

3 SPEND 5 HOURS OVERBOARD

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The Coast Guard and a private fishing vessel teamed up early today to rescue three people who abandoned their boat and spent five hours in the Gulf of Mexico off Fort Myers.

Coast Guard Petty Officer Luis Diaz said the agency received a "Mayday" call at 1:05 a.m. from the 34-foot fishing vessel Lady Audrey. The three occupants said their craft was sinking and they were abandoning ship.

The Coast Guard in St. Petersburg sent a utility boat and a helicopter to the scene. In the meantime, the private fishing vessel Sea Wolf located the Lady Audrey and reported it had capsized.

Following a search of the area, the Sea Wolf spotted the three occupants of the Lady Audrey and pulled them from the water. They were then transferred to the Cape Fox and were being taken to Fort Myers.

Diaz said the three appeared to be in good shape, even though they spent five hours in the water.

Survey shows

early drug start

ST. PETERSBURG -- A survey taken Sept. 10 of 800 clients of Straight Inc., a nationally known drug treatment program based in St. Petersburg, revealed almost half of them first used drugs before age 12, according to a report released Monday.

The 800 clients surveyed at clinics around the country ranged in age from 12 to 21.

Randy Ratliff, program director of Straight in St. Petersburg, said the survey was conducted to help determine the trends and patterns of drug use among the young people being treated.

WASTE CENTER

OPENS

PINELLAS PARK -- The first hazardous-waste transfer center in the Tampa Bay area opened in Pinellas Park Tuesday, two weeks ahead of schedule.

The state Department of Environmental Regulation approved the operation of the center by GSX Chemical Service Monday.

The company -- previously known as Gulf Coast Environmental -- will store hazardous waste and then transfer it out of state in bulk shipments.

- Memo: AROUND THE AREA

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