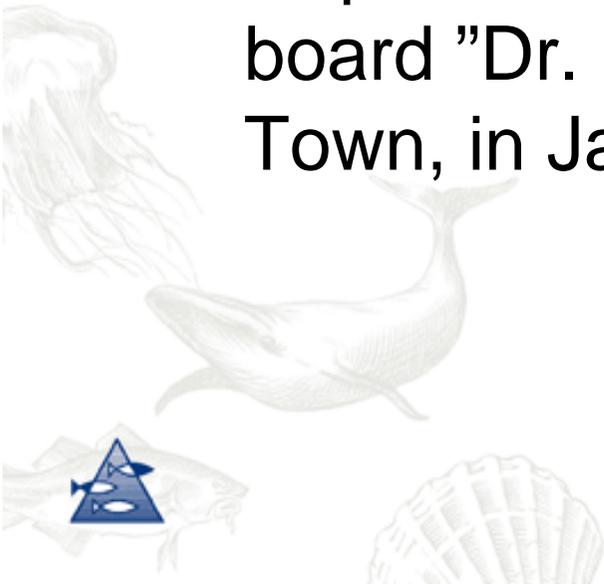


Lessons learned from deaths among crew

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ERVO 2009

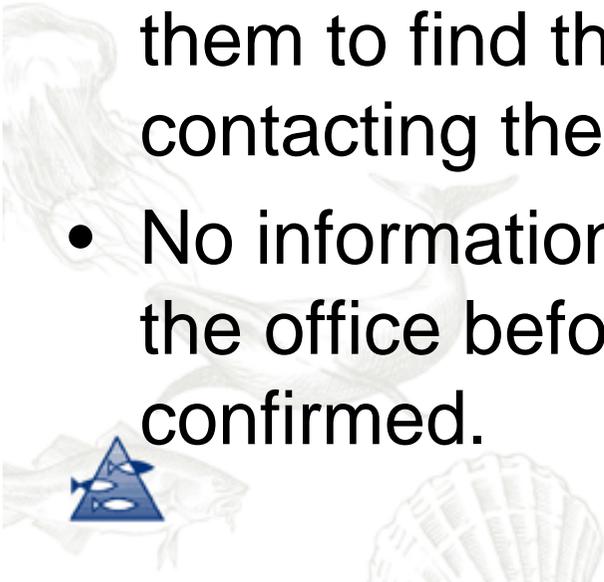
Background

- Deck hand Alf Kausland died in an accident, falling down stairs outside his cabin in the middle of the night, on board "Håkon Mosby" in Longyearbyen, Svalbard in September 2005
- Captain Atle Sangolt died in his sleep on board "Dr. Fridtjof Nansen", outside Cape Town, in January 2009



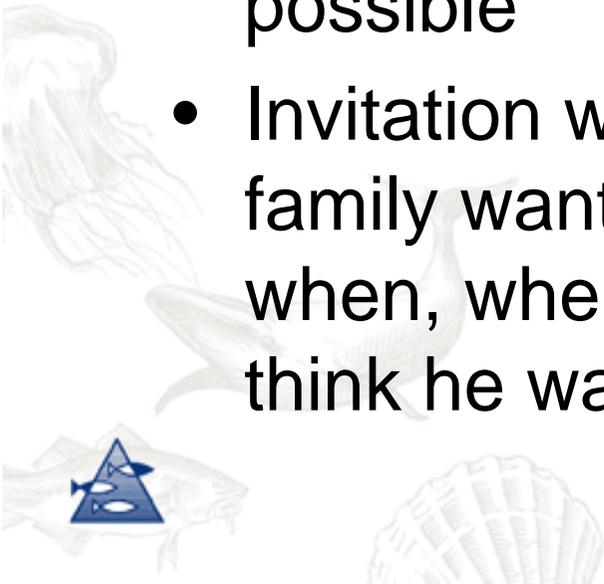
Initial phase

- On both occasions we in the office were informed by the ship early in the morning
- First action was to order the ship to close down on communications with "the outside world" to avoid that the family was told by someone else than the local priest or the police
- Second action to call the local police station and ask them to find the local priest and have him/her contacting the family immediately
- No information given to any one inside or outside the office before contact with the family was confirmed.



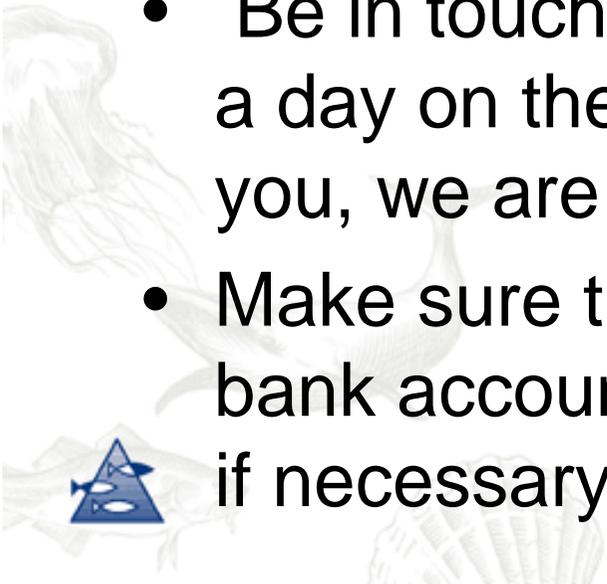
Contact the family

- We made contact with the priest as soon as we knew his name and mobile phone number (happened to be the same one in both cases) and through him we asked permission to call the widow and offer our assistance, and invited our selves to visit the family as soon as possible
- Invitation was received right away, and the family wants information! What happened, when, where, how etc. Did he suffer? Do you think he was scared and so on.



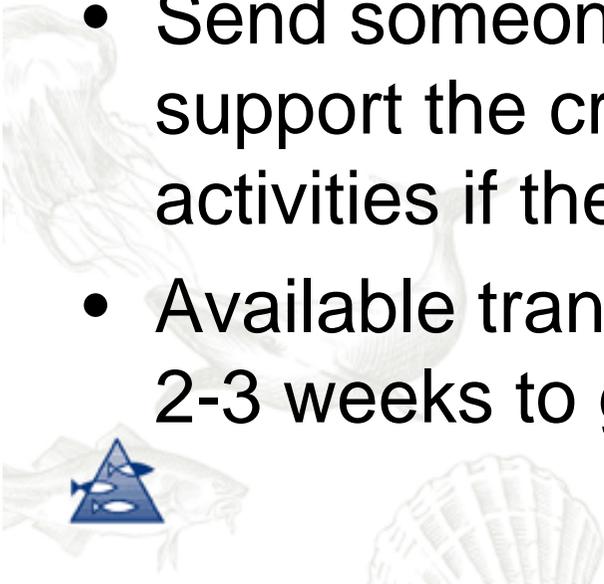
Support the family

- The family needs all the help and support they can get from the first minute and until the funeral is over.
- Bring in someone who was there when it happened, preferably the captain or chief mate, to meet the family and inform them about what happened and answer questions the family have
- Be in touch with the family every day, many times a day on the phone, just to say "we are here for you, we are here to help you in any way possible"
- Make sure the family has access to all the family bank accounts and offer them economical support if necessary



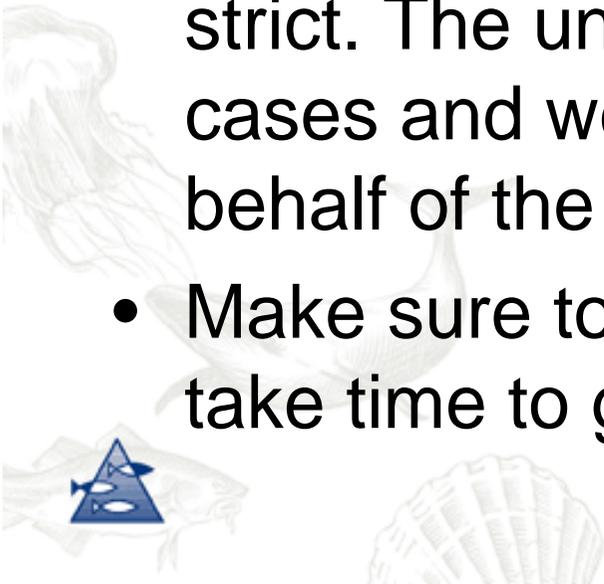
Local police, autopsy, transport etc

- Sudden death on a ship means police investigation
- Autopsi may be mandatory before the corpse can be transported out of the country
- Contact your foreign service and ask for support from embassy, consulate
- Use your local agent to make things happen!
- Send someone from the office to the ship ASAP to support the crew and follow up on the local activities if the ship is in a foreign country
- Available transport for coffins is limited. It can take 2-3 weeks to get the coffin home!



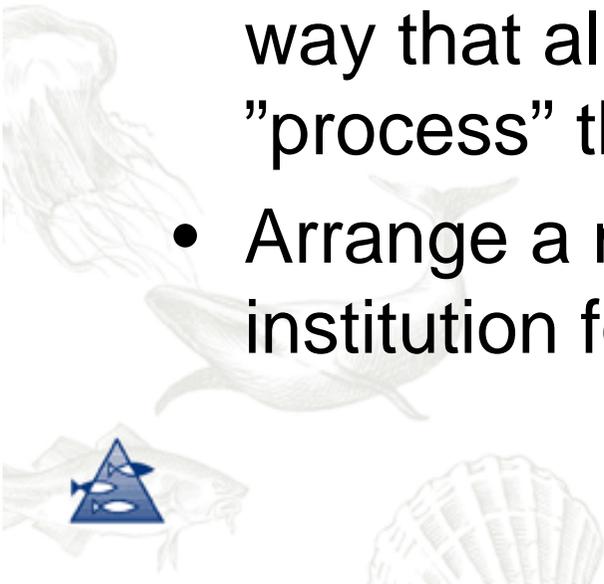
Undertakers

- We had close contact with the undertakers in Longyearbyen and Cape Town, where the body was sent from and in Bergen, where it was received and buried.
- It is a whole host of details to be sorted out in order to get the paperwork done if the death happened abroad, and the procedures are very strict. The undertakers knows how to handle such cases and we took care of all issues/questions on behalf of the family, and paid all extra costs.
- Make sure to inform the family early that it will take time to get the deceased home from abroad!



Memorial seremonies

- Modern people are not familiar with sudden death, even "grown up sailors" do not handle such incidents well
- Give the crew time to mourn. Bring in a seafarers chaplain, a local chaplain or some other "professional" to arrange a memorial service, religious seremony or some other way that all on board get the opportunity to "process" the sudden tragedy.
- Arrange a memorial seremony in the office or institution for those who was not on board



Funeral

- If the coffin comes from abroad, make sure the family get the opportunity to meet the coffin at the airport on arrival
- It is generally not a good idea to ask for a last look at the deceased if it has gone a week or two since the time of death
- Make sure that as many as possible has the opportunity to participate in the funeral. It means everything to the family!
- Ask the family if someone from the ship, from the RV operators office or from the institute can give a personal speech during the service



Returning to every day life

- Nothing else matters the first hours and first couple of days after the incident
- Only when the funeral is over is "every day life" back again
- It is important to make sure that the fleet and the office is "back to business" as soon as possible, but for the family of the deceased it is not "business as usual" for a long time, maybe a year or more
- Important to check from time to time if things are working OK for them, especially to check if the monetary side of things are handled correctly from the employer's side



In summary

- Plan and prepare for such incidents
- It is too late to start thinking about it when the phone call comes!
- Do not be afraid of showing compassion, do not be afraid of interfering, do not be afraid of coming too close to people you do not know
- Be there for the family, make your self available at all times
- You will regret what you did not do, not what you did

