



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Northeast Fisheries Science Center  
166 Water Street  
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Observers

FROM: David Potter  
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Vessel Sinks with Observer Onboard

On September the 28, 2007, at approximately 1700, the New Bedford based Scallop F/V Jacob Alan starting taking on water and the crew was unable to control the flooding. NEFOP Observer Meghan Minor was onboard the vessel at the time of the incident.

Meghan activated her Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) and the Captain activated the vessel's EPIRB and made several MAYDAY calls. At approximately 1900 all crew members, including Meghan, entered the vessel's life raft that had already been deployed and was tied alongside. Within an hour or so the F/V Sancor, responding to the MAYDAY and an alert sent out by the USCG, came alongside the life raft and brought everyone onboard. The F/V Sancor then steamed in to New Bedford with the rescued crew and observer. They arrived in New Bedford around 0540 with the tired, but uninjured, crew and observer. The vessel was met by USCG, NMFS and AIS staff. After a brief interview by the USCG all were released to go home and get some much needed rest.

Meghan and the crew did everything exactly as it should have been done. Meghan's PLB worked perfectly and a signal with her position and her unique identification was received by the USCG within minutes. The USCG deployed a Falcon jet, Helicopter and Cutter to the scene and sent out an alert to all vessels in the vicinity. Meghan said that the Captain and crew knew exactly what to do and reacted in a calm, organized manner. As it turns out the vessel had conducted abandon ship drills, with Meghan, the day before.

This incident had a favorable ending because the observer and crew were trained, prepared and reacted appropriately. We are proud of Meghan's performance in remaining composed and following her training. The importance of being prepared can not be over emphasized.

