

## OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Prevention of Boat Accidents

In many of the navigable waterways in Assam, unregistered mechanized and non mechanized boats have been running without load line indications, life jackets or inflated tubes and engines -hulls mostly local made or impoverished versions, not checked for fitness. Lack of communication facility deprives such operators from adverse weather, flood warnings. Inconsistent or nonexistent ferry ghat infrastructures also contribute to accidents.

Whereas efforts by stakeholders are being made to get all mechanized boats duly registered after proper survey as per provisions of Inland Vessels Act 2021, development of conditions of ferry ghats, provisioning of life saving equipments, Assam Inland Water Transport Regulatory Authority (AIWTRA) has initiated action for framing rules covering operations of non mechanized boats as well.

Such boats do have little safety measures, yet daily passengers have no other means than to travel in such dangerous conditions.

The following prime factors contribute to boat accidents in most of the inland waterways -

- Unskilled crew.
- Severe overcrowding.
- Ageing boats.
- Faulty boat design and stability.

Further some operating issues also cause accidents such as

### OPERATORS DISTRACTION:

The person operating the boat or personal watercraft divert attention to other issues while driving boats may cause accidents

### RECKLESS OPERATION OF THE BOAT:

Many a times, boat accidents occur due to over speeding of boats or watercrafts. In addition negligence in boat operations also cause accidents.

### UNRULY OR RAMPANT PASSENGERS:

Sometimes unruly passengers in boats/ferries create ruckus or chaos on board, and may slips and fall overboard, etc. This also causes accidents due to Imbalance.

### Unauthorised Activity:

Unauthorised activities such as adventure and/or leisure activities over regular water vessel routes not only cause distraction for passenger carrying boat operators, but also increases possibility of collision resulting in drastically reduced safety protocols.

### DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL:

When a person has been drinking they are far more likely to fall overboard and drown. Alcohol also leads to a lack of judgment which results in many of the other factors listed here as

contributing to boat accidents. Person may be injured because of someone else's operating their boat or watercraft under the influence of alcohol.

**FAILURE TO POST A PROPER LOOKOUT:**

Many boating accidents, especially collisions occur because no one is watching for obstacles, other boats, etc.

**INEXPERIENCED OPERATOR:**

Just as car accidents are more common among new drivers, anyone who is new to operating a boat or a personal watercraft is at higher risk for causing or being involved in a boating accident.

It has therefore become extremely necessary to put in place a rigorous mechanism by deploying vigilance officers at the field level for detecting faults and insisting corrective actions for eliminating the above factors causing boat accidents.

AIWTRA circulars of various safety aspects issued, RA/AIWT/4/2019/487 dt.16/05/2023, RA/AIWT/4/2019/495 dt 19/05/2023, RA/AIWT/4/2019/494 dt-20/05/2023, RA/AIWT/4/2019/498 dt.22/05/23, and may also be referred.



**Chairperson  
Assam IWT Regulatory Authority  
Ulubari, Guwahati-7**

**Memo No.RA/AIWT/4/2019**

**Date 22/5/2023**

Copy to:

1. PS to Minister, Transport Department, Government of Assam Dispur, for information.
2. The Secretary, to the Government of Assam, Transport Department, Dispur Guwahati-6, for information.
3. The State Project Director, AIWTD Society, Ulubari, Guwahati-7, for information and necessary action.
4. The Director, IWT, Assam, Ulubari, Guwahati-7, for information and necessary action. He shall ensure wide publicity.
5. ALL DC's, for information and necessary action.
6. ALL Superintendents of Police, for information and necessary action.
7. All the Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Parishads, for information and necessary action.
8. The Principal Secretaries of all autonomous District Councils for information and necessary action.
9. Office file.



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