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**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION INTO  
“MAN OVERBOARD”  
FROM A RIB IN CORK HARBOUR  
9th JUNE 2012**

**REPORT No. MCIB/217  
(No.3 of 2013)**

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## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. At approximately 21:00hrs on the 9th of June Mr Owen Corkery departed Crosshaven Co. Cork in his RIB on route to his mooring in Ringaskiddy Co. Cork.
- 1.2. Mr Corkery was the sole occupant of the RIB and was an experienced motor boat enthusiast with many years experience including off shore RIB runs to the UK.
- 1.3. Approximately 10 minutes after departure Mr Owen Corkery entered the water.
- 1.4. The out board engine on his RIB failed to cut out and the RIB circled back hitting Mr Corkery on several occasions.
- 1.5. Mr Corkery sustained serious injuries to his head, his back and lost his left arm just above the elbow.

## **2. FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **2.1. Ship Particulars**

2.1.1 Party Involved: Owner, Mr Owen Corkery, Carrigaline, Co. Cork

2.1.2 RIB details: Serial No: IE-GFV77502B707

Type: Excalibur 800s

Length: 8m

Year of Build: 2007

Hull Material: GRP and Rubber

Motor: 250Hp two stroke Evinrude

Accommodation: Forward storage cabin + 6 Seats

#### **2.1.3 Other Equipment onboard**

- Colour chart plotter
- VHF
- Compass
- Nav Lights
- Spot Light
- CD Player

#### **2.1.4 Safety Equipment**

- Life jackets

## 3. NARRATIVE

### *Events prior to the incident:*

- 3.1 On the day of the incident the weather was dry with clear sunny spells. The wind was from the southwest between 3 to 10 knots. Visibility was good to moderate. The sea state was calm to slight waves. High water in Cobh was at 22:14hrs.
- 3.2 Mr Corkery had spent the early part of the evening with friends and family and had gone to Crosshaven to drop some friends off.
- 3.3 At approximately 21:00hrs he departed Crosshaven to return his boat to its mooring in Ringaskiddy.
- 3.4 Two witnesses, Mr Dick Gibson of Crosshaven and Mr Paul Bryans of Carrigaline recall watching the RIB depart Crosshaven from their vantage point in Camden House.
- 3.5 Mr Owen Corkery travelled down the Owenboy River before turning in a northerly direction to pass through the inner channel between Spike Island and the main land.

### *The Incident:*

- 3.6 At 21:10hrs Mr Owen Corkery was travelling through the inner channel between the main land and Spike Island. He was standing along side the helm console as he approached Paddy's Point.
- 3.7 Shortly after, Mr Corkery was thrown from the boat.
- 3.8 The boat's engine did not cut out and the vessel continued running, travelling in an approximate 50m-diameter circle.
- 3.9 Although it is unclear how many times the boat struck Mr Owen Corkery, it is certain that he was struck several times, sustaining injuries to his forehead, the back of his head, back, and losing an arm.

### *Events after the incident:*

- 3.10 At 21:12hrs Mr Paul Bryans noticed, that Mr Owen Corkery's RIB was travelling in an anti-clockwise circle, with a 50-meter or so diameter between Spike Island and the bridge to Haulbowline. Viewing the vessel through a telescope he noticed that there was no one in the boat. Mr Paul Bryans asked Mr Dick Gibson to verify that he was not mistaken.

- 3.11 At 21:14hrs both men raised the alarm. Mr Paul Bryans called the emergency services on 999 whilst Mr Dick Gibson called the Crosshaven RNLI directly.
- 3.12 At 21:17hrs Launch Coxswain Con Crowley, Launch crew Gerry Moran and Pilot Nicholas Bourke, over-heard a Coast Guard request for assistance from Port Operations in Cork Harbour, as a RIB had been spotted travelling at speed around a casualty. The Launch Coxswain, Con Crowley, responded by VHF that they were heading to the scene directly.
- 3.13 At 21:20hrs the Cork Harbour Pilot boat “*Sonia*” arrived on scene spotting Mr Owen Corkery in the water between Paddy’s Point and the south end of the pier at Spike Island. They also spotted his boat travelling in a tight anti-clockwise circle to the north of Mr Corkery.
- 3.14 At 21:22hrs the crew of the “*Sonia*” recovered Mr Owen Corkery from the water. He was incoherent and bleeding heavily. He had been calling the name Pat several times, which gave rise to the idea that he may not have been on his own in the RIB.
- 3.15 Mr Owen Corkery was wearing a PFD (Personal Flotation Device) which operated correctly. However, he was not wearing warm clothes or shoes.
- 3.16 The Sonia Pilot boat requested medical assistance for Mr Owen Corkery and asked where the Ambulance was en route to.
- 3.17 The RNLI life boat arrived along side the pilot boat and Doctor John Murphy and a crew member trained in first response boarded the boat and took over first aid on the casualty.
- 3.18 The RNLI then travelled to Mr Owen Corkery’s RIB and took control of it.
- 3.19 The Pilot boat then proceeded to Crosshaven and at 21:37hrs it berthed along side the pontoon, at the Hugh Coveney pier, at which point the casualty was brought ashore.
- 3.20 At 21:43hrs the RNLI RIB, two volunteers RIBS and a Navy RIB return to the scene to search for Mr Owen Corkery’s arm and to verify that there were no other victims.
- 3.21 At 21:47hrs the Pilot boat Sonia stood down and returned to normal duties.
- 3.22 At 22:01hrs Mr Owen Corkery was transferred to an Ambulance en route to Cork University Hospital.
- 3.23 At 22:42hrs the Search party was stood down as it had been verified that Mr Owen Corkery was alone in the RIB.

## 4. ANALYSIS

- 4.1 When inspected, the RIB was found to be free from damage. There was however no CE mark or evidence that the vessel was Recreational Craft Directive (RCD) approved.
- 4.2 The Kill Cord arrangement was found to be non-functional, it was not possible to determine the cause of it's malfunction, however the following was noted:  
a) The engine started with or without the Kill Cord attached. b) Removal of the Kill Cord whilst the engine was running didn't stop the engine. c) Manual manipulation of the Kill Cord receiver didn't stop the engine. d) The Kill Cord is, in all probability malfunctioning as a result of an internal electrical failure rather than an external mechanical one.
- 4.3 In interview Mr Corkery explained that he was aware of the malfunctioning Kill Cord arrangement and as a result he did not have it attached to his person at the time of the accident. During the same interview Mr Corkery went on to explain that he was not seated whilst driving his RIB and was standing beside the helm position on the deck between the helm console and the sponson.
- 4.4 Whilst Mr Corkery is a very experienced powerboat operator, he has never completed a recognised powerboat-handling course.
- 4.5 When Mr Corkery was recovered from the water he was not wearing any shoes. His own statement of the incident suggests he did not have time to remove them therefore it is likely that he was not wearing any when he entered the water.
- 4.6 Whilst there is conflicting information with regard to the speed of the vessel, eyewitness evidence given by both the Pilot boat crew and the men that called the emergency services concur that the boat was turning in anti-clockwise circles. This indicated that Mr Corkery was thrown from the vessel whilst making a port hand turn.
- 4.7 In interview Mr Corkery stated that he believed that he went directly under the RIB when he hit the water. On the balance of probability it is more likely that his RIB circled back and hit him. This may account for the difference in reported speed by the eyewitness and the pilot boat as the vessel could have slowed as a result of repeated collision with Mr Corkery.



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Kill Cord arrangement on Mr Owen Corkery's RIB was not functioning correctly.
- 5.2 Mr Owen Corkery was aware of the malfunctioning Kill Cord system.
- 5.3 Mr Owen Corkery was thrown from the vessel during a port hand turn as he altered course from the inner channel to pass under the bridge at Haulbowline.
- 5.4 Mr Owen Corkery was thrown from the starboard side of his boat as he was standing outside of the helm position on the starboard side of the boat, which corresponds to the outside side of the boat in a port hand turn.
- 5.5 Mr Owen Corkery was standing beside the wheel rather than sitting on the pilot seat, this would have made him considerably more likely to be thrown from the vessel.
- 5.6 Not wearing shoes would have reduced Mr Owen Corkery's grip while standing.
- 5.7 Mr Owen Corkery suffered his injuries as a result of the vessel continuing its port turn and returning to hit him. This would not have happened if the Kill Cord system was working correctly.

## 6. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Kill Cord is an essential part of safety equipment for all open motorboats. They should always be used and should be checked regularly.
- 6.2 The helm of a high-speed craft should always remain seated, even at low speed, as a small throttle shift or turn of the wheel can have profound effects on centrifugal and G forces.
- 6.3 All pleasure craft owners should complete a recognised powerboat handling course, regardless of previous experience.
- 6.4 Owners and operators of recreational craft should be aware and follow the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft.

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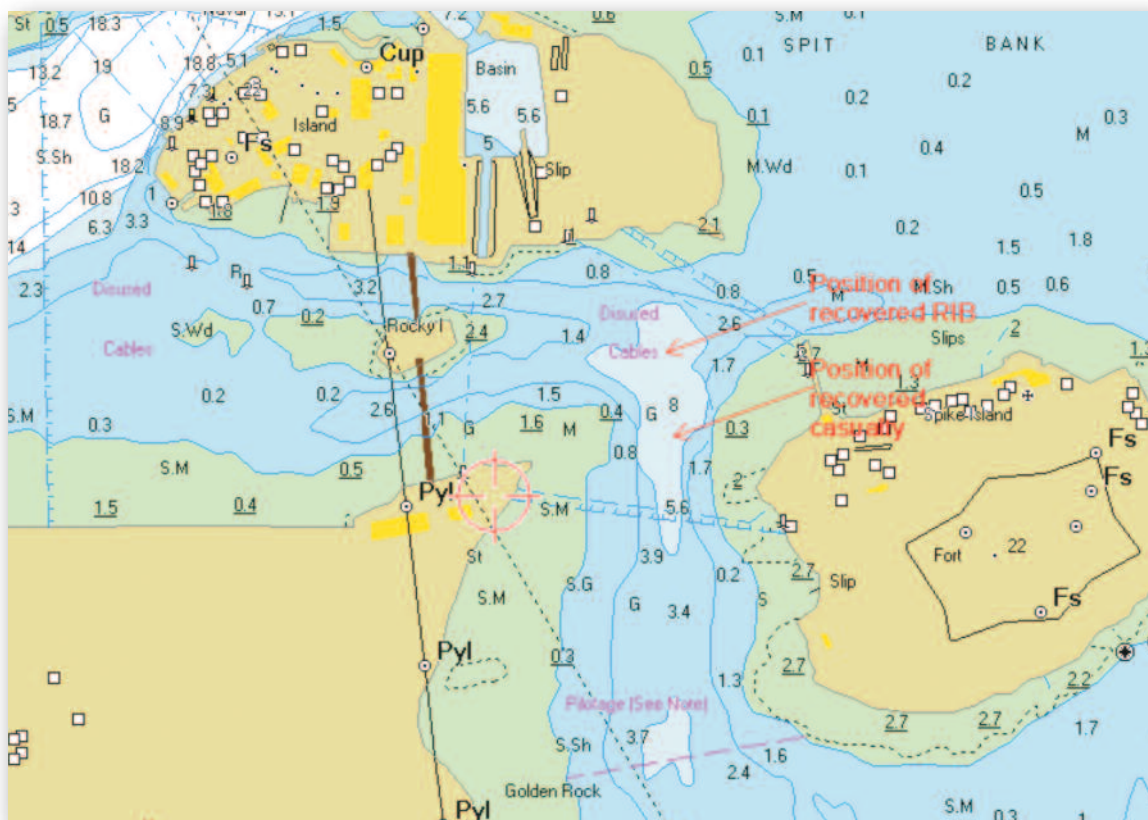
Appendix 7.1 Aerial Photograph of the route the RIB took from Crosshaven to the accident site.



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## APPENDIX 7.3

Appendix 7.3 Chart showing accident site and approximate recovery position for Causality and RIB.





Appendix 7.4 Aerial Photograph of accident site and recovery site.



## APPENDIX 7.5

### Appendix 7.5 RIB at time of inspection in Safe Haven.



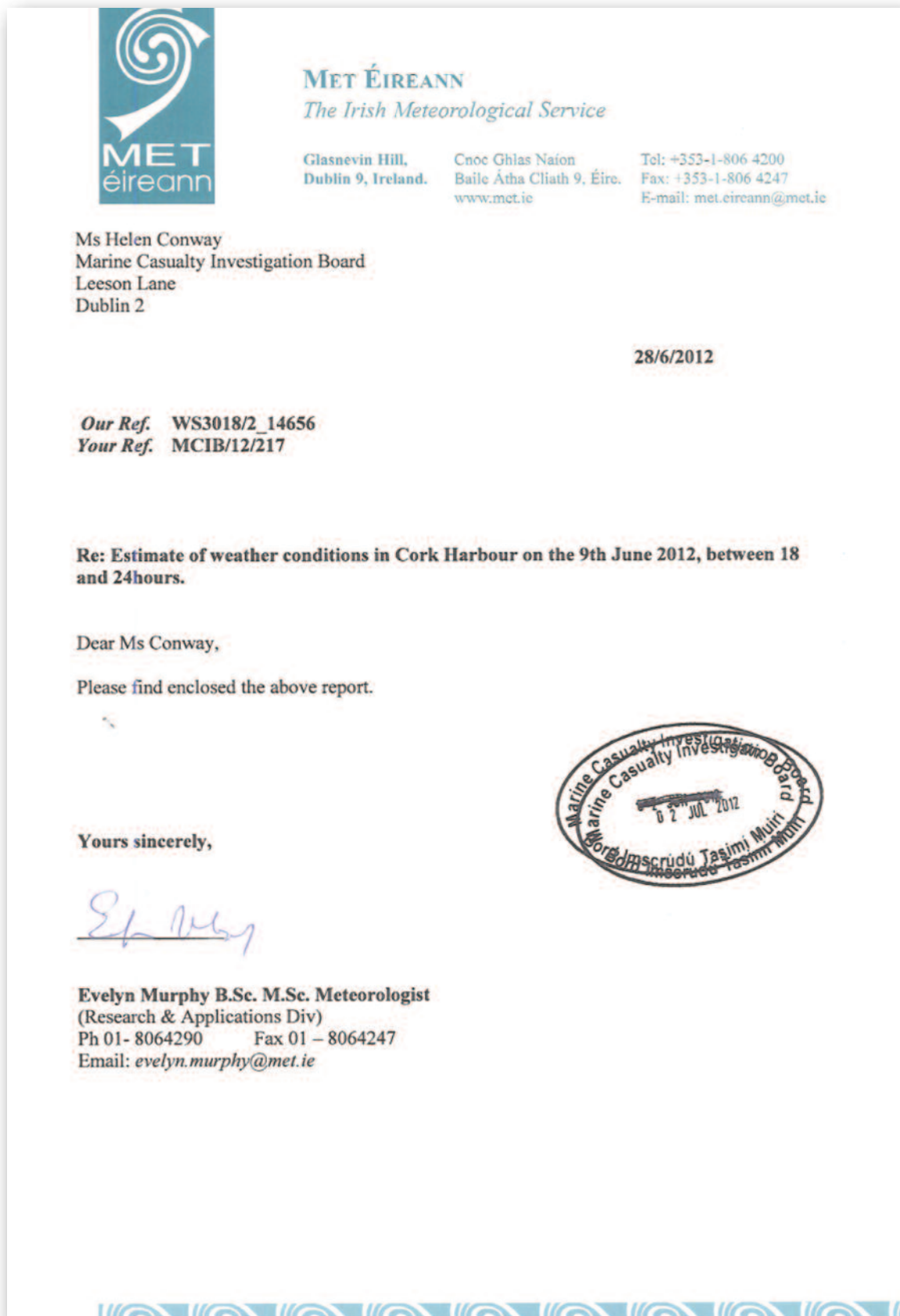
7.5.1 The hull and shaft were inspected during the investigation, there was no sign of impact damage found.



7.5.2 Helm Position and chair.



Appendix 7.6 Weather for the Period.



### Appendix 7.6 Weather for the Period.



**MET ÉIREANN**  
*The Irish Meteorological Service*

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28/6/2012

**Our Ref.** WS3018/2\_14656  
**Your Ref.** MCIB/12/217

**Re: Estimate of weather conditions in Cork Harbour on the 9th June 2012, between 18 and 24 hours.**

**General Situation**

A weak area of High pressure over Ireland as frontal troughs approached from the south-west.

**Details:**

**Winds:** Light variable winds, mainly from the south or south-west, Force 1 to 3 (or 3 to 10 knots)

**Weather:** dry with a few sunny breaks at first, but generally rather cloudy, and fog was reported at Cork Airport towards midnight.

**Visibility:** good at first, became moderate at times during the evening

**Seastate:** Smooth or slight waves in Cork Harbour. Offshore outside Cork Harbour, M5 reported Significant wave heights of close to 1 metre, during the period.

**Evelyn Murphy B.Sc. M.Sc. Meteorologist**  
Research & Applications Division  
Met Éireann

## Appendix 7.6 Weather for the Period.



**MET ÉIREANN**  
*The Irish Meteorological Service*

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Beaufort Scale of Wind					
Force	Description	Speed* knots	Speed* km/hr	Specification -sea	Wave height** (metres)
0	Calm	<1	<1	Sea like mirror	
1	Light air	1-3	1-5	Ripples	0.1 (0.1)
2	Light breeze	4-6	6-11	Small wavelets	0.2 (0.3)
3	Gentle breeze	7-10	12-19	Large wavelets, crests begin to break	0.6 (1)
4	Moderate breeze	11-16	20-28	Small waves becoming longer, frequent white horses	1 (1.5)
5	Fresh breeze	17-21	29-38	Moderate waves, many white horses, chance of spray	2 (2.5)
6	Strong breeze	22-27	39-49	Large waves, white foam crests, probably some spray	3 (4)
7	Near gale	28-33	50-61	Sea heaps up, streaks of white foam	4 (5.5)
8	Gale	34-40	62-74	Moderately high waves of greater length	5.5 (7.5)
9	Strong gale	41-47	75-88	High waves, dense streaks of foam, spray may reduce visibility	7 (10)
10	Storm	48-55	89-102	Very high waves, long overhanging crests, visibility affected	9 (12.5)
11	Violent storm	56-63	103-117	Exceptionally high waves, long white foam patches cover sea	11.5 (16)
12	Hurricane	64+	117 & over	Air filled with foam and spray, sea completely white	14 (-)

\*Speed = mean speed at a standard height of 10 metres.  
\*\*Wave height is only intended as a guide to what may be expected in the open sea.  
Bracketed figures indicate the probable maximum wave height.

### Wave Heights / State of Sea

The wave height is the vertical distance between the crest and the preceding or following trough. The table below gives a description of the wave system associated with a range of significant wave heights. The Significant wave height is defined as the average height of the highest one-third of the waves. (It is very close to the value of wave height given when making visual observations of wave height.)

Sea State (Descriptive)	Significant Wave height in meters
Calm	0 – 0.1
Smooth (Wavelets)	0.1 – 0.5
Slight	0.5 – 1.25
Moderate	1.25 – 2.5
Rough	2.5 – 4
Very rough	4 – 6
High	6 – 9
Very high	9 – 14
Phenomenal	Over 14

Individual waves in the wave train will have heights in excess of the significant height. The highest wave of all will have a height about twice the significant height

Visibility Descriptions of visibility mean the following:

Visibility (Descriptive)	Visibility in nautical miles (kilometres)
Good	More than 5 nm (> 9 km)
Moderate	2 – 5 nm (4 – 9 km)
Poor	0.5 – 2 nm (1 – 4 km)
Fog	Less than 0.5 nm (< 1km)

## 8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

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**Note:** The address and contact details of the individual respondent have been obscured for privacy reasons



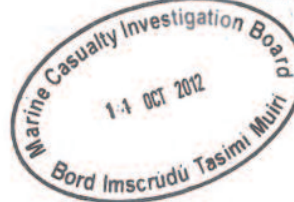
Your Ref. MCIB/12/217

Our Ref. 22/52/2

October 2012



Irish Coast Guard  
GARDA CÓSTA na hÉIREANN



Ms. Assumpta Dowd  
Secretariat  
Marine Casualty Investigation Board  
Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2

Re. Draft Report of the Investigation into Incident -Man overboard a RIB in Cork Harbour on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

Dear Ms. Dowd,

The draft report in relation to this incident has been reviewed and the Coast Guard would like to draw your attention to the following items:

- 6.3 The Coast Guard strongly agrees with recommendation 6.3 in that all who go to sea in charge of craft should undertake appropriate basic and refresher training regardless of perceived personal experience. Mr. Corkery is indeed lucky to be alive.

The Coast Guard would like to add two additional points. Whilst it appears that in this instance witnesses called 112/999 and the RNLI at the same time, it is not generally desirable. A general call on VHF Channel 16 and dialling 112/999 will guarantee a more curtailed response than phoning any particular agency directly.

Secondly, the Coast Guard feel that the report should make a strong recommendation against anyone venturing to sea or on the water on their own. It is neither safe nor conducive to good seamanship.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Reynolds  
Director

Director's Office, Irish Coast Guard, Department of Transport, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, Ireland.  
Oifig an Stiúrthóra, Garda Cóstá na hÉireann, An Roinn Iompair, Lána Chill Mochargán, Baile Átha Cliath 2, Éire.  
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## MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this correspondence.

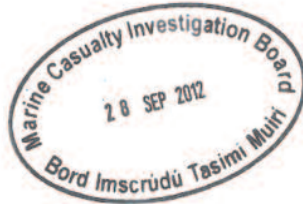


### Mr Bryans suggested the following changes:

1. He suggested switching points 3.4 and 3.5.
2. Changing 3.10 to read:  
At 21:12 Mr Paul Bryans noticed, that Mr Owen Corkery's RIB was travelling at speed in an anti-clockwise circle, with a 50-meter or so diameter between Spike Island and the bridge to Haulbowline. Checking by viewing the vessel through a telescope he observed that there was no one in the boat and a person in the water. Mr Paul Bryans asked Mr Dick Gibson to verify that he was not mistaken.
3. Inserting a new point 3.12 reading:  
Returning from the telephone call Mr Paul Bryans observed that the RIB had slowed considerably but was still travelling in a circle.

### MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this correspondence and has made the necessary amendments.



24 Sept 2012

Dear John O'Donnell.

I am writing to you in the recent response on the Draft Report on my accident in the Rib in Cork Harbour on 9th June 2012.

I have a few things highlighted and change to the draft Report.

Please forward me another copy when the changes have been completed before doing anymore with this report.

Thank you for your help and support.

Owen Corkery  
Aileen Corkery

### Mr Corkery suggested the following changes:

1. Factual Information:  
RIB Details: IE-GFV77502B707  
Year of Build: 2007
2. Point 3.13:  
Amend spelling of his name to Owen Corkery
3. Comment on Point 5.3:  
The boat hit something and then went into a turn and a couple of 100 yards away from the bridge. I was mid way from Spike Island when I was thrown from my boat.
4. Comment on Point 5.6:  
I was wearing leather sandals and a full sleeved jacket (Gill Jacket), colour red.
5. Comment on Appendix 7.2:  
This arial chart is wrong, I have marked where my accident happened.

### MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB has noted this response and has made amendments as necessary. However points 5.3 and 5.6 need further comment. There is no evidence that the RIB did or did not collide with some object in the water though no sighting was made of this object by the crew of the rescuing pilot boat. The position of the casualty was accurately noted by the pilot boat and therefore the report stands on this issue. The pilot boat crew states that Mr Corkery was not wearing any shoes when recovered from the water.