



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION INTO THE LOSS
OF FOUR LIVES ONBOARD THE
RECREATIONAL VESSEL TRIUMPH
(NY 1883MS), NEAR BREEZY POINT, QUEENS,
NY, ON FEBRUARY 23, 2025**



MISLE ACTIVITY NUMBER: 8085695, MISLE CASE NUMBER: 1429725

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Stop 7501
Washington, DC 20593-7501
Staff Symbol: CG-INV
Phone: (202) 372-1032
E-mail: CG-INV1@uscg.mil

16732/IIA #8085695
22 October 2025

**CAPSIZING OF THE RECREATIONAL VESSEL TRIUMPH (NY1883MS),
RESULTING IN THE LOSS OF FOUR LIVES WHILE TRANSITING SOUTH
OF BREEZY POINT, QUEENS, NEW YORK, ON FEBRUARY 23, 2025**

ACTION BY THE COMMANDANT

The record and the report of investigation completed for this marine casualty have been reviewed by the Office of Investigations & Casualty Analysis. The record and the report, including the findings of fact, analyses, and conclusions are approved. This marine casualty investigation is closed.



E. B. SAMMS
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis (CG-INV)

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Northeast District
United States Coast Guard

408 Atlantic Ave.
Boston, MA 02110-3354
Staff Symbol: (dp)
Phone: (617) 406-9045

16732
16 September 2025

**LOSS FOUR LIVES ONBOARD THE RECREATIONAL VESSEL
TRIUMPH (NY1883MS), NEAR BREEZY POINT, QUEENS, NY ON
FEBRUARY 23, 2025**

**ENDORSEMENT BY THE COMMANDER,
COAST GUARD NORTHEAST DISTRICT**

The record and the Report of the Investigation (ROI) convened for the subject casualty have been reviewed. The record and the report, including the findings of fact, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations are approved subject to the following comment: It is recommended that this marine casualty investigation be closed.



D. E. O'CONNELL
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Chief of Prevention, Coast Guard Northeast District
By direction

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commander
United States Coast Guard
Sector New York

212 Coast Guard Drive
Staten Island, NY 10305-5005
Staff Symbol: (s)
Phone: (718) 354-4003

16732
August 4, 2025

MEMORANDUM

[REDACTED]
From: Jonathan A. Andrechik, CAPT
CG SECTOR New York (s)

To: COMDT (CG-INV)

Thru: CG-NED (dp) [REDACTED]

Subj: LOSS OF FOUR LIVES ONBOARD THE RECREATIONAL VESSEL TRIUMPH
(NY1883MS), NEAR BREEZY POINT QUEENS, NY, ON FEBRUARY 23, 2025

Ref: (a) Title 46 United States Code, Chapter 63
(b) Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 4
(c) Marine Safety Manual, Volume V, COMDTINST M16000.10 (series)
(d) Marine Investigations Management and Documentation Requirements, CG-INV
Policy Letter 3-18 (CH-1)

1. In accordance with references (a) through (d), the Sector New York Investigations Division conducted a Marine Casualty Investigation into the loss of four lives onboard the recreational vessel TRIUMPH (NY1883MS), near Breezy Point Queens, NY, on February 23, 2025.

2. I have reviewed and concur with the Report of Investigation's findings of fact, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations. Please find enclosed the Report of Investigation, formatted in accordance with reference (d), for your review and approval.

#

Enclosure: (1) Report of Investigation into the Loss of Four Lives onboard the Recreational Vessel TRIUMPH (NY1883MS), near Breezy Point Queens, NY, on February 23, 2025



16732
August 4, 2025

LOSS OF FOUR LIVES ONBOARD THE RECREATIONAL VESSEL TRIUMPH (NY1883MS), NEAR BREEZY POINT, QUEENS, NY, ON FEBRUARY 23, 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On February 23, 2025, at approximately 0815, the New York state-registered recreational vessel TRIUMPH (NY1883MS) departed from a pier near 162nd Ave in Howard Beach, Queens, NY, with six persons onboard. The vessel was enroute to 17 Fathom Bank, located approximately 15 nautical miles (NM) from shore. The owner/operator drove the boat, while Passenger 1 provided navigation guidance, having previously fished at 17 Fathom Bank approximately 20-30 times.

At approximately 1000, the vessel arrived at 17 Fathom Bank, and the passengers deployed their fishing lines at the stern of the boat. The boat was not anchored, and they drifted while fishing. After about an hour, the group decided to relocate due to the currents, choppy waters, and lack of fish. While enroute to a new fishing location, Passenger 1 took over as operator at the request of another passenger, as he was more familiar with the area. The new fishing location was approximately five nautical miles south of the Breezy Point jetties.

When the boat approached the new fishing spot, which was located near the Green 5 buoy of Ambrose Channel, Passenger 1 placed the boat in neutral. At that moment, he noticed the vessel was riding low in the water and alerted another passenger. That passenger then opened a deck compartment and discovered a significant amount of water inside. Passenger 1 dialed 911 to report the situation, while another passenger distributed life jackets and life rings. Meanwhile, two passengers attempted to bail water using buckets.

Despite their efforts, the vessel capsized within 2-3 minutes of identifying the flooding. All six occupants entered the water and only Passenger 1 managed to climb onto the overturned hull to await rescue. The owner/operator and four passengers were recovered: two survived, while three were pronounced deceased at the hospital. After a 26-hour search covering an area of 636 square nautical miles, the Coast Guard suspended efforts to locate Passenger 5, who remains missing and was presumed deceased.

The Coast Guard's investigation determined the initiating event for this casualty was the ingress and accumulation of water in the bilge compartment, which led to progressive flooding and ultimately caused the vessel to capsize. This capsizing forced all passengers into the water, resulting in the loss of three lives and the presumed loss of a fourth. Contributing factors to this casualty include: 1) Inadequate Inspection and Maintenance of the Boat, 2) Lack of Boating Safety Certificate, 3) Cold Water Temperature, and 4) Failure of Passengers to Wear Personal Floatation Devices while Underway.



16732
August 4, 2025

**LOSS OF FOUR LIVES ONBOARD THE RECREATIONAL VESSEL TRIUMPH
(NY1883MS), NEAR BREEZY POINT, QUEENS, NY, ON FEBRUARY 23, 2025**

INVESTIGATING OFFICER'S REPORT

1. Preliminary Statement

1.1. This marine casualty investigation was conducted, and this report was submitted in accordance with Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subpart 4.07, and under the authority of Title 46, United States Code (USC) Chapter 63.

1.2. No individuals, organizations, or parties were designated as party-in-interest for this investigation in accordance with 46 CFR Subsection 4.03-10.

1.3. The Coast Guard was the lead agency for all evidence collection activities involving this investigation. The New York City Police Department (NYPD), The Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY), The New Jersey State Police (NJSP), The Sandy Hook Pilots Association, and Atlantic Beach Fire Rescue assisted the Coast Guard with initial on scene search and rescue efforts. Due to this incident involving loss of life, the Coast Guard Investigative Services (CGIS) was notified. No other persons or organizations assisted in the investigation.

1.4. All times listed in this report are in Eastern Standard Time using a 24-hour format and are approximate.

2. Boat Involved in the Incident



Figure 1. Photo of TRIUMPH on March 10, 2025, taken at the Army Corp of Engineers facility in Jersey City, NJ by USCG.

Official Name:	TRIUMPH
State Registration Number:	NY1883MS
Flag:	United States
Boat Service:	Recreational
Build Year:	1994
Length:	25' 0.2"
Hull Material:	Fiberglass
Propulsion:	Outboard Gasoline Engines (2)
Owner/Operator:	Cecilio J. Adames

3. Deceased, Missing, and/or Injured Persons

Relationship to Vessel	Sex	Age	Status
Owner/Operator	Male	50	Deceased
Passenger 1	Male	62	Injured
Passenger 2	Male	55	Injured
Passenger 3	Male	47	Deceased
Passenger 4	Male	38	Deceased
Passenger 5	Male	51	Missing & Presumed Deceased

4. Findings of Fact

4.1. The Incident:

4.1.1. On February 23, 2025, at approximately 0815 the boat TRIUMPH departed from a pier near 162nd Ave in Howard Beach, Queens, NY, located behind the KPOT Korean BBQ & Hot Pot restaurant with six people onboard for a fishing trip.

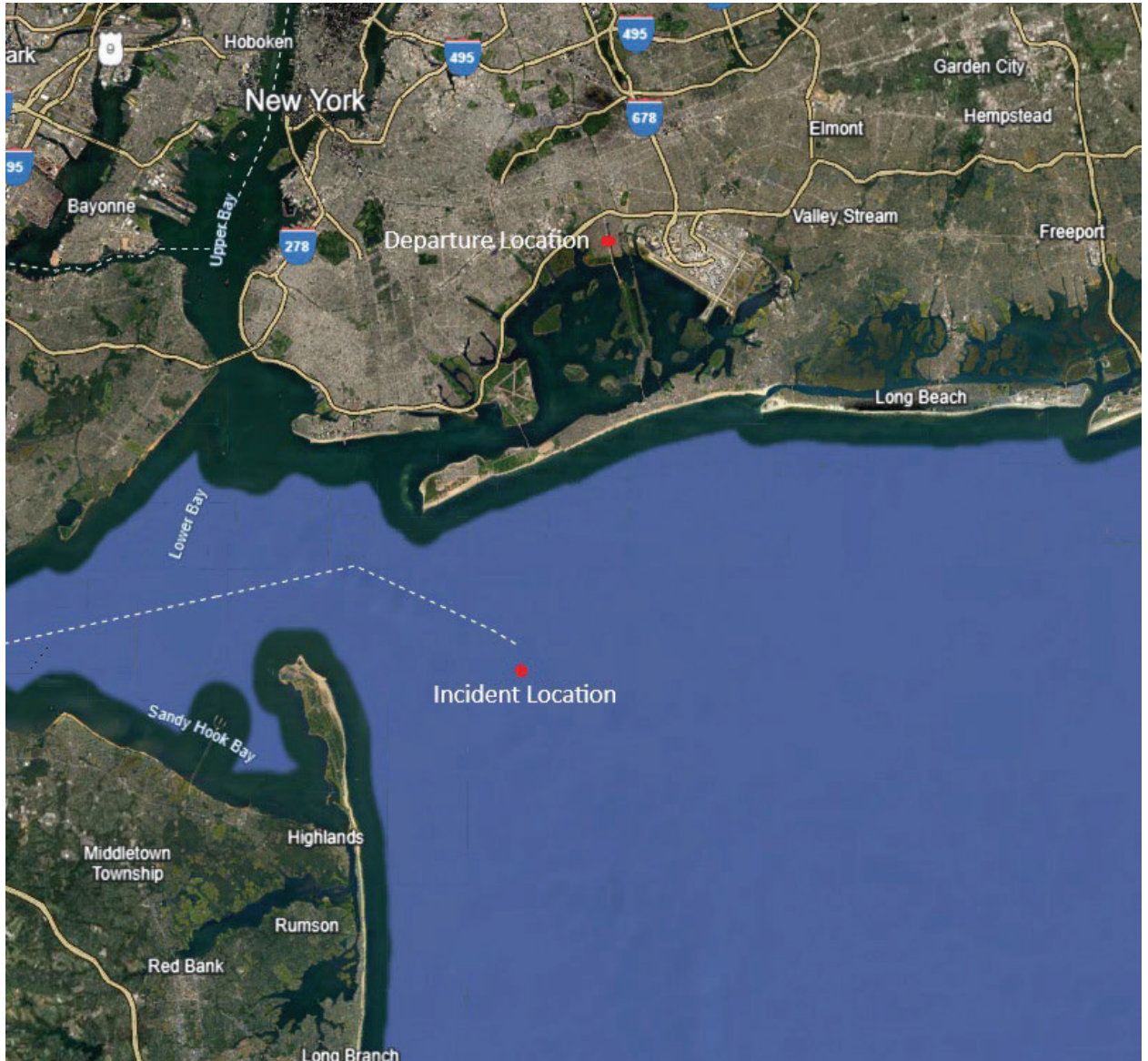


Figure 2: Map showing the departure and casualty locations (red dots).

4.1.2. The owner/operator was driving the boat to 17 Fathom Bank which was approximately 15 nautical miles (NM) offshore. Passenger 1 was guiding the owner/operator as he had been to 17 Fathom Bank 20–30 times before.

4.1.3. At 1000, the boat arrived at 17 Fathom Bank and the passengers deployed their fishing lines. All six passengers were standing at the stern of the boat while fishing. The boat was not anchored, and it drifted with the wind and current.

4.1.4. At 1100, the group decided to relocate to a different fishing spot due to the strong current and lack of fish. During this transit, Passenger 1 was driving the boat at the request of another passenger as he was familiar with the area. The second fishing spot was by the Green 5 buoy of Ambrose Channel, approximately five NM south of the Breezy Point jetties.

4.1.5. At 1154, when the boat was approximately 20–30 feet away from the fishing spot, Passenger 1 placed the boat in neutral. Immediately after slowing down, Passenger 1 noticed the boat was riding low and alerted another passenger. The unidentified passenger opened a deck compartment and told the passengers that there was a significant amount of water inside the compartment.

4.1.6. At 1157, Passenger 1 attempted to restart the engines and the bilge pump system, but nothing would start. Passenger 1 stated that at this point the engines and batteries were submerged in the water as the stern of the boat began to sink. Passenger 1 dialed 911 to report the situation, while another passenger distributed life jackets and life rings. There were no VHF calls made by anyone onboard the boat. Meanwhile, two passengers attempted to bail water from the hull of the boat using buckets.



Figure 3: Photo of the main console taken by USCG. Showing both bilge pumps were in the on position.

4.1.7. At 1200, approximately six minutes after discovering the flooding, the boat capsized, and all occupants entered the water.

4.1.8. Passenger 1 was able to get on top of the overturned hull, but the other passengers were unable to and remained in the water.

4.1.9. At 1204 Coast Guard Sector New York Command Center (SCC) received the initial notification from CityWide stating that a boat in the vicinity of Breezy Point was taking on water. CityWide is a local Incident Management System that receives 9-1-1 calls and connects the person with the appropriate emergency response organization as well as the caller's location.

4.1.10. At 1214 a Coast Guard small boat arrived to the Breezy Point area and began search efforts after being diverted from training at Gravesend Bay. At 1215 NYPD and FDNY vessels arrived on scene and at 1222 a NYPD Helicopter was on scene and began searching.

4.1.11. For the next 1 hour and 45 minutes the combined assets searched numerous places in the vicinity of Breezy Point. Their search locations included Dead Horse Bay, Sheepshead Bay, Shellbank Creek, Far Rockaway, and Far Rockaway Inlet. These locations all had negative results trying to locate the TRIUMPH.

4.1.12. At 1402, Monmouth County 911 provided the Sector New York Command Center with an updated cell phone ping location, who then redirected the assets on scene to check the area near Buoy #2 of the Ambrose Channel.

4.1.13. At 1414 the TRIUMPH was found by Buoy #2 of the Ambrose Channel, approximately six nautical miles south of the Breezy Point Jetty. The Coast Guard small boat, a Sandy Hook Pilot Vessel, NYPD Helicopter, and the Coast Guard Helicopter 6511 pulled five individuals out of the ocean. Three individuals were unresponsive and two were conscious/alert. One passenger was still missing.

4.1.14. On February 24, 2025, at 1741, the Coast Guard suspended the active search for Passenger 5. The Coast Guard completed searches covering 636 square miles.

4.2. Additional/Supporting Information:

4.2.1. The owner/operator purchased the vessel on December 3, 2024. It is unclear if he had any prior boating experience, and his family is unable to provide any information on his boating experience.

4.2.2. Passenger 1, who was familiar with fishing this area stated that he was invited by Passenger 5 who was his coworker. He also stated that he didn't know any of the other passengers before the day of the incident.

4.2.3. As of January 1, 2025, in the State of New York, all operators of motorized vessels are required to carry a Safety Boating Certificate. None of the individuals on-board possessed this certification.

4.2.4. One of the survivors indicated that the TRIUMPH had enough life jackets for all passengers. However, one of the recovered deceased individuals was not wearing a life jacket and the Coast Guard is unable to determine if the missing passenger was wearing a life jacket when he entered the water.

4.2.5. It could not be determined whether any of the deceased passengers had received boating training or possessed prior boating experience, except for Passenger 4 whose spouse stated that he had owned a boat.

4.2.6. On February 23, 2025, at 1200 hours, weather conditions were reported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as follows: Wind from the west at 10 knots, gusting to 12 knots; seas approximately 2 feet; water temperature 38°F, and air temperature 40°F.

4.2.7. Upon recovery of the vessel, it was observed that the port-side deck drain hose (scupper) was missing.

4.2.8. The recovered vessel also showed that the aft bilge hose was cracked and disconnected from the bilge pump. Additionally, the forward bilge pump hose was not connected to the hull fitting.



Figures 4 & 5: Photos of the aft bilge pump and hose taken by USCG.

4.2.9. The vessel was equipped with a manual, rather than automatic bilge pump system that activates at the detection of water.

4.2.10. All fuel lines and electrical cables were cut and/or disconnected by the Army Corp of Engineers as a safety precaution once the boat was at their facility after salvaging the vessel.

4.2.11. Passengers 1, 3, and 4 were transported to Monmouth Medical Center, NJ. The owner/operator and Passenger 2 were transported to Staten Island University Hospital, NY. Passenger 5 was not located.

4.2.12. An autopsy of the owner/operator, conducted by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner City of New York, determined the cause of death was drowning due to submersion in water. The manner of death was accidental.

4.2.13. An autopsy of Passenger 3, conducted by the Deputy County Medical Examiner of the Middlesex Regional Medical Examiner's Office, determined the cause of death was drowning due to submersion in water. The manner of death was accidental.

4.2.14. An autopsy of Passenger 4, conducted by the Deputy County Medical Examiner of the Middlesex Regional Medical Examiner's Office, determined the cause of death was drowning due to submersion in water. The manner of death was accidental.

4.2.15. Passenger 5 was not found and presumed deceased. Death was recorded as occurring on February 23, 2025, in the manner of drowning due to boating accident. On May 12, 2025, the Coast Guard issued a letter of presumed death to the next of kin.

5. Analysis

5.1. Water ingress and accumulation in the bilge compartment

5.1.1 During the investigation, it was observed that the bilge hose in the aft bilge compartment was cracked and disconnected from the bilge pump. Bilge hoses function by channeling water from the lowest point of the boat to a discharge point outside the hull, typically via an electric bilge pump. Similar to the stern, the hose in the forward bilge compartment was not attached to the hull fitting for proper discharge. Additionally, the port-side drain hose scupper was missing. The scupper allows water to drain while the boat is moving but stop water from entering the vessel when it is stationary. The fact that all of the passengers were fishing near the stern of the vessel with no scupper to stop water ingress is a likely reason that the seawater was able to enter the vessel and drain to the bilge compartment. It remains unclear whether these disconnections occurred prior to the incident or as a result of the boat capsizing, but it is reasonable to assume that if the port side drain scupper was missing, and if the bilge hoses were not connected to overboard discharge, it could have significantly accelerated the rate of water accumulation in the bilges. Additionally, for this case, the bilge pump was not automatic and required manual activation. According to Passenger 1, he was unable to operate the bilge pump due to a complete loss of electrical power, as the batteries were in an aft compartment that had flooded. This electrical failure also stopped the engines from re-starting and possibly allowing the vessel to self-rescue. Although it was not required by law, the boat didn't have a high-level bilge alarm system, which might have alerted the crew of the flooding sooner.

5.2. Inadequate inspection and maintenance of the boat

5.2.1. According to both survivors, no routine boat checks were performed by any of the passengers during the trip. Additionally, it remains unclear whether the boat owner/operator conducted any pre-departure inspections or maintenance prior to getting underway. Regular boat checks such as inspecting the bilge compartment, verifying the operation of the bilge pumps, and ensuring all hoses and fittings are secure, are critical to identifying early signs of mechanical failure or water intrusion. Had the passengers or owner/operator conducted routine checks during the voyage, it is likely they would've detected the accumulation of water in the bilge or noticed disconnected or damaged hoses. Timely detection of these issues could have allowed for corrective action before conditions deteriorated, potentially preventing the incident altogether. Therefore, the absence of routine inspections may have been a contributing factor by allowing otherwise manageable deficiencies to go unnoticed.

5.3. **Lack of Boating Safety Certificate**

5.3.1. The New York Boating Safety Certificate, often referred to as a boating license, is issued to individuals who have successfully completed an approved boating course and pass the corresponding exam. These courses are designed to provide boaters with essential knowledge of safe vessel operation, navigation rules, emergency procedures, and equipment requirements. The requirement for this certification is mandated under New York State Senate Bill 2019-S5685, often referred to as “Brianna’s Law”, which was enacted to reduce boating accidents and promote safe and informed vessel operations. The New York State Park Police confirmed that none of the passengers on board had a valid Boating Safety Certificate on file. Operating a motorized vessel without this certification is a violation of state law and may result in fines or other penalties. More importantly, it suggested that the individuals aboard may have lacked critical knowledge of basic boating safety principles, emergency procedures, or proper vessel operation. These emergency procedures also include the importance of using a VHF Radio to call in an emergency situation or “Mayday” in addition to using a cellular phone. The U.S. Coast Guard's Rescue 21 (R21) system is a maritime VHF radio communication network used to locate and assist distressed vessels. While the system itself is a network of strategically placed towers and equipment, the VHF transceivers associated with it are typically located on the vessel needing assistance. For mariners with appropriate VHF radios, these devices can automatically transmit the vessel's location in emergencies, significantly reducing search and rescue times, which is vital when cold temperatures are involved. The absence of certified boaters could have been a contributing factor in the incident, as it may have led to poor decision making, failure to identify hazards (such as water ingress), or inability to properly respond to an emergency. Boating safety training equips individuals with the skills to recognize and react to potential risks— skills that may have helped prevent or mitigate the severity of this event.

5.4. **Cold water temperature**

5.4.1. The water temperature at the time of the incident was approximately 38°F, a level considered dangerously cold. At this temperature, the risk of hypothermia is extremely high, and all swimmers, regardless of swimming abilities, can become incapacitated

within minutes. While symptoms of hypothermia may develop gradually, serious injury can occur in as little as a few minutes, and death is possible within 30 to 90 minutes of immersion at temperatures between 32.5°F and 40°F. These passengers were immersed in 38°F water for approximately 2 to 2.15 hours—well beyond the generally survivable timeframe without proper thermal protection. Prolonged exposure to such cold water would have led to a rapid loss of body heat, resulting in decreased motor function, unconsciousness, and ultimately death. While factors like body composition and protective gear can influence survival time, it is reasonable to assume that the combination of low water temperature and extended immersion was a direct causal factor in the deaths of the four individuals and if more accurate location information was provided, the rescuers would have been able to help more quickly.

5.5. Failure of Passengers to Wear Personal Flotation Devices while Underway

5.5.1. Both survivors confirmed that no one on board was wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) at the time of the incident. Passenger 2 recalled that there were approximately 10–12 life jackets on the vessel and that, once they noticed the boat was taking on water, everyone rushed to try to put them on. While Passengers 1, 2, 3, and 4 were all recovered wearing PFDs, the vessel owner/operator was recovered from the water without a PFD, and Passenger 5—who remains missing—is also presumed not to have been wearing one. Life jackets are a fundamental part of boating safety. They're specifically designed to keep a person afloat in the event of an emergency like capsizing or falling overboard. Wearing a PFD dramatically increases the chance of survival by preventing drowning, reducing fatigue, and helping keep the head above water. This not only buys time for rescue but also helps prevent water ingestion and unconsciousness due to panic or exhaustion. While we can't say for certain that the outcome would have been different, it's reasonable to believe that wearing life jackets could have improved the chances of survival—and may have aided in the recovery of everyone who entered the water.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Determination of Cause:

6.1.1. The initiating event for this casualty occurred when the TRIUMPH experienced flooding which ultimately caused the vessel to lose stability and capsize. The causal factors leading to this event were:

6.1.1.1. Water ingress and accumulation in the bilge compartment.

6.1.1.2. Inadequate inspection and maintenance of the boat.

6.1.1.3. Lack of Boating Safety Certificate.

6.1.2. The capsizing of the TRIUMPH forced all passengers into the water resulting in the death of the owner/operator, Passenger 3, Passenger 4, and Passenger 5. The causal factors leading to this event were:

6.1.2.1. Cold water temperature.

6.1.2.2. Failure of Passengers to Wear Personal Floatation Devices while Underway.

6.2. Evidence of Act(s) or Violation(s) of Law by Any Coast Guard Credentialed Mariner Subject to Action Under 46 USC Chapter 77: There were no acts of misconduct, incompetence, negligence, unskillfulness, or violations of law by a credentialed mariner identified as part of this investigation.

6.3. Evidence of Act(s) or Violation(s) of Law by U.S. Coast Guard Personnel, or any other person: There were no potential acts of misconduct, incompetence, negligence, unskillfulness, or violations of law by Coast Guard employees or any other person that contributed to this casualty.

6.4. Evidence of Act(s) Subject to Civil Penalty: This investigation did not identify evidence of potential acts subject to Civil Penalty.

6.5. Evidence of Criminal Act(s): This investigation did not identify potential violations of criminal law.

6.6. Need for New or Amended U.S. Law or Regulation: This investigation did not identify matters needing new or amended U.S. Law or Regulation.

6.7. Unsafe Actions or Conditions that Were Not Causal Factors: This investigation did not identify any unsafe actions or conditions that were not causal factors.

7. **Recommendations**

7.1. Safety Recommendation: There were no proposed actions to add new or amend existing U.S. laws or regulations, international requirements, industry standards, or U.S. Coast Guard policies and procedures as part of this investigation.

7.2. Administrative Recommendations:

7.2.1. It is recommended that the investigation be closed.



U.S. Coast Guard
Investigating Officer