

Appendix E – Recent Marine Accidents

Sinking of the CFV EAGLE III

On the morning of January 19, 2016, the 40.1 ft, 18 gross ton, commercial fishing vessel EAGLE III departed Coos Bay and transited offshore to fish for crab with an operator and three crewmembers. While engaged in crab fishing that afternoon, the generator for the external lighting on the EAGLE III failed to start and the operator decided to return to port. On the transit back to port, while the vessel was entering the bar, a wave overtook the stern and caused it to capsize. The vessel rolled, allided with the north jetty, and subsequently broke apart. At approximately 1815 hours, Coast Guard Sector North Bend Command Center received notice of an emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) activation on the EAGLE III near the entrance to Coos Bay. Coast Guard Sector North Bend commenced search and rescue efforts.

After the vessel hit the rocks on the north jetty and broke apart, the operator was ejected from the vessel, swam clear of the debris field and was pushed into the jetty by the waves. The operator walked the jetty and found an individual who assisted him by driving him to Coast Guard Sector North Bend. Later that evening, one crewmember was found on the jetty and pronounced dead. The search continued for two missing crewmembers. On the afternoon of January 20, 2016, the Coast Guard suspended the search and rescue operations and letters of presumed death were sent to next of kin. On February 9, 2016, the body of one of the missing crewmembers was recovered near Florence, Oregon.

Sinking of the CFV SARA JO

On 26 January 2016, the 42.3 ft, 42 gross ton, commercial fishing vessel SARA JO got underway to retrieve debris that was scattered outside of the Coos Bay Bar entrance from the sinking of the EAGLE III that occurred earlier in the month. The observed weather at the time of the inbound transit was estimated to be 5 knots of wind and a sea state of 6 to 8-foot swells at the North Jetty and 10 to 12 foot swells at the South Jetty.

At approximately 1600, the SARA JO experienced a material failure of the tail shaft in the vicinity of the North Jetty of the Coos Bay Bar entrance. The vessel operator hailed the Coast Guard for assistance. The vessel was set to the southward, into the middle of the channel, by the current and swells, which grew to 16 feet. SARA JO was then struck by a series of waves which led to the eventual sinking of the vessel. The two crewmembers entered the water from the stern of the vessel wearing immersion suits. The operator subsequently exited the vessel from the bow. A Coast Guard motor lifeboat arrived on scene and recovered the operator and both crewmembers from the water. One crewmember was found unresponsive and was later pronounced deceased at a nearby hospital.

Sinking of the CFV PATTY AJ

On March 23, 2016, the 59.9 foot, 83 gross ton commercial fishing vessel PATTY AJ was inbound Coos Bay channel with 4 people onboard (the operator, two deckhands, and one federal fisheries observer). It was returning to port from sea with 40,000 lbs of catch in the fish hold. The observed weather that morning included almost no swell and no marine notices or warnings were

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issued for the area. In the vicinity of Coos Bay Channel Buoy 5, the crew noticed that the starboard door had a crab pot line and float wrapped around the chain. The operator slowed PATTY AJ and changed course slightly to port (outside the channel) while the crew cut the crab pot free. Once the crab pot was cut free the master engaged the throttle to full ahead and turned the vessel hard to starboard. The vessel immediately listed heavy to port. The vessel continued in this hard starboard turn and the PATTY AJ listed even further to port; ultimately burying the port side gunwales and bulwarks. Then the vessel immediately started to capsize. The Coast Guard tower watch stander observed the incident and estimated that from the time the operator of PATTY AJ initiated the turn to starboard until the vessel was fully capsized, only 30 seconds had elapsed.

The two deckhands onboard PATTY AJ never entered the water when the vessel capsized. They walked over the gunwales and onto the overturned hull as the vessel capsized. The fisheries observer went over with the vessel, resurfaced and was pulled aboard the vessel's overturned hull. The operator was in the pilot house when the vessel capsized and he never surfaced. On April 10, 2016, divers recovered the body of the operator from the pilothouse of PATTY AJ. The PATTY AJ remains underwater, anchored down outside the channel in the vicinity of Coos Bay Channel Lighted Buoy 5A.