



Leeson Lane, Dublin 2.
Telephone: 01-678 3485/86.
Fax: 01-678 3493.
email: info@mcib.ie
www.mcib.ie

**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
INTO FATALITY OVERBOARD
FROM MFV "HARBOUR PRIDE",
OFF HOOK HEAD,
CO. WEXFORD
17th SEPTEMBER 2009.**

The Marine Casualty Investigation Board was established on the 25th March, 2003 under The Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act 2000

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**REPORT No. MCIB/177
(No. 1 of 2010)**



Report MCIB/177 published by The Marine Casualty Investigation Board
7th May 2010.

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1. SYNOPSIS

- 1.1 Mr. Patrick (Paddy) Mason sailed from Dunmore East, County Waterford, on 17th September 2009 with the intention of working his crab pots on the County Wexford side of Waterford Harbour. When his boat was seen to manoeuvre erratically the alarm was raised. Mr. Mason's drowned remains were subsequently recovered from the water after a short search.
- 1.2 Mr. Paddy Mason drowned as a result of being dragged overboard when his boat was caught in a bight of rope while shooting his second string of pots.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 Relevant Information

The owner, Mr. Paddy Mason, was described as being very fit and in good health. He habitually walked 5 miles a day when not fishing and was described as a strong swimmer though not recently known to have swum in the sea.

He had been issued with a BIM safety card after completing the Basic Survival Course, Fire Fighting and First Aid at the BIM mobile unit at Dunmore East on 5th November 2004 and had completed a Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS) Short Range Certificate SRC module 1 on the 26th November 2004.

2.2 The "Harbour Pride"



2.3 Technical specifications

Keel laid	1975
Off No.	401460
Fishing letters	W103
Length	9.02 metres
Breadth	3.0 metres
Depth	1.13 metres
Engine "Lister"	44.25 B.H.P
Power output	33.2 kw

Constructed in 1974 at Carroll's in Ballyhack, Co. Wexford, Ireland.
Carvel-built, larch planks on oak frames, open hulled salmon/crab boat.
Propeller is located on the starboard side of the vessel.

Vessel described by witnesses as in very good condition, tidy and well kept.

Certificate of Compliance issued by Prolines on 5th May 2009.

2.4 Timeline

- 07.40 hrs - Sailed from Dunmore East berth.
- 08.15 hrs - Shore based witness observed Mr. Mason hauling a string of gear close to the shore at Hook Head.
- 08.15 hrs - "Boy's Pride" passed "Harbour Pride" outward bound and (est.) consequently noted location.
- 11.30 hrs - "Mahon Lass" observed the "Harbour Pride" in an unusual position.
- 11.33 hrs - Rescue Helicopter R117 received and forwarded VHF transmission from "Mahon Lass".
- 11.40 hrs - Alarm raised by "Mahon Lass" by mobile phone. Rescue Helicopter R117 tasked to scene.
- 11.44 hrs - R117 on scene.
- 11.45 hrs - Dunmore East Lifeboat launched. Search commenced by local boats.
- 12.00 hrs - RNLI retrieved "Harbour Pride" from cliffs at Portally.
- 12.35 hrs - RNLI proceeded to Hook area.
- 13.00 hrs - Casualty recovered.
- 13.06 hrs - Casualty transferred to RNLI.
- 13.25 hrs - RNLI arrived at berth at Dunmore East.

3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 The morning of 17th September 2009 was calm and clear. See appendix 8.1 for Met Éireann weather report.
- 3.2 Mr. Paddy Mason left Dunmore East at 7.40 hrs. to check and haul two of his nine strings of crab pots. His boat was, as usual, tied up close to the "Mahon Lass" owned by Mr. Pat Mason, his cousin.
- 3.3 The two men were in the habit of boarding, leaving and returning to the quay at the same time as a safety precaution.
- 3.4 They did not fish the same areas. Mr. Pat Mason usually placed his gear to the West of Brownstone Head whereas Mr. Paddy Mason habitually shot his gear on the Wexford side of Waterford Harbour.
- 3.5 Mr. Paddy Mason was observed hauling gear on the Wexford coast at 08.15 hrs by a resident of the area while out walking on the Hook promontory. This person was quite sure that the gear was being hauled when he saw the vessel.
- 3.6 Mr. Mason had two strings of pots in the area and it is estimated that it would have taken him an hour to haul, bait and re-shoot a string of pots.
- 3.7 There are between 25 and 30 pots in a string depending on the particular operator and when laid out on the seabed would stretch between 400 and 600 yards. Boats had in the past run strings of between 40 and 50 pots but the reduced number of pots reduced the time a boat would be hanging off a line of pots and the smaller strings made it easier for single-handed operation.
- 3.8 Mr. Mason's location notebook would later show two co-ordinates (commencement and completion sites) for his first set of pots and one set of co-ordinates for the second set of pots. This information would be used to focus the search for Mr. Mason to a particular area off the Hook promontory.
- 3.9 At some point during her recent fishing history Mr. Mason had made a number of modifications to his boat to assist in her being operated single-handed:-
 - The aft transom had been fitted with a ramp by which pots could freely slide over the stern without any assistance from the skipper.
 - An emergency engine stop wire had been rigged from forward to aft and was located under the port side gunnel.
- 3.10 Mr. Mason usually wore a waistcoat type personal floatation device (PFD) and a belt with a very sharp fixed blade knife attached.
- 3.11 Mr. Mason worked his boat seasonally and was due to lay her up for the winter at the beginning of October.

4. THE INCIDENT

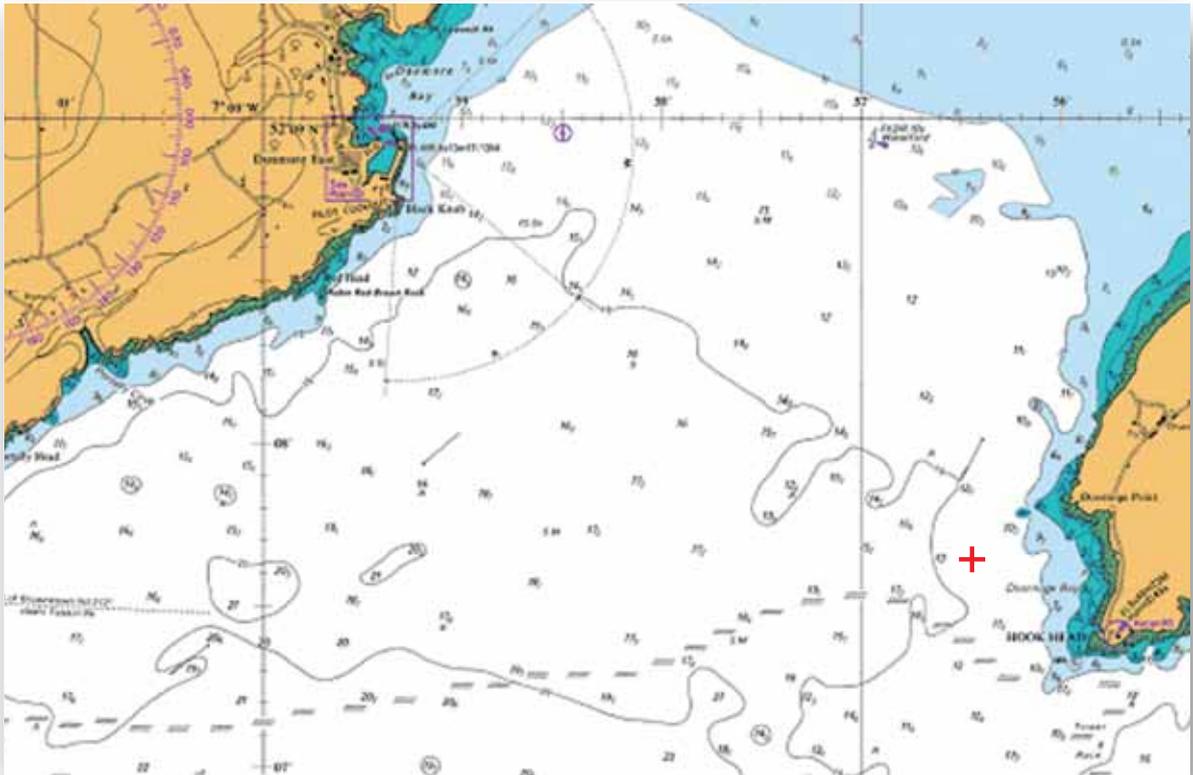
- 4.1 At 11.30 hrs Mr. Pat Mason noticed the "Harbour Pride" making a parabolic course across the harbour towards his own boat off Portally Cove.
- 4.2 At first he thought Mr. Paddy Mason was heading for port but then saw the fishing vessel glance off the shore before continuing on along the shoreline.
- 4.3 Mr. Pat Mason was unable to see any sign of the skipper and thought that he might have fallen or had a heart attack. He manoeuvred his own vessel as close alongside as possible but could not see any sign of Mr. Paddy Mason.
- 4.4 He attempted to raise the alarm on the VHF but was unable to hear any response. He reverted to the mobile phone and located a friend ashore who in turn notified the RNLI Lifeboat cox'n at Dunmore East. His VHF call had, however, been heard by Rescue Helicopter R117 which had relayed the call to MRCC Dublin.
- 4.5 The "Harbour Pride" finally ran aground in the Portally Cove area. This cove lies on the western side of Waterford Harbour about three miles from Hook Head, which forms the eastern arm of the harbour.
- 4.6 The lifeboat arrived at Portally Cove location at about 11.55 hrs and a crewman was able to board the "Harbour Pride". They found no sign of Mr. Paddy Mason and a full-scale search commenced. While on board the "Harbour Pride" the lifeboat crew, on the advice of Mr. Pat Mason, were able to locate Mr. Paddy Mason's notebook with the pot string co-ordinates. It was also noted that Mr. Paddy Mason's belt and knife were lying on the deck.
- 4.7 A location was given for both dan buoys on one string but only one dan buoy had been recorded on the second string.
- 4.8 FV "Boy's Pride" was about 3 miles from the location where they had observed Mr. Paddy Mason on the "Harbour Pride" working his pots. On arriving at this location, which the skipper of the "Boy's Pride" estimated took between 20 to 30 minutes, the crew of the "Boy's Pride" began hauling the first string of pots and noted that they were unbaited which indicated they had not been worked that morning. They then began hauling the second string and after a number of baited pots were hauled came upon a rigger boot caught in a bight (loop) of rope.
- 4.9 The skipper of the "Boy's Pride" took GPS co-ordinates of the dan buoys and of the position at which the rigger boot was found.
- 4.10 The "Boy's Pride" then re-set the pots in the original locations so that they could be used as a guide for divers if they were required.

- 4.11 Approximately 20 boats responded to the Mayday relay and converged on the scene very quickly.
- 4.12 The Fethard Inshore Lifeboat crew had been polled at 11.57 hrs and arrived at a designated search area off the Hook at 12.35 hrs.
- 4.13 They were requested to search the scarf line (meeting point between the incoming and outgoing tide).
- 4.14 Shortly before 13.00 hrs the Fethard Inshore Lifeboat came upon Mr. Paddy Mason's remains in the vicinity of the second dan buoy in a position 7 cables North West of the Hook Lighthouse.

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

5. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

- 5.1 Mr. Paddy Mason's remains were transferred from the Fethard Inshore Lifeboat to the Dunmore East Lifeboat and thence to the Lifeboat Station at Dunmore East.
- 5.2 The "Harbour Pride" was damaged extensively and sank after being pulled off the rocks at Portally Cove.



The + symbol marks the approximate location at which Mr. Paddy Mason's remains were recovered. Portally Cove can be located South and West of Dunmore East on the chart.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Mr. Paddy Mason drowned as a result of being dragged overboard when his boot was caught in a bight of rope while shooting his first string of pots.
- 6.2 Mr. Paddy Mason was wearing a full set of oilskins when his remains were discovered.
- 6.3 The vessel was travelling with her engine in gear and at sufficient speed (est. 5 kts) to pull Mr. Paddy Mason overboard with little or no warning.
- 6.4 It is likely Mr. Paddy Mason probably came free of the trapped rigger boot subsequent to drowning or when the line was disturbed by the "Boy's Pride".
- 6.5 The "Harbour Pride" was well found and in good condition prior to the incident. The vessel had been surveyed by Prolines in May 2009.
- 6.6 Mr. Paddy Mason had made a number of modifications to his vessel to assist in single-handed operation. However, he was not wearing his PFD at the time of the incident.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Department of Transport should develop guidelines for the safety of fishermen working alone.

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Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann weather report.



**Sea Area Forecast until 0600 Friday 18 September 2009
Issued at 0600 Thursday 17 September 2009**

1. Gale warning: NIL

Small craft warning: NIL

2. Meteorological situation at 0300: An anticyclone of 1028 hPa, just to the north of Ireland, is moving slowly eastwards and declining.

3. Forecast for coasts from: Carnsore Point to Roches Point to Mizen Head

Wind: East to northeast force 3 to 4, decreasing force 3 or less during the day. Little change tonight.

Forecast for coasts from: Mizen Head to Malin Head to Carnsore Point and the Irish Sea

Wind: Variable force 2 or 3.

Weather for all sea areas: Fair.

Visibility for all sea areas: Good.

4. Outlook for a further 24 hours until 0600 Saturday 19 September 2009: Winds becoming light to moderate southerly on the Connacht and Donegal coasts, with rain developing early Saturday. Light variable winds elsewhere, with fair weather.

Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann weather report.

Warning of heavy Atlantic swell: NIL

Text of Gale Warning

NIL

Text of Small Craft Warning

NIL

Coastal Reports	at 5 AM Thursday 17 September 2009
Malin Head	South, 03 Knots, Fine, 18 Miles, 1026, Falling slowly
Buoy M5	NOT AVAILABLE, NOT AVAILABLE Knots, The visibility at Tuskar Lighthouse is over 10 Miles, 1024, Falling slowly
Roche's Pt (Automatic)	North, 08 Knots, Cloudy, over 10 Miles, 1025, Falling slowly
Valentia	Southeast, 01 Knot, Fine, 16 Miles, 1025, Falling slowly
Belmullet	South-Southeast, 01 Knot, Fine, 26 Miles, 1026, Falling slowly
Dublin Airport	North-Northeast, 03 Knots, Cloudy, 10 Miles, 1026, Falling slowly
Buoy M1 53° 8'N, 11° 12'W	NOT AVAILABLE,
Buoy M2 53° 29'N, 5° 26'W	NOT AVAILABLE,
Buoy M3 51° 13'N, 10° 33'W	East, 11 Knots, WAVE HT 02.0 m, NOT AVAILABLE, Falling slowly
Buoy M4 55° 0'N 10° 0'W	North, 06 Knots, WAVE HT 02.2 m, 1025, Falling
Buoy M5 51° 41'N 6° 42'W	NOT AVAILABLE, NOT AVAILABLE Knots, WAVE HT 01.1 m, 1024, Falling slowly
Buoy M6 53° 4'N 15° 56'W	South-Southwest, 09 Knots, WAVE HT 01.3 m, 1025, Falling slowly

Disclaimer: buoy locations are approximate and are not for navigational purposes

Sea Crossings	State of sea until 0500 Saturday 19 September 2009
Dublin - Holyhead	Slight
Rosslare - South Wales	Slight to moderate, decreasing slight
Cork - South Wales	Slight to moderate, decreasing slight
Rosslare - France	Moderate decreasing slight to Land's end. Rough decreasing moderate south of Land's End.
Cork - France	Moderate decreasing slight to Land's end. Rough decreasing moderate south of Land's End.

Next update before 1300 Thursday, 17 September 2009

A detailed forecast may be obtained by dialling *Weatherdial* on 1550 123 855.

Calls cost € 0.95 per minute (Incl. VAT).

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Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann weather report.

**MET ÉIREANN***The Irish Meteorological Service*Glasnevin Hill,
Dublin 9, Ireland.Cnoc Ghlas Naíon
Baile Átha Cliath 9, Éire.
www.met.ieTel: +353-1-806 4200
Fax: +353-1-806 4247
E-mail: met.eireann@met.ieSpecialist field: Marine Meteorology
Reference: WS3018/2B/20090917m.doc**1 Glossary of technical terms**

The information in this Marine Weather Report is derived by extrapolation from reports of the offshore weather buoys, from Met Éireann's nearby synoptic land stations, archived weather charts, satellite and radar images and wave model data. Please note that all times in this report are given in Universal Time Coordinate (UTC)

UTC = Universal Time Coordinate = Greenwich Meantime

Irish Summer Time = UTC + 1 hour (April – October)

Barometric pressure in hector Pascal (hPa) = millibar (mbar)

Wind direction in degrees from North

Wind speed in Beaufort Force or knots (see section 1.3)

Temperatures in degrees Celsius

Significant wave height in meters

1.1 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.

Sea State (Descriptive)	Significant Wave height in meters
Calm	0 – 0.1
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.

1.2 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 (< 1 km)

Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann weather report.



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
www.met.ie E-mail: met.eireann@met.ie

Specialist field: Marine Meteorology
Reference: WS3018/2B/20090917m.doc

1.3 Beaufort scale of wind force

Force	Description	Wind Speed (km/hr)	Wind Speed (knot)	Land Signs	Sea State	Sea Height* (Metres)
0	Calm	0 - 0.9	0 - 0.9	Smoke rises vertically	Sea like mirror	0
1	Light Air	1 - 5	1 - 3	Smoke Drifts	Ripples	0.1(0.1)
2	Light Breeze	6 - 11	4 - 6	Leaves rustle, wind vane moves	Small wavelets	0.2(0.3)
3	Gentle Breeze	12 - 19	7 - 10	Light flag will wave, small twigs and leaves move constantly	Large wavelets, crests begin to break, perhaps scattered white horses	0.6(1.0)
4	Moderate Breeze	20 - 28	11 - 16	All flags extended, small branches move, dust and paper blow about	Small waves, becoming longer, fairly frequent white horses	1.0(1.50)
5	Fresh Breeze	29 - 38	17 - 21	Small trees begin to sway	Moderate waves, many white horses, chance of some spray	2.0(2.5)
6	Strong Breeze	39 - 49	22 - 27	Large branches move	Large waves begin to form with foam crests. Probably some spray	3(4)
7	Near Gale	50 - 61	28 - 33	Walking into wind difficult, whole trees move	Sea heaps up and white foam from breaking waves blown in streaks	4(5.5)
8	Gale	62 - 74	34 - 40	Twigs break from trees, walking difficult	Moderately high waves of greater length; edges of crests begin to break. Foam is blown in well-marked streaks	5.5(7.5)
9	Strong Gale	75 - 88	41 - 47	Slight structural damage	High waves, dense streaks of foam, crests of waves begin to topple. Spray may affect visibility	7(10)
10	Storm	88 - 102	48 - 55	Trees uprooted, structural damage	Very high waves with long overhanging crests. Foam in great patches of dense white streaks. Tumbling sea becomes heavy and shock-like. Visibility affected.	9(12.5)
11	Violent Storm	103 - 117	56 - 63	May cause widespread damage, rare inland	Exceptionally high waves, sea completely covered with long white patches of foam, wave crests are blown into froth. Visibility affected	11.5(16)
12	Hurricane	118+	64+	Causes devastation.	Air filled with foam and spray. Sea completely white with driving spray; visibility seriously affected.	14+

* The column sea height (probable maximum height in brackets) is added as a guide to show roughly what may be expected in the open sea, remote from land.

Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann weather report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9, Ireland.	Cnoc Ghlas Naíon Baile Átha Cliath 9, Éire. www.met.ie	Tel: +353-1-806 4200 Fax: +353-1-806 4247 E-mail: met.eireann@met.ie
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Specialist field: Marine Meteorology
 Reference: WS3018/2B/20090917m.doc

2 Map of Ireland with Headlands, coastal stations and offshore weather buoys



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Connagh
Fethard on Sea
New Ross
Co Wexford

Attn Ms Eve Reddin
Secretariat
Marine Casualty Investigation Board
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2

26th January 2010

**Re: DRAFT Report of the Investigation into the fatal incident off Hook head,
Co. Wexford on 17th September 2009**

Dear Sirs

Thank you for your letter of 11th January last which included the above draft report and for affording me the opportunity to respond with my observations.

It was due to the skill, experience and local knowledge of both the Dunmore East and Fethard lifeboat crew, that Paddy's body was recovered so quickly from the water.

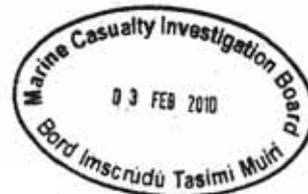
However, with the aid of new technology an even more rapid and accurate response could be attained.

I would recommend that fishermen wear a personal safety device (PSD) such as the 'MOB Guardian' system which is actively promoted by the RNLI in the UK. The benefit of wearing such a system is that there is accurate information on the last known position, course and speed of a fishing boat. This together with tide, wind and environmental factors would help take the search out of a search and rescue.

Yours sincerely

Pat Mason

Pat Mason



MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the comments made by Mr. Pat Mason and has passed them on to the Marine Safety Directorate.

The MCIB wishes to convey its deepest sympathy to Mrs. Mason on the tragic death of her husband.

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea



What is MOB Guardian?

MOB Guardian is the only system that provides safety cover for both the vessel and individual crew members. As soon as you go to sea MOB Guardian connects with the RNLI operations room.



The system expects the MOB Guardian unit to automatically update its position at hourly intervals. If contact is lost, the shore-side system automatically tries to re-establish contact. If contact cannot be established with the MOB Guardian unit, the RNLI operations room is alerted who confirm if the boat is at sea. If so details are passed to the Coastguard, who accept it as a Search and Rescue (SAR) alert.

The benefit of fitting MOB Guardian is that the RNLI can pass the last known position, course and speed of the fishing boat to the Coastguard who can programme it into their own location software that allows for tide, wind and environmental factors – helping take the search out of search and rescue.

In addition, each crew member wears a personal safety device (PSD), which communicates constantly with the base unit. If a crew member falls overboard the communication link is broken and the base unit, sounds a very loud klaxon aboard the fishing vessel. An LCD screen on the base unit displays the range and bearing back to the GPS position of the man overboard incident, and alerting the RNLI via a satellite system in less than 3 minutes. This information is passed straight away to the Coastguard, who will initiate a SAR mission.

No other system works on the 'always-on' principle and is linked directly to the RNLI and other SAR authorities via the shore-side monitoring infrastructure.

QUIETWAYS,
PASSAGE EAST,
CO. WATERFORD

Attn Ms Eve Reddin
Secretariat
Marine Casualty Investigation Board
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2



February 1st 2010

**Re: DRAFT Report of the Investigation into the fatal incident off Hook head,
Co. Wexford on 17th September 2009**

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your letter and copy of the draft report into my father's death.

We would like to thank you for your sensitivity in putting together the draft report in what has been a very difficult and traumatic time for us.

We think it's important to note that the experience, skill and local knowledge of fishermen and the Dunmore East and Fethard lifeboat crews was crucial in getting my father's body back so quickly from the water. We would also like to thank the Coastguard, on the ground and in the air, for their help and assistance.

We would like to recommend that a better system of "doctor on-call" be put in place in Dunmore so that the inordinate delay in getting a doctor to the quay on the day of the tragedy is never repeated.

We also think the government should help out financially in supplying personal safety devices, or PSDs, to fishermen. The 'MOB Guardian' system being promoted by the RNLI in Britain may be suitable and would help we believe in getting to fishermen a lot quicker.

Yours sincerely

Louise Maon Tiernan
Louise ^{MCIB} Tiernan.
and family.

MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes and passes Ms. Tiernans' comments on to the Marine Safety Directorate.

The MCIB wishes to convey its deepest sympathy to Ms Tiernan on the tragic death of her father.

An Garda Síochána

Ceannfort,
An Garda Síochána,
Port Láirge.



Tel/Teileafón: (051) - 305316
Fax/Facs: (051) - 305382

Superintendent,
An Garda Síochána,
Waterford.

Web site: www.garda.ie
E-mail:

Please quote the following ref. number:
MCIB/177

WD10A.1937/09

Date: 14th of Jan 2010

Eve Reddin,
Secretary,
Marine Casualty Investigation Board,
Lesson Lane,
Dublin 2

GARDA SÍOCHÁNA
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

14 JAN 2010

WATERFORD
DIVISION OF WATERFORD

Re: Draft Report of the investigation into the Fatal Incident off Hook Head, Co. Wexford on the 17/9/09

Further to the above, I wish to acknowledge receipt of the draft report from Mr. John O'Donnell B.L, Chairman of the M.C.I.B fatal 11/01/2010.

- I would fully agree that the Department of Transport should develop guidelines for the safety of fishermen working alone. The primary observations outline at 6:1 to 6:3 should form part of these guidelines particularly the development of a checklist on safety protocols.
- The compulsory wearing of automatically inflatable personal flotation device by all fishermen working either singularly or as part of a crew would improve the prospects of surviving such an incident in the future.

I hope these observations are of some assistance to your final report.

Yours Faithfully,



(C. DELANEY) Superintendent



MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter and is grateful to the Superintendent for his observations.