

## CAPSIZING

### The Story

Capsizings and falls overboard account for the majority of recreational boating deaths in this country. Contributing to small craft capsizings are such unsafe practices as excessive speed, overloading, improper loading and disregard for adverse weather conditions.

The following story is drawn from among the accident reports on file at the Coast Guard's Office of Boating Safety. This narrative illustrates why the Coast Guard is so concerned about the large number of accidents that involve capsizings.

Four persons aboard a 10-foot outboard (rated with a load capacity of 350 pounds) were victims of a tragic capsizing in which one man lost his life.

The operator, a guest couple and their small child were out on the New River near Meadow Creek, West Virginia. But they weren't out for long. Shortly after getting underway, the overloaded boat began to ship water and soon capsized. The operator swam to shore; the woman guest remained with the boat and was able to keep herself and her child afloat until they were rescued downriver some time later; the husband, a non-swimmer, drowned.

### Lesson Learned

*For his failure to equip the boat with personal flotation devices, and for overloading the boat, the operator was charged with negligent operation.*

Prevention Through People



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