



Summary Report
Grounding
Rex
4 June 2006



REPORT NO.: 06 4100

VESSEL NAME: *REX*

Ship Type:	Commercial Fishing
Certified Operating Limit:	Enclosed/Coastal
Flag:	New Zealand
MSA No.:	101281
Built:	1940
Construction Material:	Wood
Length Overall (m):	15.34
Gross Tonnage:	27
Net Tonnage:	8.21
Owner:	K A Ward
SSM Company:	Maritime Management Services
Accident Investigator:	Domonic Venz

SUMMARY

At the time of the accident, the vessel held a valid SSM Certificate and was correctly manned.

During the week leading up to the grounding at 0130 hours on Sunday 4 June, the vessel had been day fishing out of the port of Riverton.

The tidal conditions were such that the vessel could only depart in the early hours of the morning and return approximately 12 hours later on the incoming tide.

The vessel was engaged in cod potting within about 2 hours steaming distance of Riverton.

The Skipper normally manned the vessel alone during the local cod-potting season due to financial restrictions.

On Saturday 3 June 2006, the vessel departed Riverton at 0500 hours. On board was the Skipper and his friend, a local very experienced ex fisherman. He was coming for a ride and a feed of fish.

They completed the cod potting part of the day by about 1900 hours. At this point they moved to an oyster area and dredged for oysters for about 3 hours, finishing at about 2200 hours, about seventeen hours after first leaving port.

At this time they started steaming for Riverton with the intention of anchoring off the entrance to the harbour to await the tide at around 0500 hours.

Shortly after departing the oyster grounds the crew and Skipper had an evening meal. The Skipper was conning the vessel from a chair at the front of the wheelhouse while his friend was sitting at the after end of the wheelhouse on the day bunk. The diesel stove was on to keep out the chill. No windows or the door to the wheelhouse was left open.

After a short period of time, the Skipper's friend fell asleep on the day bunk.

At about 0100 hours on Sunday 4 June, the Skipper fell asleep when the vessel was about 1 nautical mile from the intended anchorage position.

The vessel grounded on Oreti Beach at about 0130 hours on 4 June. The Skipper attempted to refloat the vessel by putting the engine full astern, but due to the vessel being underpowered was unable to do so.

The Skipper then called the local coastguard who responded as well as two local fishing vessels.

Attempts to tow the vessel off the beach were unsuccessful and **Rex** remained hard aground. The Skipper and his friend left the vessel at about 0430 hours after all hope was lost. The vessel started breaking up in the 1 to 2 metre swell shortly afterwards. Over the next 24 hours the vessel was reduced to 'matchwood' and was a constructive total loss.

The Skipper was navigating using an echo sounder, a radar and a GPS plotter cursor mark. No alarms had been activated on any of this equipment.

The Skipper had an alarm clock on the wheelhouse dash that he used occasionally as a watch alarm, but this was not being used at the time.

The Skipper checked his position as he neared Riverton and had about 1 nautical mile to run to the anchoring position. This was the last memory he had before being woken when the vessel grounded.

The Skipper had intended to sleep after the anchor was set before entering port in the early morning.

Examination of the vessel's SSM manual, that was supplied by Maritime Management Services, showed there was no mention of fatigue or of its recognition and management.

The Skipper had been sleeping in his own bed at home for the week preceding the accident as the tides only allowed him to fish mainly during daylight hours. He said he thought he was sleeping well each night. He had been in bed for 7 to 8 hours each night of the preceding three nights to leaving Riverton. During these days he had worked almost continually from departure at about 0500 hours through until arrival back at Riverton at approximately 1800 hours. There were some periods where he would steam between pots, but was of course unable to sleep. The work at sea was not particularly stressful but was moderately physical as he was the sole person onboard.

On this trip, the Skipper decided to stay out a few extra hours to dredge for oysters as he had missed the evening high tide that was predicted at about 1800 hours on 3 June.

His partner was interviewed and she gave a somewhat different account of the sleeping habits of the Skipper while at home.

It was determined that he is generally a poor sleeper. She said that he would get up at night for no apparent reason and get a drink. She had at time spoken to him during these episodes and stated that he had not recalled these conversations the next day.

The Investigator spoke to her about fatigue and its ramifications both to her and her partner and also spoke about some fatigue management tools she might employ to help the Skipper's sleep patterns. These are outlined in the letter attached which is addressed to both her and the Skipper as this is a family issue, and is best dealt with by a caring family wishing to see their loved one return safely.



Photograph 1
Rex



Photograph 2
Rex after the accident.