



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Stewardship

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Washington, DC

Alert 06-09

PARASAILING INCIDENTS

Recently, two parasail vessel passengers lost their lives when the towline to which their parachute and harness were attached parted, causing the passengers and the parachute to descend. Subsequently, the two passengers were dragged along the water's surface by the parachute and ultimately were ensnared by the pilings and the structure of an ocean fishing pier. Although an investigation is underway and the causal factors surrounding this accident are being discovered, it appears that high winds and waves may have contributed to this casualty.

The Coast Guard **strongly reminds** the parasailing industry, its vessel owners, operators and shore side personnel to be vigilant in their observations of current and forecasted weather and sea conditions with particular attention paid to wind speed. Approaching weather patterns or squall lines present significant hazards to these operations due to sudden and dramatic shifts in wind direction, gusty winds, or even lightning. In a matter of a few short moments what is intended to be a pleasurable experience can become life threatening.

The Professional Association of Parasail Operators (PAPO) has developed and published parasail vessel Operating Standards and Guidelines for the safe parasail operations. These standards are available to PAPO members and the parasail industry. They can be obtained online at:

http://www.teampapo.org/documents/2006PAPOOSAG_000.pdf

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