SFAB Offshore Safety Guidelines for Recreational Tuna Fishers

Foreword - As with all fisheries, safety should always be the number one priority for every angler! Considering the distances that recreational anglers travel offshore in pursuit of Tuna, special attention should be paid to the following:

Weather:

- Monitor the "Current" weather conditions and "forecast" prior to leaving shore, and when you are at sea. Websites such as Environment Canada (https://weather.gc.ca) , Unisys (http://weather.unisys.com) and Windyty (https://www.windyty.com) can provide some insight, but remember the accuracy of the information can vary. When on the grounds, the weather channel on your VHF radio can provide forecast and current condition data.
- If the conditions deteriorate, have an exit plan agreed upon with your partner boats.

Stability:

- Know your vessel's safe weight capability; do not exceed that when loading gear, passengers and ice
- Stability – While different vessels can have varying weight capacities, it is important to know what the safe limits of your craft are. To determine what the capacity of your vessel is, it is a good idea to complete a stability test. This can be done by a naval architect, or by using the Transport Canada "Simplified Assessment of Intact Stability & Buoyancy of Small Non-pleasure Vessels". For more information on vessel stability and conducting the assessment, consult the following Transport Canada website: https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-vessel-stability-menu-1193.htm
- Safely secure all items, particularly coolers to prevent load shifting
- Be aware of "Free Surface Effect" and its effect on stability
- Store items as low as possible to lower center of gravity
- For more detailed information on Marine Safety, check out https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/menu.htm

Communication:

- Monitor Channel 72 and 16; a second back up radio is a good idea
- Carry 2 VHF radios with DSC capabilities / keep a waterproof VHF radio in your ditching bag
- Contact other fishing vessels on channel 72 to notify them you are entering a fishing area – this helps increase everyone's situational awareness

Collision Avoidance:

- Increase visibility by utilizing flags on masts and radar reflectors
- Radar with proximity alarms and AIS is recommended
- Maintain multiple sources of navigation such as, compass, GPS chart plotter, tablet or phone
- Always keep an active wheel watch – assign one driver
- Allow at least half mile distance between vessels
- Never cross in front of another vessel that is fishing

Safety / Emergency Preparedness- *In addition to the standard required equipment, the following is recommended:*

- File a detailed sail plan with a responsible shore party prior to departure, and ensure you have an agreed upon check in time and plan for notifying search authorities if overdue
- Boats should travel together in groups of 2 or more and stay in constant contact using the buddy system for mutual safety and rescue
- Carry and wear PFD's. Survival suits are advisable.
- Prepare a ditching bag that holds an EPIRB flare signal kit and extra flares, first aid kit, water, waterproof flashlight
- Conduct a pre-departure safety briefing to demonstrate all safety equipment, communication, EPIRB operation. Ensure everyone knows how to safely navigate the vessel
- Life ring, with throw rope
- Tow rope, bridle and drone
- Carry at least 2 ABC rated fire extinguishers
- To learn more about Marine Safety, check out Transport Canada's Marine Safety website (http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/menu.htm)

Fuel Management:

- Determine the distance you will cover prior to departure and ensure you carry enough fuel – calculate by fuel burn, anticipated speed over the distance travelled, plan for 1/3 fuel load for trip out plus fishing, 1/3 for return trip and 1/3 for reserve. Carry spare water separating fuel filters.

Maintenance:

- Maintenance – Using a checklist, ensure that all systems on your vessel are in good operating condition prior to departure. Carry spare parts and be prepared for mechanical breakdowns.
- Having more than one source of propulsion is advisable.