

Trident History: LADY D – 2004 capsizing

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In 1996, the Coast Guard certificated a 36' pontoon vessel, water taxi, named the LADY D in Baltimore Harbor in Baltimore, MD. It successfully operated there for 8 years. On March 6, 2004, a nasty storm developed very rapidly and caused the LADY D to capsize with 25 people on board. Tragically, as a result of the casualty, 5 people died and many others received injuries, including one surviving child who sustained brain damage and from those injuries, required in-home assistance for life.

The Coast Guard Marine Board and the NTSB's investigations revealed that causal factors included:

- The weather, the company's policy, and the master's decision to operate in the storm,
- The LADY D was operating outside its original COI route restrictions AND ALSO
- **There was too much weight** on board the vessel

The CG's investigation started with reviewing the wreckage in 2004 and there were subsequently multiple studies of passenger weights and vessel's intact stability. Many people here at HQ were involved with the investigation and subsequent regulation development.

At the time when the former regulations were implemented, the average American weighed 140lbs. The average person aboard LADY D weighed 168lbs. The Coast Guard utilized the CDC to determine an average passenger's weight. **Now we use 185lb/per** passenger in our Simplified Stability Tests.

The Marine Safety Center also made changes to the Simplified Stability Tests and updated passenger crowding criteria to achieve the heeling moments required to prove a vessel's stability.

This is a great example of how Prevention can work together in promoting maritime safety! Investigating Officers and other SME's helped to conduct a thorough investigation of the marine casualty and made positive recommendations for regulatory/poicy reform. MSC worked to revise the stability tests, calculations used, and made sure that SST's are performed correctly. And our Marine Inspectors ensure that it's correct on board vessels. **All of these help to meet our main Prevention mission: to safeguard and PREVENT the loss of human life.**