

Seamanship

Bad weather preparation

- Sea going vessel needs the nature's favour for the successful completion of its voyage. The weather is one of the factors that determine the safe and timely arrival of the destination for every vessel including coastal fishing vessels. As we know the weather conditions are not always favouring the mariners, and the adverse conditions of Heavy /Rough/ Bad Weather are often experienced. The best way to handle bad weather is to go to shore immediately and avoid it completely. However, this may not be practical if the vessels are on an extended cruise. Every sea going person should know about the heavy weather conditions and preparations for the vessel and crew to face the bad weather conditions at sea. The mariner should never use the boat other than for what it was designed and its intended use. The boat should not be tried beyond the boat's design capabilities.

- The body of water on which the boat is operated, has a lot to do with how severe the conditions may get. While operating on deep and large bodies of water, wave action tends to build more slowly than on large waters that are shallower. In deep waters, wind action may only cause moderate seas with slow, rolling swells, while in shallower waters that same wind force may make steep, breaking seas. The fishing vessels may encounter bad weather especially during monsoon season and cyclones. Every fishing vessel should take positive action to save his crew and vessel during bad weather conditions. During the cyclone, it is always wise to return to the port as and when a cyclone warning is received, because small fishing vessels will not be able to withstand the fury of the sea.

- Weather and water conditions play a big role in your safety on the water. Before going out from the fishing harbour, the mariner should watch the latest weather forecast for that particular area. Indian Meteorological Department provides marine forecasts in many ways. If you have a marine radio, you can get weather updates while you're on the water. These forecasts provide information on wind speed and direction, weather, sea state wave actions etc,. Whenever a coastal strip is affected by bad weather, weather warnings for fishermen are broadcast in regional languages by All India Radio.

Points to be noted during bad weather preparation

- Handling the vessel under bad weather condition is one of the seamanship techniques. This knowledge could be gained only through practice. However, the preparation for bad weather could be done by all those who are connected with vessels. The following are the important points pertaining to bad weather preparation,
 1. Reduce the vessel speed. The reduction in speed will reduce the strain on the hull and superstructure of vessel.
 2. Start pumping bilge water, monitor the water level in the bilge and repeat the pumping as and when required. (Water in the bilge may affect the stability)
 3. Blow fog horn and switch on the navigational lights at restricted visibility.
 4. Increase the look-out.
 5. Restrict the persons movements on the open deck.
 6. Remove all movable articles from the deck
 7. Secure mooring ropes and anchor properly

- 8. Close all hatches water tight.
- 9. Inform the engine room and galley about the state of weather.
- 10. Remove the awnings and fittings.
- 11. Lower the derrick
- 12. Study the sea conditions change in weather frequently.
- 13. Keep ready a sea anchor (Sea Anchor - A floating canvas cone, attached with a rope bridle at the larger to the bow of the boat. It is used in storm conditions to keep the bow of the boat into the wind, and slow the downwind drift of the boat.
- 14. Keep your anchor ready with suitable rope.
- 15. Watch the weather warnings for fishermen and follow.

- 16. Suspend the fishing operation, if it is not favouring the vessel movement.
- 17. In case of a cyclone return to the nearest port.
- 18. Make sure the life raft is ready for launching.
- 19. Plans to go to sheltered waters if possible.
- 20. Fix your vessel position both electronically and on chart.
- 21. Keep ready emergency items such as hand pumps, first aid kit, sound signalling device, etc.
- 22. Secure all loose gears above decks and below.
- 23. Determine position of storm, wind direction, speed.
- 24. Explain the situation to the crew members. Make them to understand the condition and cooperate and act accordingly.