantities carried are reviewed regularly nationwide through joint CCG SAR Program and Fleet analysis, revision, updating and publication of Canadian Coast Guard Fleet Order "*SAR Equipment Aboard CCG Ships.*" This ensures that equipment meets current and future operational needs.

15 - Communications problems between the JRCC and CCG Ships *Des Groseilliers* and *Sir William Alexander* were investigated and resolved with respect to the dissemination of information by the most appropriate method of transmission. The CCG engages in a continuous process of upgrading its systems to keep pace with technological improvements and all large CCG vessels carry a full suite of modern cellular, satellite, HF, VHF and email radio-communications equipment.

19 – The classification review for the job description of the SAR Systems Support Officer has been completed and is being implemented.

20, 21 - Protocols have been implemented that require timely Next-of-Kin notification of SAR events and confirmation that information being passed is clearly understood, including to third parties such as law enforcement agencies. The Next-of-Kin notification process is also part of classroom training at the Coast Guard College and practiced in simulation.

ANNEX - FULL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD OF CANADA

(Transportation Safety Board of Canada - MARINE REPORTS - 2008 - M08M0010)

Recommendation M08-04: "That the Department of Transport include in the proposed Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations adequate measures to ensure that all fishing vessels operating in ice, including those participating in the seal hunt are structurally suited for their operating environment."

Recommendation M08-05: "That the Department of Fisheries and Oceans develops comprehensive safe towing policies, procedures, and practices that take into account all safety risks associated with towing small vessels in ice infested waters."

INDEPENDENT GIROUARD REPORT

(Canadian Coast Guard - Report on the Events Related to the Capsizing & Sinking of L'ACADIEN / off the Coast of Cape Breton - 28 and 29 March 2008)

- 1) The CCG should conduct a full review of towing requirements, policies, processes, training and equipment.

- 2) CCG should aggressively seek, implement and apply technological methods which deliver a "common operating picture."

- 3) CCG should conduct a reassessment of its east coast waters' jurisdictional apportionment.

- 4) CCG should refine its organizational planning and risk management process for the oversight of east coast activities.

- 5) CCG should promote the concept of record-keeping and analysis, as well as the value of shared professional lessons learned.

- 6) CCG should renew and reinvigorate engagement of the client base.

- 7) CCG should propose and participate in a coherent alignment of cross-departmental jurisdictional domains within Canada's east coast waters.

- 8) CCG should propose a review of the regulatory process, standards and inspection regime for vessels working and operating in ice with the applicable authoritative partners in the appropriate departments.

ANNEX - FULL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS

SAR OPERATION REPORT

(Department of National Defence - Search and Rescue Operation Report F/V L'Acadien II - H2008-00319)

SAR and Ice Operations Cooperation

- 1) SAR representatives attend all planning conferences for Arctic and Gulf Ice seasons to discuss any change in policies and procedures that may affect either program.

- 2) SAR representatives are invited to join weekly Ice Operations conference calls when there is potential for increased SAR involvement due to ice, weather, vessel activities or policy changes.

- 3) A more comprehensive set of guidelines should be developed to help operational staff define which program is responsible to provide assistance and when responsibility for an operation should be passed from one program to another. This information should be included in the National SAR Manual, Ice Operations SOPs and MCTS Operations Manuals.

- 4) Clear guidelines, detailing when a vessel in ice transitions from an Ice Assistance case to SAR case, need to be developed by Coast Guard Headquarters in Ottawa and relayed to all Regional Offices.

- 5) There is a need for a national Coast Guard case operational computer program, similar to the SARMaster program utilized in Canada's Rescue Centres, which would enable all Regional ROCs, Ice Offices, JRCC/MRSCs and Headquarters to manage interregional incidents and share information more easily. Coast Guard Headquarters should investigate the use of a current program such as INNAV, SARMaster or CANSARP or develop a new National Program to manage Coast Guard operational incidents.

Coast Guard Vessel Availability for SAR - CCG

- 6) CCG Maritimes Region should review this issue with respect to resource levels, multi-tasking procedures and program priorities. It is imperative that the requirements of the SAR Needs Analysis are met. Otherwise, at some point a major SAR will occur off the Coast of Nova Scotia with no capable Coast Guard vessel available to respond in a timely and safe manner.

- 7) More accurate reporting of the quality of Offshore SAR coverage is required to determine the extent of the loss of Offshore SAR Coverage, to ensure Maritimes Region is meeting the requirements as stated in the SAR Needs Analysis and to reflect the realistic quality of Offshore SAR coverage provided in the Maritimes Region.

JRCC Operations Room/Staff Interaction - DND

- 8) The operations room should be renovated with the assistance of an ergonomics expert familiar with the requirements of this type of facility.

- 9) All operational staff should receive training similar to bridge resource or cockpit resource management.

SAR Aircraft Reliability

- 10) CF should review this issue with respect to resource levels, program demands, availability, reliability and maintenance in order to determine if there is a systemic problem.

Capsized Vessel Rescues - CCG

- 11) Coast Guard implements training and develops procedures for ships' crews and SAR staff when dealing with this type of incident. The investigation, evaluation and purchase of suitable equipment to assist crews with a capsized rescue operation should also be initiated.

- 12) There are currently no national Coast Guard guidelines or procedures for rescuing survivors from capsized vessels. It is recommended Coast Guard Headquarters investigate, evaluate and purchase suitable equipment to assist crews with a capsized rescue operation and develop operational guidelines for these situations.

SAR Tech OTV Kit

- 13) The SAR Tech community should evaluate the dive equipment to be used during dive operations in icy waters.

- 14) The OTV kit should be configured to permit both parachute deployment and helicopter deployment.

Communications Problems - CCG and DND

- 15) Coast Guard Technical Services review the problems experienced during these incidents and implement measures to improve communications reliability between JRCC and CG vessels.

- 16) The CF should install satellite communications as soon as possible onboard all SAR aircraft. This equipment should provide voice, data and fax service.

Coast Guard Vessel/CF SAR Aircraft Tracking – CCG & DND

- 17) All Coast Guard vessels and CF SAR aircraft have this functionality installed. There is an immediate need for real time tracking of all Coast Guard resources in the Maritimes region.

JRCC Technical Issues

18) In the last ten years the JRCC has gone from paper log keeping and charts to almost total electronic case prosecution. As a result, many new technologies and systems have been introduced to the centre but no comprehensive management plan, budget or staffing has been put in place to maintain and manage these systems. It is recommended that a technology review and audit be conducted with the goal of a comprehensive maintenance, tech training and financial plan implemented nationally and at the JRCC.

19) The job description of the SAR Systems Support Officer is currently under classification review. There is need for this review to be completed as soon as possible so that any staffing and qualification deficiencies may be identified. Administrative staffing issues leading up to this incident prevented the SAR Systems Support Officer from focusing on the JRCC Technical issues.

Next of Kin Notification

20) The National SAR Manual and JRCC/MRSC Standard Operating Procedures should specify that in addition to an early notification of a pending search reduction, the SM/SMC will confirm at the actual time of search reduction that all NOK have been advised.

21) The Search Mission Coordinator Course at the Canadian Coast Guard College should be reviewed to ensure the Next-of-Kin notification process instruction is provided in the classroom and practiced in simulation.