



**REPORT of the
INVESTIGATION
into the
LOSS OF A CREWMAN
OVERBOARD
from the
IRISH FISHING VESSEL
"DUN EOCHALLA"
in THE CELTIC SEA
on 03 MARCH 2000.**

The Marine Casualty Investigation Board was established on the 5th, June 2002 under The Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act 2000

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SYNOPSIS

1. SYNOPSIS.

On February 29th 2000, the Irish registered fishing vessel MFV "Dun Eochalla" sailed from Waterford. The vessel proceeded to beam trawl for monk and megrim around position 51 20 North, 00700 West in the Celtic Sea. There was a crew of four on board.

On 3rd March 2000, while hauling nets in position 50 50 North, 006 45 West, one of the crew, Mr. Maurice Swaine, was pulled overboard when he became entangled in the bag rope. It would appear that the weight suddenly came onto the rope and unfortunately he was standing in the bight of the rope which tightened around his left ankle and pulled him overboard. Weather conditions were moderate to rough.

In an attempt to rescue Mr. Swaine, the skipper entered the water attached to a line and made a brave attempt to get Mr. Swaine back on board. Unfortunately, he was not able to hold onto Mr. Swaine in the conditions and he appeared to sink.

The rescue services were contacted and assisted in the search for Mr. Swaine, with other vessels, throughout the day. To date, Mr. Swaine's body has not been recovered.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 Particulars of the Vessel "Dun Eochalla"

Name:	"Dun Eochalla"
Built:	1955 by N.V. Scheepsbouwwerft, Woubrugge, Holland.
Owner:	Brendan McGrath, Duncannon, New Ross, Co. Wexford.
Purchased:	June 1989.
Registered Length:	103.30 feet.
Registered Breadth:	23.10 feet.
Registered Depth:	11.65 feet.
Gross Tonnage:	197.94 tons.
Register Tonnage:	89.19 tons
Port of Registry:	Sligo.
Official Number:	401918.
Machinery:	One Mirrlees Blackstone 8 Cylinder Main Engine. B.H.P. 1000. Engine made in 1973. The engine gives an estimated speed of 10 knts.
Description of Vessel:	Clencher built, steel fishing vessel with a cruiser stern. The vessel has six watertight bulkheads fitted. The vessel was being used as a beam trawler fishing for monk and megrim.

2.2 Lifesaving Appliances available on board.

Lifejackets:	Nine.
Lifebuoys:	Four.
Pyrotechnics:	Twelve parachute flares.
Line throwing apparatus:	One.
Liferafts:	Two, both fitted with hydrostatic release units.

2.3 Navigational aids provided on board.

One Magnetic Compass.
One Furuno Radar.
One Koden Radar.
One Furuno Colour Video sounder.
One Racal Decca fish plotter.
One Shipmate RS 2500 fish plotter.
One Electronic compass sensor for Autopilot.
One DGPS Navigator MLR FX 412.
One GPS Navigator Koden KGP 98.
One ICOM VHF Installation.
One Sailor MF Installation.
One Sailor VHF Installation.

2.4 The crew of the "Dun Eochalla" on 3rd March 2000 consisted of the following persons.

Mr. Philip James Mitchell aged 30 years of 14 Bridge Street, Waterford. Mr. Mitchell is the holder of an U.K. Deck Officer Class 2 Fishing Vessel Certificate of Competency No. 1252, which he obtained in 1998. He has been fishing at sea for about 13 years and was the Skipper of the vessel. He joined the vessel in October 1999.

Mr. Derek Cullen aged 24 years of Fethard on Sea, Co. Wexford. Mr. Cullen has been fishing for 9 years but holds no formal sea going qualifications.

Mr. Ken Pierce aged 30 years of Wexford, Co. Wexford. Mr. Pierce has been fishing for many years and is an experienced fisherman but, as far as is known, holds no formal sea going qualifications.

Mr. Maurice Swaine aged 24 years of Cahir, Borris-in-Ossory, Co. Laois. He started fishing in about August 1998 and had been on board the vessel for two weeks. He is not known to have had any formal sea going qualifications.

3 EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 The vessel, manned and equipped as stated in section 1 of this report, sailed from Waterford at 1700 hours on 29-02-2000. The vessel went fishing for monk and megrim around position 51 20° N 007 00° W.
- 3.2 While towing there would be a 2 hour break for sleep. The skipper would do 2 watches and then the 3 others would do a watch each.
- 3.3 The skipper's cabin is located just behind the wheelhouse and all crew are instructed to call him if anything unusual happens.

THE INCIDENT

4 THE INCIDENT.

- 4.1 The crew commenced hauling the nets at about 0700 hours on 3rd March 2000 when in position 50° 50' North 006° 45' West. (See position in Appendix A).
- 4.2 The skipper was in the wheelhouse operating the engines and also observing the starboard side of the foredeck.
- 4.3 Maurice Swaine was on the starboard side and the Skipper had a good view of him as they commenced to haul the nets. The other two crewmembers were on the port side.
- 4.4 The Met Eireann weather report states that from 0100 hours the wind was WSW to West force 7 and that approximately between 0600 and 0700 hours it veered NW and decreased to force 4 by 0900 hours. It also states that the sea state was rough. (See Met Eireann report in Appendix B). The skipper estimates that at the time of the incident the wind was NW force 5/6 with a moderate Westerly swell.
- 4.5 The derricks were adjusted to an angle of 45° and the gear was hauled to the surface of the water. The engine was going very slow ahead.
- 4.6 Maurice Swaine was attempting to take in some slack on the bag rope so that this rope could be put onto the drum end in order to haul in the cod end. The bag rope is shown in the diagram in Appendix C. The drum end arrangement and the bag rope are shown in the photographs in Appendix D.
- 4.7 After hauling in some slack on the bag rope and laying it on the deck, the weight again came onto the bag rope.
- 4.8 This weight surging would be normal when hauling with a swell running. As the weight came onto the bag rope it was pulled out and Maurice Swaine was standing in the bight of the slack rope which tightened around his left ankle and pulled him overboard.

5 EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT.

- 5.1 The Skipper immediately went full astern to take the way off the boat. He was also very aware of the danger of the cod end fouling the propeller.
- 5.2 At the same time he saw Maurice Swaine in the water about 25 feet off on the starboard side. One of his boots had come off and it was floating in the water.
- 5.3 The Skipper called the other two crewmembers and told them to secure the cod end on the port side. The boat was now stopped in the water.
- 5.4 The Skipper threw a lifebuoy and smoke float from the starboard bridge wing, which landed four feet away from Maurice Swaine. At this stage he was in total panic and made no attempt to reach the lifebuoy.
- 5.5 By this time, the port cod end was secure and one of the lifebuoys forward had also been thrown to Maurice Swaine. This landed some distance from him. The vessel was starting to drift away from him.
- 5.6 The starboard side beam was lowered down to 10 fathoms and the Skipper succeeded in manoeuvring the boat close to Maurice Swaine. He came to within 20 feet off the starboard bow. At this stage he was motionless in the water and appeared to be starting to sink.
- 5.7 The Skipper ran onto the deck, grabbed some rope and jumped in after him. He managed to get a hold of him by the clothing around his neck and tried to hold his head above the water. The other two crewmembers pulled them back alongside the vessel using the rope.
- 5.8 The Skipper tried to secure the rope around him but he was not able to hold onto Mr Swaine.
- 5.9 When the Skipper came back on board he put out a Mayday on 2182 and Falmouth responded.
- 5.10 After about one hour, R193 arrived and shortly afterwards three merchant vessels assisted in the search. At about 1100 hours the helicopter and two of the boats departed. The other vessel remained until 1300 hours.
- 5.11 The Dun Eochalla searched until darkness assisted by two other fishing vessels that arrived at 1500 hours. At about 1900 hours the Dun Eochalla stood down and sailed back to Waterford and arrived early on 4th March 2000.

FACTS

6 OTHER FACTS TO BE CONSIDERED.

- 6.1 The hauling operation is carried out between 6 and 7 times each day when fishing.

- 6.2 Maurice Swaine was wearing a full set of oilskins, safety boots and gloves. He was not wearing any personal flotation devices.

7 FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS.

- 7.1 The main reason why Mr Swaine was lost over board was that, as the weight came onto the bag rope and it was being pulled out, he was standing in the bight of the rope, which tightened around his left ankle and pulled him overboard.
- 7.2 The weather conditions were not good, the sea state at the time of the accident was moderate or rough. This would have caused the weight to come onto the bag rope more suddenly and therefore allow Mr Swaine less time to take preventive action of getting out of the way of the rope.
- 7.3 Mr Swaine was not wearing any form of personal flotation device that would have assisted in his recovery from the water.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8 RECOMMENDATIONS.

- 8.1 When working on deck all fishermen should wear some form of personal flotation device. The wearing of a personal flotation device will give a person in the water a realistic chance of being recovered. The use and wearing of personal flotation devices at the time of the incident was covered by Marine Notice No 14 of 2000, {since this incident was investigated, new regulations (S.I. 586 of 2002) have been introduced in relation to the wearing of personal flotation devices on fishing vessel and a new Marine Notice, No. 7 of 2002 [see Appendix E] has also been issued}.
- 8.1 A Marine Notice should be issued stating that all fishing vessels must be manned as required by the Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck Officers and Engineer Officers) Regulations, 1988 (S.I. No. 289 of 1988), as amended. A Marine Notice No. 10 of 2002 subsequently issued in this regard (see Appendix F).
- 8.1 Every Skipper should think about how he would recover a person, who has fallen overboard, from the water. Skippers should carry out man overboard drills on a regular basis and have an effective system for retrieving casualties from the water. A Marine Notice No. 16 of 2002 also issued in this regard (see Appendix G).

9. APPENDICES

Appendix A. Chart extract showing position of man overboard.

Appendix B. Weather Report from Met. Eireann.

Appendix C. Diagram showing layout of equipment when towing.

Appendix D. Photographs showing bag rope and drum end arrangement.

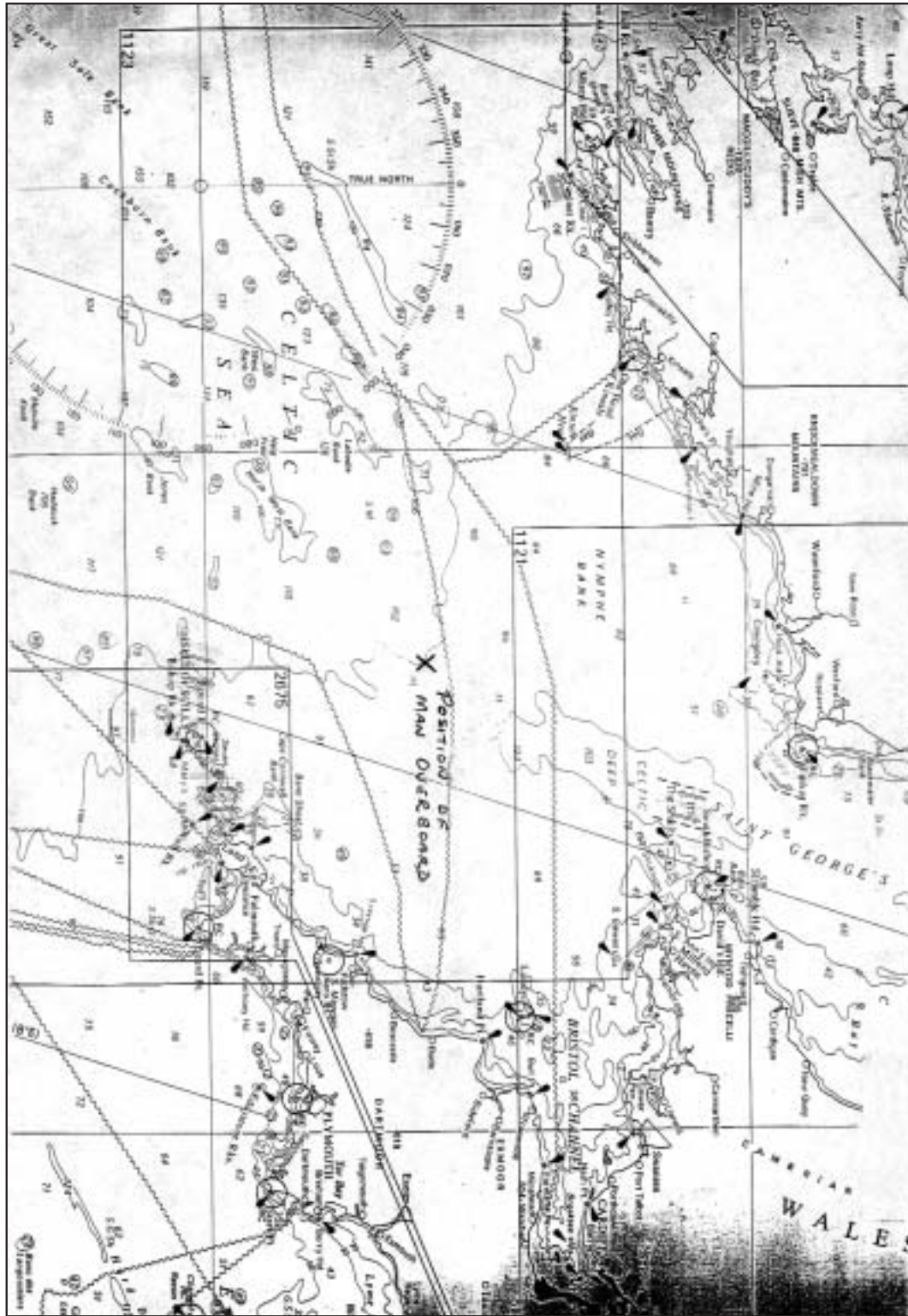
Appendix E. Copy of Marine Notice No. 7 of 2002, dealing with the wearing of personal flotation devices.

Appendix F. Copy of Marine Notice No. 10 of 2002, dealing with the manning of fishing vessels.


Appendix G. Copy of Marine Notice No. 16 of 2002, dealing with the dangers of falling overboard from the deck of a fishing vessel.

APPENDIX A.

Appendix A. Chart extract showing position of man overboard.



Appendix B. Weather Report from Met. Éireann.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

Glasnevin Hill, Cnoc Ghlas Naíon, Tel: +353-1-806 4200
Dublin 9, Ireland. Baile Átha Cliath 9, Éire. Fax: +353-1-806 4247

Weather report for the sea area near 50° 50'N, 6°45'W
on the 3rd March 2000
between 1 and 9 hours GMT.

General Situation

A strong westerly airflow over the Celtic Sea in the early hours. A frontal trough moved south-eastwards during the early morning and the westerly airflow was replaced by a slacker north-westerly airflow.

Details for 50° 50'N 6° 45'W

Winds: West-south-west to west Force 7 . The wind veered north-west between 6 and 7 hours approx. and decreased to Force 4 by 9 hours.

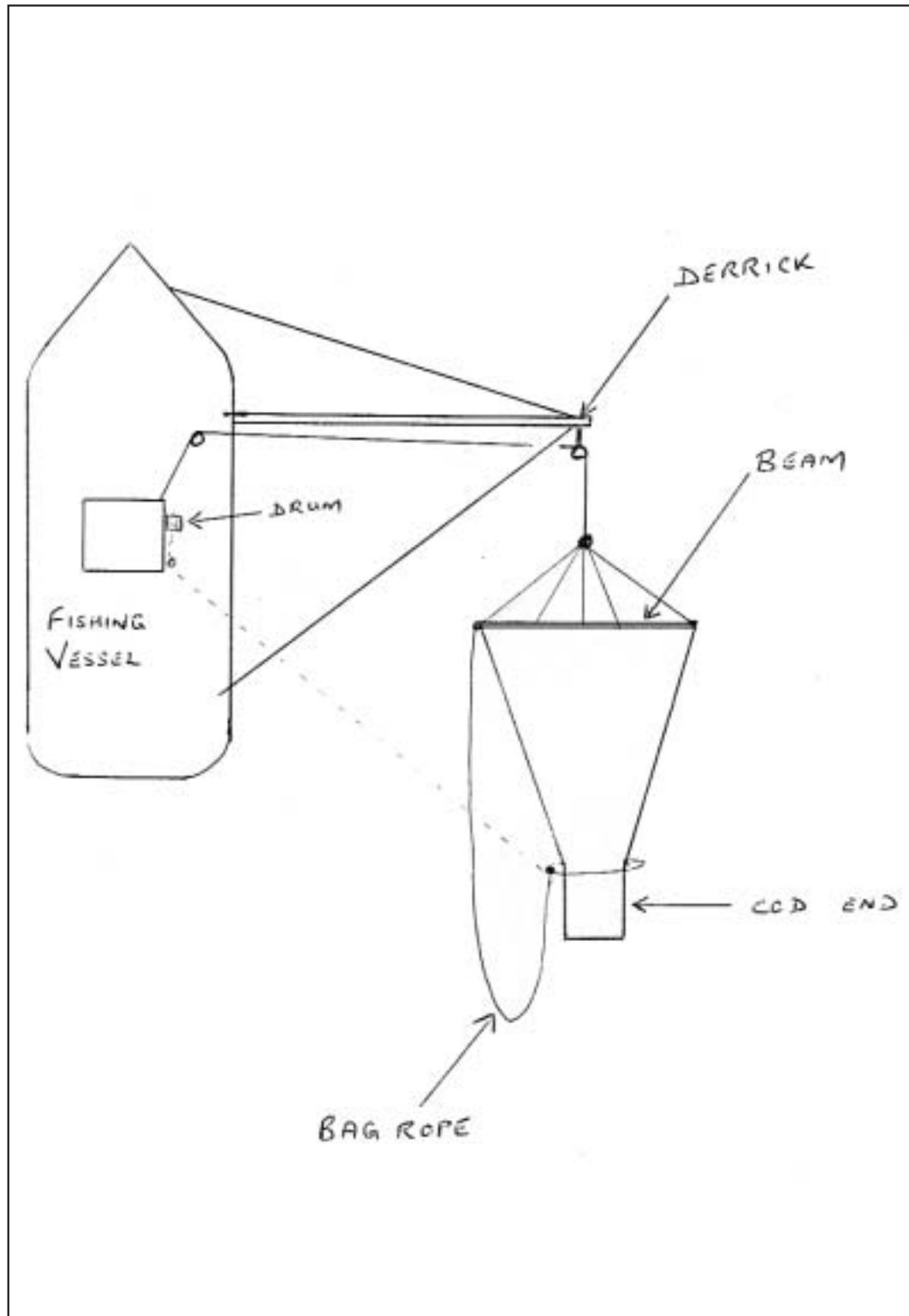
Weather: cloudy, patches of rain and drizzle

Visibility: moderate to poor.

Seastate: Rough

APPENDIX C.

Appendix C. Diagram showing layout of equipment when towing.




Appendix D. Photographs showing bag rope and drum end arrangement.



APPENDIX E.

Appendix E. Copy of Marine Notice No. 7 of 2002, dealing with the wearing of personal flotation devices.



**Department of the Marine
and Natural Resources**

Roinn na Mara agus Acmhainní Náidúrtha

**Marine Notice
No 7 of 2002**

To all Fishing Vessel Owners, Agents, Skippers, Fishing Vessel Crew
Members, Fishermen, and Chandlers.

**GUIDANCE ON THE SELECTION OF PERSONAL FLOTATION
DEVICES (PFDs) FOR USE ON-BOARD FISHING VESSELS**

WITHDRAWAL OF MARINE NOTICE NO. 14 OF 2000

Marine Notice No. 14 of 2000: Use of Lifejackets (LJ) & Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) is hereby withdrawn.

GENERAL

The Department of the Marine and Natural Resources wishes to remind skippers and those working onboard fishing vessels about the new Regulations on Personal Flotation Devices, PFDs, which came into operation on the 1st of March 2002.




These regulations are the Fishing Vessel (Personal Flotation Devices) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 586 of 2001). These regulations apply to all crewmembers on board fishing vessels, other than those registered under the laws of another state. The regulations require that every fishing vessel carry a suitable personal flotation device for every person onboard. The personal flotation device shall be worn at all times by the crew when on an exposed deck, or for undecked vessels when on board the vessel, whether at sea, in harbour or coming to and from moorings. The skipper shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that all crewmembers wear a personal flotation device. The criteria, which the regulations refer to for determining suitability, include:

1. The device is sufficient to give a person using it a positive buoyancy in waters which are likely to be encountered where the vessel on which it is required to be used is reasonably likely to be.
2. The device is appropriate to the body weight of the person who is to wear it and also to the type of work being done.
3. The device has on it the CE conformity marking consisting of the initials "CE" taking the form of the specimen given (shown below) in Annex IV of Council Directive 89/686/EEC of 21 December 1989 (as amended by Council Directive 93/68/EEC of 22 July 1993 and Council Directive 96/58/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 3 September 1996).



TYPES OF PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES

The term personal flotation device is an all-encompassing term, which covers all forms of personal protective equipment, intended to help keep a person afloat. These range from 'CE' marked lifejackets through to 'CE' marked buoyancy aids. The following table lists the different types of PFDs acceptable under this legislation and a brief description is given together with suggestions for areas of use.

Type and Markings	Suggested Uses
 EN 399 - 275N	For offshore use in extreme conditions when heavy protective clothing is being worn or when extra loads are being carried. Turns unconscious wearers face up in water under almost all circumstances. May be suitable for use in situations where there may be a delay in rescue.
 EN 396 - 150N	For swimmers and non-swimmers of any age. For offshore use. Turns most unconscious wearers face up in water (depending on the clothing worn). These may be suitable for use in tidal waters or when foul weather clothing is being worn and where the wearers may not be capable of helping themselves due to injury or exhaustion.
 EN 395 - 100N	For swimmers of any age. For use in relatively sheltered waters, will not turn unconscious wearers face up in water (depending on the clothing worn). May be suitable in instances where the wearers remain capable of helping themselves.
 EN 393 - 50N	Only for good swimmers and for use in sheltered waters where help is close at hand. Will not hold the face of an unconscious wearer clear of the water. For adults only (+40kg). May be suitable in circumstances where more bulky or buoyant devices could impair the user's activity or actually endanger them. Not a lifejacket.

Note: EuroNorm (EN) refers to European wide standards, which are used for ensuring the uniformity and minimum standards for products and services.

The above table is for guidance only and skippers are to assess the risks appropriate to their area of operation and select personal flotation devices appropriately.

NOTES FOR SELECTION OF PFDs

The selection of PFDs is a complex issue and it is dependent on many factors such as area of operation for the vessel, seasonal variations, night and day time work, type of work being carried out, ease of use etc.... In this section we have attempted to deal with these issues and to highlight concerns and issues which should be considered in selecting a PFD.

Inherently buoyant flotation suits are popular especially in cold weather. A particular benefit of these suits is their thermal protection offered against cold-water shock and hypothermia. However, in warm weather they become very hot to work in. Fishermen should also be aware that because the suit floats in a horizontal position an unconscious person might float either face-up or face-down.

Inflatable PFDs such as those complying with EN 396 and EN 399 are lightweight and less restrictive and can be worn comfortably in both warm and cold weather. They can also be fitted with automatic inflation devices and may turn the wearer face upwards in the water, depending on clothing worn. These types of PFDs are also available in versions where they are incorporated into clothing such as oilskins and work suits.

If the wearer is unconscious when entering the water, only automatically activated devices will inflate and fishermen who have the manually activated type must be aware of this limitation.

Consideration should also be given to fitting personal flotation devices with lights. These lights should comply with the EuroNorm standard EN394.

GUIDANCE FOR CORRECT USE OF PFDs


1. Inflatable personal flotation devices must be worn over all clothing and not underneath. This is to ensure that there is sufficient space for the device to inflate and that the wearer's breathing is not restricted.
2. PFDs should be worn correctly to prevent them from riding up above the wearer's shoulders.
3. Wearers should be fully familiar with the operation of their inflatable PFDs both manually and automatically.
4. Inflatable PFDs should be checked regularly and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. As a minimum, checks should include ensuring that the gas cartridges have not been

punctured, that the zips, buckles, fasteners and webbing straps are functioning correctly and that lights, if fitted, are functioning.

5. Automatically inflatable PFDs, which operate by means of a soluble bobbin, may activate in error if left in a damp condition. When inflatable PFDs are not being worn they should be hung to dry vertically to ensure that all moisture drains away from the bobbin. Covers are available which reduce the problem of accidental inflation.

ABANDON SHIP LIFEJACKETS

It is important not to confuse personal flotation devices which are required under the Fishing Vessel (Personal Flotation Devices) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 586 of 2001) with the abandon ship lifejackets which all fishing vessels must carry. Personal flotation devices are in addition to these lifejackets and both types must be carried on board. The abandon ship lifejackets must fulfil the requirements of the IMO SOLAS/EU Marine Equipment Directive (MED) and they are required to be carried as part of the normal lifesaving equipment for all fishing vessels. IMO SOLAS/EU MED lifejackets are marked as follows.

Type and Markings	Suggested Uses
 <p>IMO SOLAS/EU Marine Equipment Directive</p>	<p>Use for abandoning ship. Required under Merchant Shipping Legislation. Not intended for everyday use as they are generally bulky and they need to be kept in good condition for use in abandon ship situations.</p>

SUMMARY

This Marine Notice has attempted to provide guidance to support the regulations requiring all crewmembers on fishing vessels to wear personal flotation devices. The skipper of a fishing vessel should identify the hazards faced by the crew and based on this assess the risks and select suitable personal flotation devices based on the guidance given in this marine notice.


Secretary-General
Department of the Marine and Natural Resources
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2

19th April 2002

Any enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to:
Maritime Safety Division
Tel: 01-6199358 Fax: 01-6620774 email: marine_notices@marine.gov.ie

APPENDIX F.

Appendix F. Copy of Marine Notice No. 10 of 2002, dealing with the manning of fishing vessels.



Department of the Marine
and Natural Resources

Roinn na Mara agus Acmhainní Náúúrtha

MARINE NOTICE NO 10 OF 2002

**ATTENTION: ALL FISHING VESSEL OWNERS, SKIPPERS,
MATES AND FISHERMEN**

Manning Of Fishing Vessels

An investigation into a recent fishing vessel incident found that the person on watch at the time of the incident did not hold a certificate of competency or have any formal training in the use of navigational equipment.

The fishing vessel did not carry the correct number of qualified Deck Officers as required by the Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck Officers and Engineer Officers) Regulations 1988 (S.I. No. 289 of 1988), as amended, the requirements of which are set out in Appendices I and II attached.

All fishing vessel owners and skippers are reminded that they are required to ensure that their vessels are correctly manned and that the proper number of certificated officers are carried for the appropriate fishing area, i.e. Limited or Unlimited.

Skippers are reminded that navigational watchkeeping duties must be carried out by properly qualified personnel at all times.

All watchkeeping personnel must be thoroughly familiar with all the electronic equipment they are expected to use.

The attention of fishing vessel owners and skippers is drawn to the following information, concerning the Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck Officers and Engineer Officers) Regulations 1988, as amended.

1. The Regulations

The Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck Officers and Engineer Officers) Regulations 1988, as amended, require:

- (a) those fishing vessels of 17 metres in length and over, which operate in the Limited Area, and all fishing vessels that operate in the Unlimited Area to carry a specified number of deck officers, certificated in accordance with the Regulations. Existing certificates of competency issued under section 414 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894, will be

treated as equivalent to specified certificates of competency issued under these Regulations.

- (b) all fishing vessels of 750 kilowatt or more engine power to carry a specified number of engineer officers certificated in accordance with the Regulations.

2. Certificates of Competency (Deck Officer)

The Regulations require fishing vessels registered in the State (and Government fishery research vessels) to be manned by duly certificated Deck Officers and set out the minimum number of Deck Officers to be carried determined by the length of the vessel and by the area (Limited or Unlimited) in which the vessel operates.

Every ship registered in the State, being a sea-going fishing vessel or Government fishery research vessel:

- (a) which operates in the Unlimited area, or
- (b) which being of 17 metres length or more, operates in the Limited area, when going to sea,

shall carry such number of qualified Deck Officers as set out in Appendix 1.

Existing Deck Officer certificates of competency issued under section 414 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894, are to be treated as equivalent to specified certificates of competency issued under the Regulations.

3. Certificates of Competency (Engineer Officer)

The Regulations require fishing vessels registered in the State of 750 kilowatt registered power or more to be manned by duly certificated Engineer Officers, and lay down the minimum number of Engineer Officers and the level of their certificates related to the registered power in kilowatts (see Appendix II). The Regulations also specify that only duly certificated persons shall be employed in capacities, which require certificates.

4. Additional Information

The standards of competency which must be attained before a candidate will be issued with a certificate of competency under the Regulations together with examination syllabuses, specimen papers and requirements are set out in the Department of the Marine & Natural Resources publications entitled:

- (1) Examination for Certificates of Competency for Fishing Vessels: Engineer Officer Requirements, Syllabuses and Specimen Papers

And

- (2) Examination for Certificates of Competency for Fishing Vessels;
Deck Officer Requirements, Syllabuses and Specimen Papers.

Copies of the Regulations and of the Department of the Marine & Natural
Resources publications may be obtained from the Government
Publications Sale
Office, Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

5. Marine Notice No. 4 of 1995 is hereby withdrawn as this notice
supersedes it.

Secretary-General
Department of the Marine and
Natural Resources
Dublin 2

13th May 2002

Any enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to:
Maritime Safety Division
Tel: 01-6199358 Fax: 01-6620774 email:
marine.notices@marine.gov.ie

Appendix 1


Column 1	Column 2	Column 3					Column 4
Fishing Area	Description of Length of Vessel	Minimum Number of Qualified Deck Officers to be Carried on Vessel					Number of other Officers to be carried on Vessel
		Skipper Full	2 nd Hand Full	Skipper Limited	2 nd Hand Limited	2 nd Hand Special	
Unlimited	> 100 Metres	1	3 or	3			3 Officers required in addition to Skipper
Unlimited	50 Metres to <100 Metres	1	2 or	2			2 Officers required in addition to Skipper
Unlimited	< 50 Metres	1	1 or	1			1 Officer required in addition to Skipper
Limited	>100 Metres	1	1 or	1	1 or	1	2 Officers required in addition to Skipper
Limited	50 Metres to <100 Metres			1	2 or	2	2 Officers required in addition to Skipper
Limited	24 Metres to <50 Metres			1	1 or	1	1 Officer required in addition to Skipper
Limited	17 Metres to <24 Metres					1	

Appendix 2

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2		
Registered Power (Kilowatts)	Required Classes of Certificate		
	Chief Engineer Officer	Senior Engineer Officer	Third Engineer Officer
3,000 and over	1	2	3
2,000 or more but under 3,000	1	3	—
750 or more but under 2,000	2	3	—

APPENDIX G.

Appendix G. Copy of Marine Notice No. 16 of 2002, dealing with the dangers of falling overboard from the deck of a fishing vessel.



**Department of the Marine
and Natural Resources**

Roinn na Mara agus Acmhainní Náidúrtha

Marine Notice No. 16 Of 2002

NOTICE TO ALL FISHING VESSEL OWNERS, SKIPPERS AND ALL FISHERMEN

Dangers of falling overboard when working on the deck of a fishing vessel

A number of recent incidents, resulting in deaths, have occurred when fishermen have been lost overboard when working on the decks of fishing vessels. In each case the fishermen were wearing no form of personal flotation device. This made their recovery from the water slow and difficult and in one case impossible.

The Department of the Marine and Natural Resources wishes to remind skippers and those working onboard fishing vessels that **the Fishing Vessel (Personal Flotation Devices) Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 586 of 2001) came into operation on the 1st of March 2002**. These regulations apply to all crewmembers on board Irish registered fishing vessels. The regulations require that every Irish registered fishing vessel carry a suitable personal flotation device for every person onboard. **The personal flotation device shall be worn at all times by the crew when on an exposed deck, or for undecked vessels when on board the vessel, whether at sea, in harbour or coming to and from moorings.** The skipper shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that all crewmembers wear a personal flotation device. Guidance on the selection of personal flotation devices (PFDs) for use on-board fishing vessels is covered in Marine Notice No. 7 of 2002.

When working on deck, fishermen should also consider the following matters:

1. Always keep clear of any fishing gear while it is being shot. If the gear snags inform the skipper so he can take the weight off the gear. The snag can then be cleared without danger. A torn net or broken rope can be repaired later.
2. When hauling gear always keep clear of bights in ropes. If a person is standing in the bight of a rope and the weight suddenly comes onto the rope then there is the danger of being pulled overboard, or being seriously injured or both.
3. Recovering a person overboard is extremely difficult. He/she will most likely be very cold, extremely tired, weighed down by waterlogged clothing and almost certainly unable to help himself or herself. Body temperature falls fast and even the fittest person becomes exhausted within a short

period of time, so speed of any recovery is essential. Although there are some well-documented cases of people surviving immersion in the water for several hours the normal experience is that time is generally measured in minutes rather than hours.

4. Tossing a lifebuoy to someone in the water is a sensible first step; it provides an additional means by which people overboard can keep themselves afloat. But exercise extreme caution when trying to pull someone along by it. Hanging on to a moving lifebuoy is infinitely harder than it looks. If the victims cannot help themselves, some means of getting a strop around the body must be sought. Ideally this strop will be the same means by which he/she is lifted back on board.
5. Every skipper should plan how he would recover a person from the water onto the boat. The conscientious skipper will carry out "man overboard" drills on a regular basis and have an effective system for retrieving casualties from the water. All personal flotation devices should be fitted with a body or lifting loop by which the wearer can be hauled from the water and should also be fitted with retro-reflective material in the upper part to ensure their visibility at night by a searchlight.
6. To enter the water to aid a person overboard is commendable but very risky and it should be undertaken only when absolutely essential, and then only with the aid of a safety line and a lifejacket. If a wet suit is available and worn, then the rescuer's task will be made easier.

Director General
Maritime Safety Directorate
Department of the Marine and
Natural Resources
Dublin 2.

29th May 2002

Any enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to:
Maritime Safety Directorate
Tel: 01-6199358 Fax: 01-6620774 email: marine.notices@marine.gov.ie