
REPORT NO. MCIB/254 (No.2 OF 2017)
The Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) examines and investigates all types of marine casualties to, or on board, Irish registered vessels worldwide and other vessels in Irish territorial waters and inland waterways.

The MCIB objective in investigating a marine casualty is to determine its circumstances and its causes with a view to making recommendations for the avoidance of similar marine casualties in the future, thereby improving the safety of life at sea.

The MCIB is a non-prosecutorial body. We do not enforce laws or carry out prosecutions. It is not the purpose of an investigation carried out by the MCIB to apportion blame or fault.

The legislative framework for the operation of the MCIB, the reporting and investigating of marine casualties and the powers of MCIB investigators is set out in The Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000.

In carrying out its functions the MCIB complies with the provisions of the International Maritime Organisation’s Casualty Investigation Code and EU Directive 2009/18/EC governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector.
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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1. **SUMMARY**

The ‘*FV Carraig Chuin*’ departed from Kilkeel, Co. Down on the 19th March 2016. The vessel was fishing in the Irish Sea and intended to return to Kilkeel on the 21st March 2016. At 10.56 hrs on the 20th March 2016, the Air Traffic Control at Shannon Airport reported that an EPIRB signal had been received by an aircraft and was identified as being registered to the vessel. The signal was confirmed by UKMCC Kinloss at 10.58 hrs. MRCC Dublin tasked the air sea rescue helicopter R116, based at Dublin Airport and the RNLI Lifeboat at Clogherhead. The crew were airlifted to safety at 12.06 hrs and brought directly to hospital in Drogheda.

(All times are in UTC)
2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 Vessel Details

Name: ‘FV Carrig Chuin’.

Type: Fishing vessel.

Construction: Hull -Timber, oak on oak, carvel style.
Superstructure - Steel
(see Appendix 7.1 - Photograph No. 1).

Year: 1981, Arklow.

Port of Registry: Galway.

Year purchased: 2007.

Length: 13.96 metres (m).

Beam: 5.27 m.

Fishing No: G 162.

Fleet No: IRL 000I10230.

Engine: Caterpillar 3306 series.

Power: 141.76 kW.

Document of Compliance: 23rd April 2015, inspected at Kilkeel.

2.2 The Skipper held a Certificate of Competency (CoC) as a 2nd Hand, issued in September 2003. He had undergone training in First Aid and Sea Survival at the Seafish facility in Kilkeel, in November 2015. He also had a Long Range Radio Certificate (LRC) issued in May 2002. The two crewmembers were Northern Ireland residents.

2.3 The vessel carried lifejackets, inflatable liferaft, lifebuoys, Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) and distress signals, including Emergency Position Indication Radio Beacon (EPIRB), and a SART in accordance with the requirements for the Code of Practice for the Design, Construction, Equipment and Operation of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall, referred to as the “Code of Practice for Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15 metres in Length Overall”.

2.4 This was a serious marine casualty, however, because the inflatable liferaft and EPIRB operated properly, the crew were rescued and brought to hospital. All crew were suffering from hypothermia when picked up by the helicopter and one was held overnight in hospital. The casualty occurred at position 53° 51.07’ N 005° 31.07’W (see Appendix 7.1 - Photograph No. 2). Weather conditions were reported as winds of Beaufort Force 2, smooth sea and low swell. The air temperature was 6.9° C and the sea temperature was 8.3° C (see Appendix 7.2 - Met Éireann Weather Report).

2.5 The first alert was received by Air Traffic Control at Shannon Airport. The second alert was from UKMCC Kinloss. MRCC Dublin handled the alert. The Irish Coast Guard, through MRCC Dublin, tasked rescue helicopter R116, based at Dublin Airport and the Clogherhead All Weather Lifeboat based at Clogherhead. The response time from alert to rescue was 01.10 hrs.
3. NARRATIVE

3.1 The vessel was built in Arklow in 1981. Reports indicate that the vessel was originally fitted with a net hauler. This was replaced at an unknown date (believed to be in 1990’s), and a new gantry was fitted with a net drum suspended overhead. No revised stability booklet was ever issued for the vessel.

3.2 The vessel was using Kilkeel, Co. Down, as its base for operations in the Irish Sea. The vessel was rigged for trawling and the targeted species were prawns and whitefish. At the time of loss the trawl was set and the vessel was moving at slow speed through the water. The Skipper was alone in the wheelhouse and the two crew members were asleep below decks in the fore cabin area.

3.3 The vessel layout was determined as follows:

3.3.1 The hull was of oak planks on oak frames, laid carvel style. It was built with a raked stem, round bilge to full form hull and a transom stern. The foredeck was raised and the wheelhouse was forward, joining to the fore deck.

3.3.2 Below the main deck the crew accommodation was located forward, accessed via the wheelhouse, and with an escape hatch to the foredeck. The wheelhouse door was on the aft face of the structure. There was an access hatch to the engine compartment on the starboard side of the main deck and aft of the wheelhouse. The fish hold had a larger hatch in the centreline. There were four compartments, namely; accommodation, engine room, fish hold and lazarette.

3.3.3 The only through hull fittings in the fish hold were for a redundant pump and the bilge suction for the compartment.

3.3.4 Other equipment included a derrick set on top of the wheelhouse for landing the catch and a second crane for landing the net on deck.

3.4 Maintenance for the vessel indicates that it was last dried out for inspection of the hull at Kilkeel in April and May 2015. The vessel was examined by a Surveyor on 23rd May 2015. At that time there was no evidence of fastening failure but some caulking needed to be repaired. A new float free automatic GPS enabled EPIRB was fitted to the vessel in accordance with the revised Code of Practice for Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15 metres in Length Overall.

3.5 New lifejackets were purchased for the vessel in June 2015 and two McMurdo Fastfind 220 Personal Location Beacons (PLBs) had been purchased in May 2016. These were not integrated in a lifejacket but rather worn round the neck by use of a lanyard. The PLBs were not purchased through the Bord
Iascaigh Mhara scheme, as the Skipper had not completed a Sea Survival Course at Greencastle. The Skipper had completed courses run by the UK Seafish organisation in Kilkee which included First Aid, Fire Fighting, Sea Survival and Safety Awareness.

3.6 The vessel departed from Kilkeel on the 19th March 2016. The Skipper intended to return to Kilkeel on the 21st March 2016. At the time of loss the vessel was engaged in trawling for prawns and whitefish. Two crewmembers were below decks asleep and the Skipper was maintaining a deck watch in the wheelhouse.

3.7 The high level bilge alarm sounded, indicating water in the fish hold. The Skipper rose from the chair and noted the vessel was sluggish in the water. He roused the crew and opened the fish hold hatch, which was half full of water. No Mayday call was issued by the Skipper.

3.8 The Skipper then entered the engine compartment to switch on his main bilge pump. This pump was additional to the automatic pump for the compartment which was not coping with the ingress. The entrance was to starboard of the engine and the pump controls to port of it. As he passed ahead of the engine, the movement of the vessel caused concern. He immediately exited the compartment and returned on deck, where one of the crewmembers handed him his lifejacket.

3.9 The three crewmembers were on deck at the time and two had donned their primary lifejackets. The Skipper did not have time to don his lifejacket and he had not been wearing one on watch in the wheelhouse. Having just been roused from sleep, neither of the other two crewmembers were wearing their PLBs. It is noted that the vessel, when inspected, only carried safety equipment for two persons and not three as were on-board at the time.

3.10 The vessel heeled suddenly to port. One crewmember managed to jump overboard. The Skipper and the other crewmember were dragged below the surface clinging to the wheelhouse. They managed to free themselves and rose to the surface.

3.11 Two crewmembers were in the water supported by their lifejackets. After an unknown period of time the liferaft floated free and inflated. The Skipper swam to the liferaft and, when he boarded it, he assisted the two crewmembers in boarding. The EPIRB then floated free and activated.

3.12 The EPIRB was first detected by Shannon Airport Air Traffic control who alerted the Irish Coast Guard Dublin. The Coast Guard air sea rescue helicopter R116 at Dublin Airport was tasked first and then the RNLI All Weather Boat at Clogherhead. The three crewmembers were air lifted out of the water at 12.06 hrs and brought to hospital in Drogheda.
3.13 All three crew members suffered from hypothermia and one was held in hospital overnight for observation.

3.14 The vessel carried two PLBs which were not activated. They are reported as remaining on-board the vessel. The liferaft was ‘on hire’ and had a capacity for six persons. It fully inflated and was in good condition. The last service date was June 2014.

3.15 The EPIRB was a McMurdo Smartfind 406 GPS EPIRB and the battery expiry date was August 2021. Although the primary frequency was 406 mhz, it was also capable of transmitting on 121.5 mhz. The unit had been opened by a crewmember of the RNLI on recovery and the battery was disconnected.

3.16 Weather was recorded as Beaufort Force two and described as a light breeze. The sea state was described as smooth. This is confirmed by data from the M2 data buoy, position 53° 29.0’ N 005° 25.8’ W, where winds were North Easterly between two to four knots and wave heights were 0.3 m.

3.17 A copy of the vessel’s Document of Compliance, issued under the Code of Practice for the Design, Construction, Operation and Equipment of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15 m Length Overall was obtained. The vessel’s superstructure construction is described as timber. It is also noted that the Life Saving Appliances were on-board for two crewmembers only.
4. ANALYSIS

4.1 The vessel foundered in position 53° 51.07' N 005° 31.07' W. The depth of water was approximately 30 m. The wreck was not inspected.

4.2 Weather was not a factor to consider, apart from the sea water temperature.

4.3 The vessel foundered in a short time frame of between 10 to 25 minutes. The crew did not note the time of the alarm and did not observe the time during the subsequent period, being more concerned with saving lives. It was reported that the fish hold flooded but the engine compartment and accommodation area remained dry. The Skipper attempted to start the bilge pump but considered the condition of the vessel was unsafe and he abandoned the action.

4.4 The vessel was built in 1981 of timber. The Owner advised that a net drum was added to it sometime during 1990 before he purchased it. The only alteration made by the Owner was the installation of a new stainless steel bilge pump-deck wash system.

4.5 The Document of Compliance indicated that the vessel carried a crew of two persons and had adequate life-saving equipment for that number of persons. However, there was a third crewmember on-board at the time of the incident. There were only two PLBs carried on-board (refer section 9.5.3 of the Code of Practice for Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15 metres in Length Overall).

4.6 Events happened very quickly and, from the time the Skipper first noted there was something wrong to the time needed to investigate the situation, he only had sufficient time to rouse the crew and to attempt to start the main bilge pump. From the time he re-emerged on deck to the time the vessel foundered was less than one minute.

4.7 The vessel suffered a sudden ingress of water into the fish hold. The Skipper did not recall striking an obstruction and the vessel was operating in water with charted depths of 100 metres. The only through hull fitting in the fish hold was a redundant fitting for a bilge pump. The vessel was elderly, and of timber construction, with planks fastened by nails, and the seams sealed with caulking.
5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Without inspection of the wreck it is not possible to state clearly what the cause of the incident was. Some possible causes include; sudden ingress into one compartment, a sprung plank, or a failed through-hull fitting.

5.2 The crew were not wearing their PLBs at the time of sinking so these did not activate. There were only two PLB’s for the three crewmembers on-board.

5.3 The speed of events precluded the crew having time to issue a Mayday call. The Skipper was trying to find out what was wrong and then went to start the main bilge pump. He barely had time to rouse the crew from sleep. The crew did not have time to activate their PLBs, which were clearly not being worn.

5.4 There was no radar transponder on-board.

5.5 The float free EPIRB activated and the first indication of an incident was when the Air Traffic Controller at Shannon Airport was informed by an aircraft that they had picked up the EPIRB signal.

5.6 The liferaft inflated and the crewmembers were able to climb on-board.

5.7 Both the EPIRB and liferaft worked as designed. The fitting of a new float free automatic GPS enabled EPIRB was a key element in ensuring a successful rescue. The fitting of this equipment demonstrates that the recent revision of the Fishing Vessel Code of Practice requiring such EPIRBs has been important to improving safety in the sector.

5.8 The vessel was only certified to carry two people on-board.
6. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

This report illustrates the benefits of fitting the required safety equipment. In particular, the recent revision of the Small Fishing Vessel Code of Practice in relation to the carriage of automatic, float-free GPS enabled EPIRBs illustrates the importance of such equipment.

6.1 Owners and Skippers are reminded that they must comply with all the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Design, Construction, Equipment and Operation of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15 (m) length overall and that they must not carry more persons on-board than the number certified in the Declaration of Compliance for the vessel.
## 7. APPENDICES

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<thead>
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<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>7.2 Met Éireann Weather Report.</td>
<td>16</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7.1 Photographs.

Photograph No. 1: ‘FV Carraig Chuin’.
Appendix 7.1 Photographs.

Photograph No. 2: Chart showing area of incident.
Marine Casualty Investigation Board,
Leeson Lane,
Dublin 2

5th April 2016

Our Ref: W50318/2_16182
Your Ref: MCOB/12/254

Re: Estimate of weather conditions at 25 nautical miles east of Clogher Head on 20th March 2016 between 06 hours and 18 hours UTC/GMT.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached report on the above matter and data from Buoy M2 in the Irish Sea for 20th March 2016.

Yours sincerely,
Appendix 7.2  Met Éireann Weather Report.

Estimate of weather conditions at 25 nautical miles west of Clogherhead on 20th March 2016 between 06 hours and 18 hours.

General Meteorological situation: A slow moving anticyclone of 1031 hPa centred to the west of Ireland, maintained a mostly light northerly airflow over the region through the day. A weak occluded front was situated close to the location through the morning and for a time in the afternoon.

0600Z – 1200Z
Wind: Light, mainly northerly force 3 or less.
Weather: Mostly cloudy. Mainly dry, but possibly a small amount of drizzle and mist at times from nearby weak front.
Visibility: Moderate or poor in any drizzle and mist. Otherwise moderate to good.
Sea state: Wavelets or slight. Significant wave height 0.5 m
Temperature: Air temperature slightly below 7.0 degrees Celsius. Sea temperature around 8.3 degrees Celsius.

1200Z – 1800Z
Wind: Light North to northwest force 3 or less.
Weather: Mostly cloudy at first with possibly a small amount of mist and drizzle for a time. Becoming fair during the afternoon from around 1500Z onwards
Visibility: Moderate or poor in any drizzle or mist, increasing mostly good.
Sea state: Wavelets. Significant wave height 0.3 m
Temperature: Air temperature slightly above 7.0 degrees Celsius. Sea temperature around 8.4 degrees Celsius.
Appendix 7.2 Met Éireann Weather Report.

Beaufort Scale of Wind

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Speed*</th>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Wave height**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>&lt;1 knots</td>
<td>Sea like mirror</td>
<td>0.1 (0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Light air</td>
<td>1-3 knots</td>
<td>Ripples</td>
<td>0.2 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Light breeze</td>
<td>4-6 knots</td>
<td>Small wavelets</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gentle breeze</td>
<td>7-10 knots</td>
<td>Large wavelets, crest begins to break</td>
<td>0.6 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Moderate breeze</td>
<td>11-16 knots</td>
<td>Small waves becoming Longer, frequent white horses</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fresh breeze</td>
<td>17-24 knots</td>
<td>Moderate waves, many white horses, chance of spray</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Strong breeze</td>
<td>25-32 knots</td>
<td>Large waves, white foam crests, probably some spray</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gale</td>
<td>33-40 knots</td>
<td>Sea heaps up, streaks of white foam</td>
<td>4 (5.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gale</td>
<td>41-50 knots</td>
<td>Moderately high waves of greater length</td>
<td>5.5 (7.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Strong Gale</td>
<td>51-64 knots</td>
<td>High waves, dense streaks of foam, spray may reduce visibility</td>
<td>7 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Storm</td>
<td>65-80 knots</td>
<td>Very high waves, long overhanging crests, visibility affected</td>
<td>9 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Violent storm</td>
<td>81-100 knots</td>
<td>Exceptionally high waves, long white foam patches over sea</td>
<td>11.5 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hurricane</td>
<td>100+ knots</td>
<td>Air filled with foam and spray, sea completely white</td>
<td>14+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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.
Appendix 7.2  Met Éireann Weather Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave Heights / State of Sea</th>
<th>Significant Wave height in meters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>0 – 0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth (Wavelets)</td>
<td>0.1 – 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>0.5 – 1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.25 – 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough</td>
<td>2.5 – 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very rough</td>
<td>4 – 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>6 – 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>9 – 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenal</td>
<td>Over 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visibility (Descriptive)</th>
<th>Visibility in nautical miles (kilometres)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>More than 5 nm (7 &gt; 9 km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>2 – 5 nm (4 – 9 km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0.5 – 2 nm (1 – 4 km)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fog</td>
<td>Less than 0.5 nm (&lt; 1 km)</td>
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</table>
Appendix 7.2  Met Éireann Weather Report.
Appendix 7.2  Met Éireann Weather Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stn</th>
<th>time</th>
<th>wind speed (kts)</th>
<th>wind gust (kts)</th>
<th>wind direction</th>
<th>air temp (°C)</th>
<th>sea temp (°C)</th>
<th>air pressure (hPa)</th>
<th>Sig Wave Ht (m)</th>
<th>Indiv Max Wave</th>
<th>Period sig Wave (sec)</th>
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<td>1029</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
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<td>36.8</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
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Section 36 of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000 requires that:

“36 (1) Before publishing a report, the Board shall send a draft of the report or sections of the draft report to any person who, in its opinion, is likely to be adversely affected by the publishing of the report or sections or, if that person be deceased, then such person as appears to the Board best to represent that person’s interest.

(2) A person to whom the Board sends a draft in accordance with subsection (1) may, within a period of 28 days commencing on the date on which the draft is sent to the person, or such further period not exceeding 28 days, as the Board in its absolute discretion thinks fit, submit to the Board in writing his or her observations on the draft.

(3) A person to whom a draft has been sent in accordance with subsection (1) may apply to the Board for an extension, in accordance with subsection (2), of the period in which to submit his or her observations on the draft.

(4) Observations submitted to the Board in accordance with subsection (2) shall be included in an appendix to the published report, unless the person submitting the observations requests in writing that the observations be not published.

(5) Where observations are submitted to the Board in accordance with subsection (2), the Board may, at its discretion -

(a) alter the draft before publication or decide not to do so, or

(b) include in the published report such comments on the observations as it thinks fit.”

The Board reviews and considers all observations received whether published or not published in the final report. When the Board considers an observation requires amendments to the report that is stated beside the relevant observation. When the Board is satisfied that the report has adequately addressed the issue in the observation, then the observation is ‘Noted’ without comment or amendment. The Board may make further amendments or observations in light of the responses from the Natural Justice process.

‘Noted’ does not mean that the Board either agrees or disagrees with the observation.
8. NATURAL JUSTICE - CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

8.1 Correspondence from RNLI and MCIB response. ........................................... 24
8.2 Correspondence from Coast Guard and MCIB response. .............................. 25
8.3 Correspondence from Skipper and MCIB response. .................................... 26

Note: The names and contact details of the individual respondents have been obscured for privacy reasons.
Correspondence 8.1  RNLI and MCIB response.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes the contents of this correspondence.
Correspondence 8.2  Coast Guard and MCIB response.

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 07 December 2016 19:41

To: [Redacted]

Subject: FW: Sinking of the FV Carriga Chun DRAFT MCIB report.

Some observations on the above report:

1. Summary Section page 3
   a. Suggest second sentence be reworded to reflect the following:
      i. At 1015, Shannon ATC reported that an EPIRB signal had been picked up by an aircraft. At 1058 UKMCC Kinloss also reported the EPIRB detection identifying as registered to the vessel.

2. Para 5.5
   a. Suggest change wording after ATC at Shannon to read as follows:
      i. Air traffic Control at Shannon were informed by an Aircraft North of Dublin that it had detected an EPIRB signal.

Kind regards,

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes the contents of this correspondence and has made the necessary amendments.
Correspondence 8.3 Skipper and MCIB response.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes the contents of this correspondence and has made the necessary amendment.