



Accident Report
Unnamed Dinghy
Fatality, York Bay, Wellington
Harbour on 14 February 2004



REPORT NO.: 04 1073

VESSEL NAME: *UNNAMED DINGHY*

Casualty Details:

Date of Casualty:	14 February 2004
Time of Casualty:	2130 hours New Zealand Daylight Time (NZDT)
Casualty Type:	Fatality
Casualty Location:	York Bay, Wellington Harbour
Investigator:	Jim Lott



REPORT NO.: 04 1073

VESSEL NAME: *UNNAMED DINGHY*

Vessel Details:

Vessel Name:	<i>Unnamed Dinghy</i>
Vessel Category:	Dinghy
Length (m):	2.6



SUMMARY

The deceased went crab fishing in a dinghy at 2130 hours with one oar and no lifejacket. He was reported missing and a search was mounted. His body was located on 16 February 2004.



KEY EVENTS

- 1.1 On Saturday 14 February 2004 at about 2030 hours New Zealand Daylight Time, the deceased borrowed a small plywood dinghy from the beach at York Bay in Wellington Harbour to go crab fishing.
- 1.2 His two sons aged seven and nine remained in a vehicle on shore.
- 1.3 The deceased used an oar to paddle into the Bay. The strong wind carried the dinghy along the Bay, out of the control of the deceased.
- 1.4 His sons saw the dinghy being blown past a white raft that was moored in York Bay.
- 1.5 At about 0200 hours on 15th February a security guard found members of the deceased's family searching for him in the Eastbourne area, which is south of York Bay.
- 1.6 At about 0530 hours, Police were advised that the deceased was missing.
- 1.7 At about 1030 hours, the Police dive team commenced searching in York Bay. They found a pair of white gumboots on the white raft. Divers also found two cray bags thought to belong to the deceased on the sea-bed near the raft.
- 1.8 At about 0930 hours on Monday 16 February, the naked body of the deceased was found on rocks at the northern end of Days Bay, about a mile south from his departure point in the dinghy.
- 1.9 The dinghy has not been found.



KEY CONDITIONS

- 2.1 The plywood dinghy was about 2.6 metres in length (8 feet) and was at least 15 years old. It had no fitted buoyancy. The owner used it as a tender. He did not give the deceased permission to borrow the dinghy.
- 2.2 The deceased took with him some fishing equipment and some cray bags. The only other equipment he had on board was one paddle. He did not take a lifejacket. He had borrowed the dinghy to go fishing for crabs on other occasions and had always returned it.
- 2.3 The deceased was wearing a jacket and gumboots. He was 35 years old and worked for a fishing company. He was a large man weighing approximately 130 Kg.
- 2.4 The deceased suffered from a serious medical condition, narcolepsy, which makes a person prone to excessive sleepiness during the daytime.
- 2.5 The weather when the deceased left shore was squally with Northerly winds up to 25 knots. The weather deteriorated further during the night and following day.
- 2.6 The Wellington Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaws require all vessels to carry a lifejacket for each person on board.



CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

N.B. These are not listed in order of importance.

- 3.1 The deceased had no suitable equipment to propel the dinghy in the conditions.
- 3.2 He left shortly before dark and did not say when he would be back.
- 3.3 He carried no lifesaving equipment of any kind.
- 3.4 He had no means of communicating his distress.
- 3.5 The dinghy was unsuitable for the fishing trip in the prevailing conditions.
- 3.6 The deceased suffered from a daytime sleeping disorder that could make boating increasingly dangerous for him.
- 3.7 The weather forecast was for rain, gale force northerly winds and squalls. The wind was already blowing hard when the deceased left the beach.
- 3.8 The deceased's weight was marginal for this dinghy in calm conditions. In the weather conditions on 14 February, the dinghy was overloaded.



CAUSE

Human Factor

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Failure to comply with regulations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drugs & Alcohol	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overloading
<input type="checkbox"/> Failure to obtain ships position or course	<input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/> Physiological
<input type="checkbox"/> Improper watchkeeping or lookout	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Ship Handling
<input type="checkbox"/> Misconduct/Negligence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Error of judgement	<input type="checkbox"/> Other . . .

Environmental Factor

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adverse weather	<input type="checkbox"/> Debris	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice	<input type="checkbox"/> Navigation hazard
<input type="checkbox"/> Adverse current	<input type="checkbox"/> Submerged object	<input type="checkbox"/> Lightning	<input type="checkbox"/> Other . . .

Technical Factor

<input type="checkbox"/> Structural failure	<input type="checkbox"/> Wear & tear	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steering failure
<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical failure	<input type="checkbox"/> Improper welding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inadequate firefighting/lifesaving
<input type="checkbox"/> Electrical failure	<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient fuel
<input type="checkbox"/> Corrosion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inadequate stability	<input type="checkbox"/> Other . . .

- 4.1 The deceased drowned after he capsized in bad weather in a dangerously unsuitable boat with no lifesaving equipment and inadequate means of propulsion.



OPINIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Every year a number of persons die in preventable dinghy accidents similar to this.
- 5.2 Given the lack of equipment, the weather and a totally unsuitable craft, the deceased's death was almost inevitable from the time he left the beach.
- 5.3 It is recommended that this accident is brought to the attention of the Education and Communications Division of the Maritime Safety Authority for consideration when the next edition of the Recreational Boating Accident book is published.

