COAST GUARD
MARINE SAFETY OFFICE

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MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN 06-03

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Wearing of Life Jackets

In a recent marine accident, nine persons died, eight survived, and two are missing after the vessel they were on capsized while crossing a bar. None of the nine deceased were wearing life jackets. The eight people that survived were either wearing or holding onto life jackets. In light of this marine accident, vessel owners and operators are reminded of the following requirements, as per Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations Part 185.508.

(a) The master of a vessel shall require passengers to don life jackets when possible hazardous conditions exist, including, but not limited to:

1. When transiting hazardous bars and inlets;
2. During Severe weather;
3. In event of flooding, fire, or other events that may possibly call for evacuation; and
4. When the vessel is being towed, except a non-self-propelled vessel under normal conditions.

(b) The master or crew shall assist each passenger in obtaining a life jacket and donning it, as necessary.

If passengers are reluctant to don life jackets, explain to them that is just a precaution, as is wearing a seat belt. It is better to have life jackets on before they are needed. If vessel owners and operators are in doubt as to whether a hazardous condition exists, they should require passengers and crew to don life jackets.

A safety alert highlighting this information can be found at: http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/moa/safea.htm. For further information, contact this office.

Sincerely,

J. A. Boudrow

J. A. BOUDROW
By Direction