

## Safety Report

### Personal flotation devices – it's not a life saver unless you are wearing it!

#### Narrative

On a pleasant Friday evening, the owner of a 30 foot timber cabin cruiser decided to go fishing for the weekend. He set out with his trusty dog, and a friend on board as deckhand.

During the night, the vessel's engine stopped and the owner dropped anchor to assess the problem. Upon investigation, he discovered the rear deck under water; the ship sunk shortly thereafter.

Both men abandoned ship without fitting life jackets before they did so. In the dark they hung onto floating debris and were eventually separated by tidal currents. The deckhand located a life jacket floating in the current and fitted it to himself. After several hours, he drifted onto the mainland and was able to get assistance the following day.

The owner was located some time later. He had drowned.

#### Lessons

1. **A personal flotation device is a mariner's best friend.**
2. **Personal flotation devices should be easily accessible to all persons on board the vessel.**
3. **At any time that there is doubt as to the watertight integrity of the vessel, a personal flotation device should be worn.**
4. **If you have time to fit a personal flotation device – do not abandon ship without one.**

Safety Reports are prepared by the Compliance Unit, Executive Services and Compliance Branch, Maritime Safety Queensland. Safety Reports are intended to draw the attention of the marine community to the lessons arising out of investigations into marine accidents. Consequently, the reports do not assign fault or blame nor do they determine liability.

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