

# South African Maritime Safety Authority



## Marine Notice No. 19 of 2009

---

---

### Recommendations following capsizing of shark cage diving vessel.

TO ALL SHARK CAGE DIVING VESSEL SKIPPERS AND OPERATORS, SMALL PASSENGER VESSEL SKIPPERS AND OPERATORS AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

---

---

#### *Summary*

As a result of a small passenger vessel engaged in shark cage diving on the Cape South Coast capsizing with the loss of three lives an investigation was conducted and the following recommendations have been made.

1. Shark cage diving by its very nature can be considered a risky venture. Passengers need to be fully briefed of what the trip will involve and all associated dangers and risks before boarding the vessel. This briefing should include sea sickness, poor weather and sea conditions, procedures in event of an emergency (medical and other) and a practical life jacket demonstration. Once passengers have been informed they should have the option of not continuing with the trip should they wish.
2. Following on with the risks involved with shark cage diving owners need to examine their own operations and put in place control measures to reduce the likelihood of incidents and have procedures in place covering various scenarios. Examples of incidents could be: medical emergency involving a passenger, capsizing during exiting a launch site, shark bite, emergency transfer of passengers at sea, inoperable engines, vessel drifting onto a lee shore, fire during refuelling etc.  
  
Emergency services should be informed of these procedures.
3. A passenger and crew list must be left with the harbour controller at the launch site prior departure of each vessel. This list will then be close at hand should it be required in an emergency. This list must contain the name of the vessel and the names of all passengers and crew, the intended area of operation and the expected times of departure and arrival. The primary purpose of this list is for use in an emergency, as such the layout and writing must be clear and legible. This requirement is as per Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations of 2007 as amended and Marine Notice 7 of 2008.
4. Shark cage diving vessels must be manned by suitably trained personnel. Some operators have volunteer programs whereby young people learn about sharks and assist with the shark cage diving operation. Volunteers must not be used in place of crew unless they have been properly trained and fulfil all the requirements for crew as stated in the Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations of 2007 as amended. Volunteers, if carried and not complying with these regulatory requirements should be considered as passengers.

5. Sea conditions on the Cape South Coast are seldom flat and calm; and television and internet weather forecasts may not always be correct. Owners and skippers of shark cage diving vessels should be aware that there are services available which can be area and operation specific. These services may be able to trigger warnings of large swell and wave focusing.

03 December 2014

SM6/5/2/1

Issued by and obtainable from:  
**The South African Maritime Safety Authority**  
**161 Lynnwood Road**  
**Brooklyn, Pretoria**

**PO Box 13186**  
**Hatfield 0028**

**Tel: +27 12 366 2600**

**Fax: +27 12 366 2601**

**E-mail: [marinenotices@samsa.org.za](mailto:marinenotices@samsa.org.za)**

**Web Site : [www.samsa.org.za](http://www.samsa.org.za)**