



NTSB

SAFETY ALERT

National Transportation Safety Board

★ Small Passenger Charter Fishing Vessels

Wear life jackets and increase safety precautions in hazardous conditions

The problems

- Simple safety procedures are not being followed by some masters of small passenger vessels on charter fishing trips and sightseeing trips, potentially jeopardizing the lives of their passengers, their crew, and themselves.
- Safety Board investigations pointed to flawed decisions by the captains of two vessels involved in fatal accidents—to cross or to approach a bar in hazardous conditions and failure to require passengers to don life jackets.

The accidents

- The problems were dramatized by the 2003 capsizing of the *Taki-Too*, a small passenger vessel off the coast of Oregon, which claimed the lives of 11 of the 19 people on board, including the captain, and the 2005 sinking of the uninspected passenger vessel *Sydney Mae II*, also off the coast of Oregon, which claimed the lives of 3 of the 5 on board.
- In both cases, small craft advisories were in effect and the U.S. Coast Guard had activated the rough bar warning signs for recreational and uninspected vessels because of the hazardous conditions.
- The *Taki-Too*, on a charter fishing day trip, was enroute from a marina to the open seas of the Pacific Ocean. After waiting for an opening in the breaking waves at the bar, the *Taki-Too* exited Tillamook inlet and turned northward around a jetty where it was struck by a large wave and capsized.
- The *Sydney Mae II*, also a charter, was on a tuna trolling expedition in the Pacific Ocean. On the return trip the vessel was in close proximity to the bar and river entrance when it was hit by 10- to 12-foot waves and sank near Winchester Bay.

What can vessel operators do?

- Always require passengers to wear life jackets on outside decks while transiting bars and inlets when rough bar warnings are in effect.
- Operators in the Pacific Northwest should develop written “go” and “no go” policies, based on risk management principles, regarding transiting bars and inlets.

Need more information?

- Visit the NTSB’s Web site: <http://www.nts.gov>