



Fig. 3.10 Stability of floating bodies.

Modern ships can have stability problems as well: overloaded ferry boats have capsized when passengers all gathered on one side of the upper deck, shifting the CG laterally. In stacking containers high on the deck of a container ship, care is needed to avoid raising the center of gravity to a level that may result in the unstable condition depicted in Fig. 3.10*b*.

For a vessel with a relatively flat bottom, as shown in Fig. 3.10*a*, the restoring moment increases as roll angle becomes larger. At some angle, typically that at which the edge of the deck goes below water level, the restoring moment peaks and starts to decrease. The moment may become zero at some large roll angle, known as the angle of vanishing stability. The vessel may capsize if the roll exceeds this angle; then, if still intact, the vessel may find a new equilibrium state upside down.

The actual shape of the restoring moment curve depends on hull shape. A broad beam gives a large lateral shift in the line of action of the buoyancy force and thus a high restoring moment. High freeboard above the water line increases the angle at which the moment curve peaks, but may make the moment drop rapidly above this angle.

Sailing vessels are subjected to large lateral forces as wind engages the sails (a boat under sail in a brisk wind typically operates at a considerable roll angle). The lateral wind force must be counteracted by a heavily weighted keel extended below the hull bottom. In small sailboats, crew members may lean far over the side to add additional restoring moment to prevent capsizing [2].

Within broad limits, the buoyancy of a surface vessel is adjusted automatically as the vessel rides higher or lower in the water. However, craft that operate fully submerged must actively adjust buoyancy and gravity forces to remain neutrally buoyant. For submarines this is accomplished using tanks which are flooded to reduce excess buoyancy or blown out with compressed air to increase buoyancy [1]. Airships may vent gas to descend or drop ballast to rise. Buoyancy of a hot-air balloon is controlled by varying the air temperature within the balloon envelope.

For deep ocean dives use of compressed air becomes impractical because of the high pressures (the Pacific Ocean is over 10 km deep; seawater pressure at this depth is greater than 1000 atmospheres!). A liquid such as gasoline, which is buoyant in seawater, may be used to provide buoyancy. However, because gasoline is more compressible than water, its buoyancy decreases as the dive gets deeper. Therefore it is necessary to carry and drop ballast to achieve positive buoyancy for the return trip to the surface.

The most structurally efficient hull shape for airships and submarines has a circular cross-section. The buoyancy force passes through the center of the circle. Therefore, for roll stability the CG must be located below the hull centerline. Thus the crew compartment of an airship is placed beneath the hull to lower the CG.

3.7 Fluids in Rigid-Body Motion (on the Web)