

PSC Related Circular

No.PSC 23/2021

Dated: 22.03.2021

Subject:

USCG SAFETY ALERT: Blocked freeing ports can trap seawater on deck reducing fishing vessel's stability



SAFETY ALERT was developed by **USCG** regarding subject case.

A recent marine casualty resulting in the capsizing of a commercial fishing vessel brought to light a potentially dangerous situation involving the closure of freeing ports. As the vessel dragged for sea scallops, a wave **unexpectedly crashed over the port railing, causing the vessel's deck to fill with seawater**. The seawater, now trapped on deck, was unable to drain overboard as closure devices blocked all freeing ports. The investigation identified the closure of the freeing ports as a causal factor in why the vessel capsized.

The **Coast Guard strongly recommends** that vessel owners and operators:

- Ensure freeing ports remain open at all times to allow seawater to drain freely off the deck.
- Ensure owners/operators discuss with their crews the hazards trapping seawater on deck can pose to vessel stability.
- Come up with an alternate means to prevent loss of catch while maintaining adequate drainage.

[Click here to download the Safety Alert 03-21](#)

