

South African Maritime Safety Authority

Ref: SM 6/5/2/1

Date: 6 January 2003

MARINE NOTICE NO. 1 OF 2003

TO ALL PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, OWNERS, AND SKIPPER'S OF FISHING VESSELS

THE USE OF FISHING MASTERS ON SOUTH AFRICAN FISHING VESSELS

Investigations into recent casualties in the fishing industry have highlighted that where Fishing Masters are employed onboard they are in *de-facto* command of the vessel.

This situation leads to confusion onboard in complying with mandatory requirements and the neglect of practical safety issues.

The Merchant Shipping Act is quite clear ; a person who signs articles as the Master or Skipper has command of the vessel and is to be duly certificated to hold that position.

Fishing Masters should only be used where new technology is being introduced from abroad and whilst skills transfer is undertaken to a South African.

South African nationals being used as Fishing Masters should be allowed the opportunity advance themselves. Training should be undertaken to allow them to acquire the certification necessary to command that vessel.

Where there is no alternative to the employment of a Fishing Master, management should develop a Standard Operating Procedure for this eventuality.

The S.O.P. should clearly define the responsibilities of both the Skipper and the Fishing Master bearing in mind the requirements of the Merchant Shipping Act.

It must be reiterated that the person who signs articles as the master has command of the vessel.

**SD MSIKINYA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Safe Ships - Clean Seas

P O Box 13186, HATFIELD, 0028
Tel: +27 12 342 3049 Fax: +27 12 342 3160

SAMSA BOARD:

Mr CA Nissen (Chair), Mr TC Dlamini (Deputy-Chair), Mr SN Mthethwa, Ms N Sithole,
Mr AE Ramphele, Mr SD Msikinya (CEO)