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MCIB
Marine Casualty Investigation Board

REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE COLLISION BETWEEN CORK PILOT LAUNCH "SONIA" AND SAILING YACHT "MAUREEN" IN CORK HARBOUR ON THURSDAY 27 AUGUST 1998.

The Marine Casualty Investigation Board was established on the 23rd, May 2002 under The Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act 2000

CONTENTS

1. SYNOPSIS.

1.1 At approximately 17.17 hours in the afternoon of Thursday 27th August. 1998 in a position two cables to the South of Spit Bank light a collision occurred between the Port of Cork Company power driven pilot launch "Sonia" and a privately owned sailing yacht "Maureen". There were no fatalities but one of the crew of the "Maureen" sustained serious injuries. There was no pollution.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 Pilot launch "Sonia" (See Photograph at Appendix 8.1)

Name:	"Sonia"
Official Number:	403089
Type:	Aqua-star 43
L.O.A:	43 feet
Beam:	12 Feet
Date Commissioned:	December 1995
Engines:	Volvo TAMD 122 x 2 (375 BHP x 2)
Speed:	23/24 knots (Maximum)
Certificate Type:	Passenger Boat Licence No. 784 issued by DM&NR 7/3/96 to 28/1/98
Type of Hull:	Semi-displacement
Gross Tonnage:	20.29

2.1.2 Crew List

Mr. Brian Carr	Coxswain
Mr. Patrick Murtagh	Driver & Deckman attending pilots

2.2 Sailing yacht "Maureen" (See Photograph at Appendix 8.2)

Name:	"Maureen"
Type:	Cork Harbour One Design. privately owned.
Dimensions:	Length: 29' 06" Beam: 7'06" Draft: 4' 06"
Engines:	12 HP Dolphin petrol
Built:	1896 (102 years old)
Hull:	Timber
Rig:	Bermuda

2.2.1 Crew List "Maureen"

Mr. Willaim Horgan Mallow Co. Cork	Skipper
Mr. Alan Horgan Mallow Co. Cork	

3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

3.1 Pilot launch "Sonia" leading up to the collision:-

3.1.1 At approximately 17.10 hours on Thursday 27th August 1998 the pilot launch embarked a pilot to an inward vessel MV "Danilith" off Roches Point.

3.1.2 The pilot launch then proceeded on its usual Northerly course (357 degrees true) back to base at a speed of 22 knots. This track keeps No. 5 buoy to port and Spit Bank Light to port (See Appendices 8.4 & 8.5) .

3.1.3 The coxswain stated that he was maintaining a lookout to the port side across the Spit Bank towards the Main Channel (Cobh Road) (See photographs at Appendices 8.6, 8.7 & 8.8).

3.1.4 There was an operational daylight radar Koden MD 3604 fitted but not switched on. It is said to be used at night time only.

3.2 Yacht "Maureen" leading up to the collision:

3.2.1 The yacht "Maureen" had left its moorings at Carrigaloe, Cobh earlier in the day for recreational sailing.

3.2.2 The owner/Skipper and his son, (a young adult) were on board.

3.2.3 "Maureen" was North West of No. 16 buoy heading approximately 235 degrees true at a speed of about 4.5 knots when "Sonia" was first sighted on the port side approaching on a Northerly heading.

3.2.4 The owner/Skipper of "Maureen" expected the pilot launch to give way although he thought it would pass close by. On previous occasions he had observed the pilot launch proceeding at speed and passing close to other craft on the river.

3.2.5 "Maureen" was carrying a full main sail and a No. 1 Genoa jib sail rigged to a 36 foot mast. The visibility was said to be good at the time. The owner/Skipper stated that, in his opinion, there was no glaring sun affecting the vision of crew on "Maureen".

4. THE INCIDENT

4.1 When the pilot launch was about 60 metres away the Skipper of the "Maureen" felt that he had not been observed by the pilot launch and decided to take avoiding action by putting helm up and let fly the Genoa sheets thus allowing the yachts' head to fall off to starboard and away from the rapidly closing pilot launch.

4.2 At approximately 17.17 hours "Sonia" made impact with "Maureen" on the port side of the cockpit (See Photographs at Appendices 8.9 & 8.10).

4.3 It is not clear whether the coxswain of the "Sonia" maneuvered immediately before the moment of impact or just at the time of impact by first putting the joystick to hard to starboard and then pulling back the throttles and taking all way off the pilot launch.

5. EVENTS FOLLOWING INCIDENT

5.1 The crew of the "Maureen" were thrown into the water and the yacht, which has a two and a half tons lead keel, sank in a short time in about 14 feet of water.

5.2 The "Sonia" which was stopped in the water some 30 metres away raised a Mayday call. The coxswain checked the forward compartment and that the hull both were intact. At the same time the driver prepared the overboard rescue device.

5.3 Mr. Alan Horgan was helped on board the "Sonia" while the Skipper (Mr. William Horgan) was helped through the water to the stern of "Sonia" and then lifted on board using the Helmatic Matesaver in conjunction with the aft davit and transom ladder. The rescue was effected within three minutes (See Appendix 8.11).

5.4 When the Skipper was brought on board the pilot launch the crew wrapped him up in a thermal protective aid (tinfoil blanket) taken from the first aid box (See Appendix 8.12).

5.5 The pilot launch then proceeded to Monkstown at full speed, which is 23.5 to 24 knots, and transferred the crew of "Maureen" to an ambulance and from there they were transferred to Cork University Hospital

Note: 22 knots = 25.32 miles per hour
24 knots = 27.62 miles per hour

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

6.1 The pilot launch "Sonia" is not fitted with automatic steering. It therefore requires the coxswain to retain constant physical control of the helm (wheel).

6.2 The manner in which the driver was reclined into the starboard chair precluded him from keeping a proper look out particularly up to the North East, i.e. to starboard side (whence the sailing yacht was approaching).

6.3 The crew of "Sonia" made reference to the following, inferring that these matters may in some way have interfered with the observance of the yachts approach:-

6.3.1 The crew stated that sun visors are only utilized when steering straight into the sun. They claim material used in the screens tended to reduce visibility and that the curtain visor cuts out some of the view and are not as effective when the sun is at an angle.

Comment:-

(a) The use of sun visors are well established for all types of marine craft. They are designed to reject glare, heat and ultra violet light. On "Sonia" they were fitted to the forward wheelhouse windows in the form of retractable roller screens. Sun visors are regarded as a navigation aid and conform to ISO 8468 "Ships Bridge Layout and Associated Equipment". They are proven to be effective for a bright sun and where a calm sea may produce a mirror-like reflection back up into the wheelhouse and where a look outs vision may be adversely affected.

(b) However in this particular incident the yacht was approaching from the North East i.e. in almost the opposite direction to that which the sun was setting in and allegedly affecting the vision of the crew of "Sonia". Therefore "sun visors" do not appear to have had any significant bearing on this collision.

6.3.2 The crew stated that chairs are especially designed for truck drivers and that crews have in the past raised the problem of "the arc of visibility". There are three different sized windows with wide vertical support pillars fitted and the smallest window is right in front of the coxswains' position.

Comment:-

(a) The above does not appear to have had any significant bearing on this accident particularly as the relative bearing of other vessels change and the lookout is only required to make the appropriate slight head or body adjustments in order to maintain full visibility.

(b) The aspect of the design of the chairs is a matter for Port of Cork Company to address separately. Refer to Section 6.2.

CONCLUSIONS

6.4 The International Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea 1972 [SI No. 29 of 1984 Collision Regulations (Ships and Water Craft On The Water) Order 1984 and subsequent legislation] apply to all vessels on the high seas and in all waters connected therewith navigable by seagoing vessels. The following Regulations are relevant in the context of this collision:

6.4.1 Under rule 18 (iv) the power driven vessel is deemed the responsible vessel and by the rules is required to keep out of the way of a sailing vessel,

6.4.2 Rule 5 refers to Look-out whereby every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision,

6.4.3 Rule 7 (b) refers to Risk of Collision and provides that proper use shall be made of radar equipment if fitted and operational,

6.4.4 Rule 17(b) refers to action by stand-on vessel. In this case "Maureen" was the stand-on vessel and considering the circumstances of the situation and the combined closing speed of approach of 24.7 knots (12.37 metres per second), it appears that "Maureen" did what was reasonably practicable to do so in order to comply with the Collision Regulations,

6.5 The owner of "Maureen" suffered serious injuries as a result of the collision and was confined to hospital for one week.

6.6 There is no evidence available to indicate that the crew of the pilot launch had specific training or instruction in the technical aspects of the management of the launch such as:-

(i) Collision regulations;
(ii) The practical use of Radar;
(iii) Chartwork/Navigation.
(iv) Navigational and Radio Watchkeeping

6.7 There is no evidence to suggest that the pilot launch "Sonia" normally proceeded around the harbour passing other craft at an extremely close distance at excessive speed. However the Port of Cork Company should ensure that procedures are in place to avoid the possibility of this occurring and that this is explicitly stated in the company standing orders.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Port of Cork Company should review their training/qualification requirements of coxswains;

7.2 Appointed crews i.e. drivers be required to be part of the watch system for keeping a proper lookout when the pilot boat is proceeding at speed;

7.3 Radar should be in use at all times when the pilot launch is off it's berth and operational;

7.4 The Port of Cork Company should formally advise the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR) that it has implemented these recommendations.

8. APPENDICES

8.1 Photograph of the Pilot Launch.

8.2 Photograph showing the same class yacht as "Maureen".

8.3 Glossary

8.4 Chart with the estimated tracks taken by both vessels.

8.5 Estimated tracks of both vessels and Angle of Impact- North up.

8.6 Photograph showing front view through the window of "Sonia".

8.7 Photograph showing a closer view at the Navigators position.

8.8 Photograph showing a closer view of the starboard crew chair.

8.9 Photograph showing the damage to the port quarter of "Maureen".

8.10 Photograph showing the damage on the starboard side of "Maureen".

8.11 Drawings of the Halmatic Matesaver recovery system.

8.12 Drawing of STRENTEX thermal protective aid (TPA).

8.13 Port of Cork Company Standing Orders for pilot launch crews.

8.14 Photograph showing a front view of the Pilot launch.

8.15 Crewing and Training Arrangements.

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8.1 Photograph of the Pilot Launch.

APPENDIX 8.2

8.2 Photograph showing the same class yacht as "Maureen".

8.3 Glossary

GLOSSARY

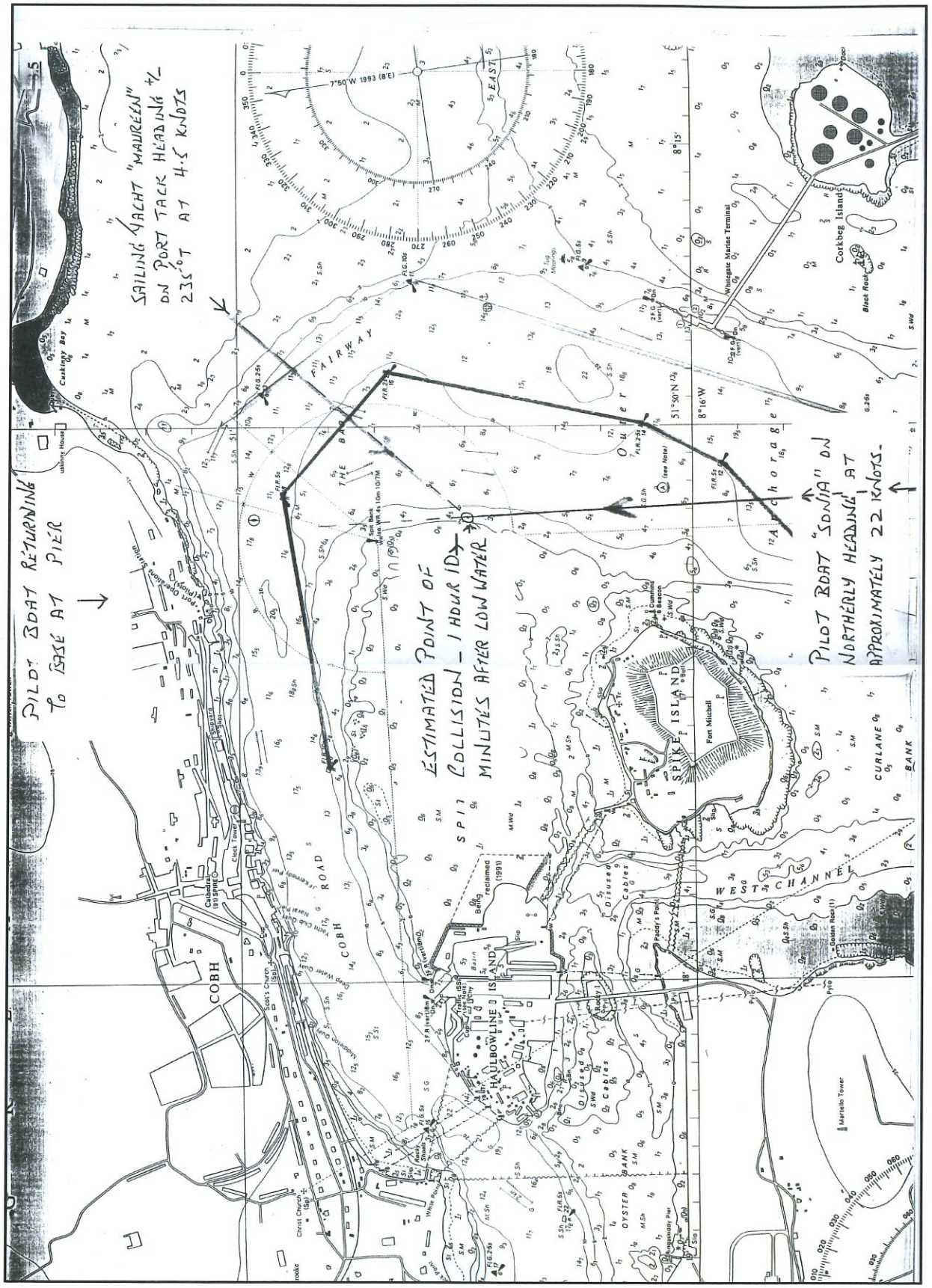
Cable	One tenth of a Nautical Mile
Cockpit	A well or sunken space in the afterdeck of a small boat for use of the helmsman and crew.
Coxswain	The person in charge of a boat and steers the boat.
Davit	A small derrick or lifting device.
Genoa Jib	A triangular headsail setting on the fore topmast stay and used when reaching. It overlaps the mainsail about one third to one half its width
Helm	Describes the whole of the steering apparatus which includes the hydraulics, motors and control wheel.
Helm up	To push the tiller to the weather side.
International Nautical Miles	1852 metres
Joystick	A quick response lever on the control console for operating steering apparatus.
Keel	The main centre-line structural member running fore and aft along the bottom of the yacht.
Knot	Velocity in nautical miles per hour
Let fly	Applies to running gear when let go quickly and completely.
Mainsail	The largest sail set from the mainmast

Mayday	When a vessel is in grave and imminent danger and requests immediate assistance.
Pilot	A qualified individual possessing local knowledge and is licensed by the Port of Cork Company and is taken on board ships arriving and departing within Cork Harbour Limits.
Pilot Launch	The vessel that carries pilots to and from ships.
Rudder	A flat plane surface of wood ("Maureen") hinged at the forward end to the stern of the vessel and used for steering and manoeuvring the yacht
Semi Displacement	Where the weight of the launch is supported by a combination of hydrostatic and hydrodynamic forces.
Sheets	A set of ropes attached to the lower corner (clew) of the Genoa Jib and is used to extend it or change its direction.
Tack (Port)	The direction of the vessel's head with regard to the trim of its sails; as on the port tack it has the wind on the port side.
Tiller	A lever bar that is connected to the rudder stock. The function is to turn the rudder.
Transom ladder	A boarding ladder fitted to the stern.

8.4 Chart with the estimated tracks taken by both vessels.

APPENDIX 8.5

8.5 Estimated tracks of both vessels and Angle of Impact.



8.6 Photograph showing front view through the window of "Sonia".

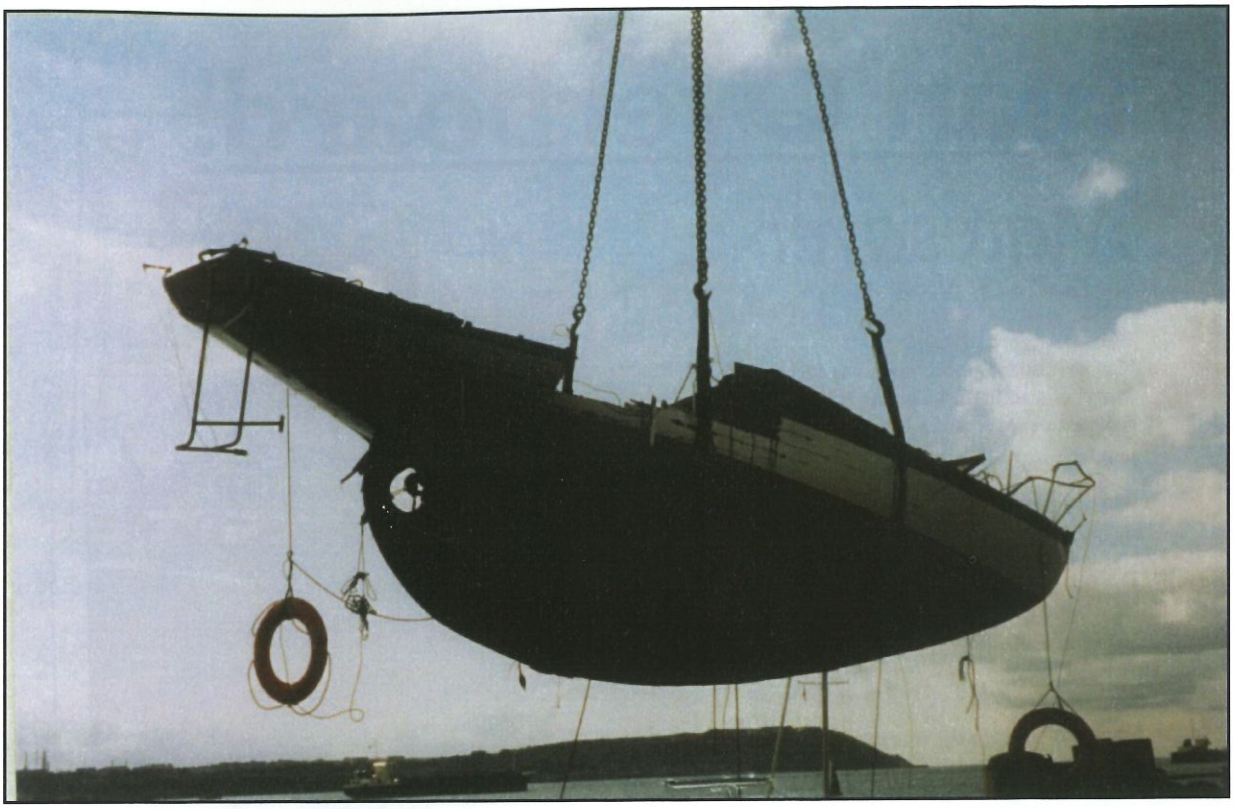
8.7 Photograph showing a closer view at the Navigators position.

8.8 Photograph showing a closer view of the starboard crew chair.

APPENDIX 8.9

8.9 Photograph showing the damage to the port quarter of "Maureen".

8.10 Photograph showing the damage on the starboard side of "Maureen".



8.11 Drawings of the Halmatic Matesaver recovery system.

Man Overboard!

Matesaver

RECOVERY SYSTEM

Man overboard - potentially the most dangerous accident to occur at sea. Failure to save a victim is often due to:

High freeboard

Crew fatigue

Dead weight of casualty

The *Matesaver*, proven in a range of hazardous and arduous commercial environments, has been specifically designed to assist in the safe recovery of survivors even when they are *injured or unconscious.*

Simple to operate the *Matesaver* incorporates a unique adjustable loop, that once passed over the body enables the survivor to be supported and safely manoevered to a suitable recovery area.

Both lightweight and robust the *Matesaver* is easily stowed when not in use.

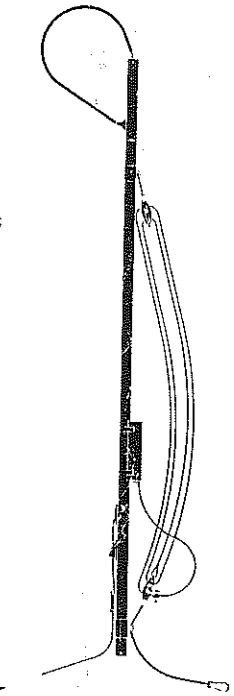
Features include:

- Easy to use
- Proven in arduous commercial operations
- Robust construction
- Galvanised/stainless steel parts
- Lightweight
- Easily stowed

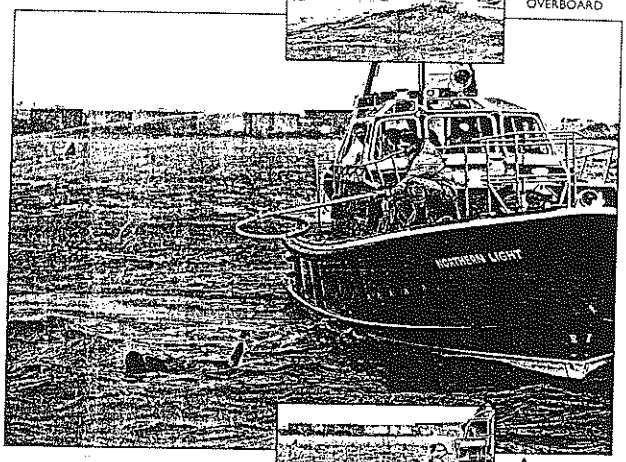
Halmatic, leading Builder of Pilot Boats, has a commitment to excellence that ensures the supply of the safest products possible. *Matesaver* will be supplied as standard equipment on all Halmatic craft.

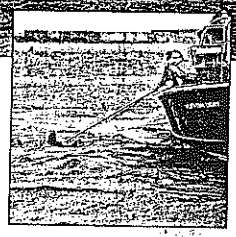
The *Matesaver* costs only **£395**(+ VAT) and is also available to the pleasure yacht market. Bulk orders prices on application.

Fully patented.



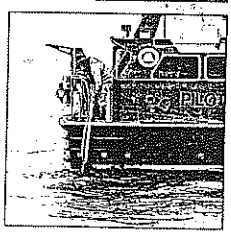
◀ MAN OVERBOARD



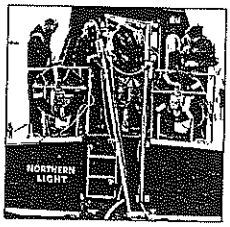


▲ CREW MEMBER STANDING BY WITH FULLY OPEN LOOP

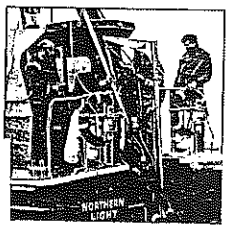
◀ LOOP PASSED OVER HEAD AND SHOULDERS OF SURVIVOR AND SECURED UNDER ARMS



◀ SURVIVOR IS THEN MOVED TO BEST POSITION FOR RECOVERY



◀ MATESAVER IS ATTATCHED TO RECOVERY DAVIT

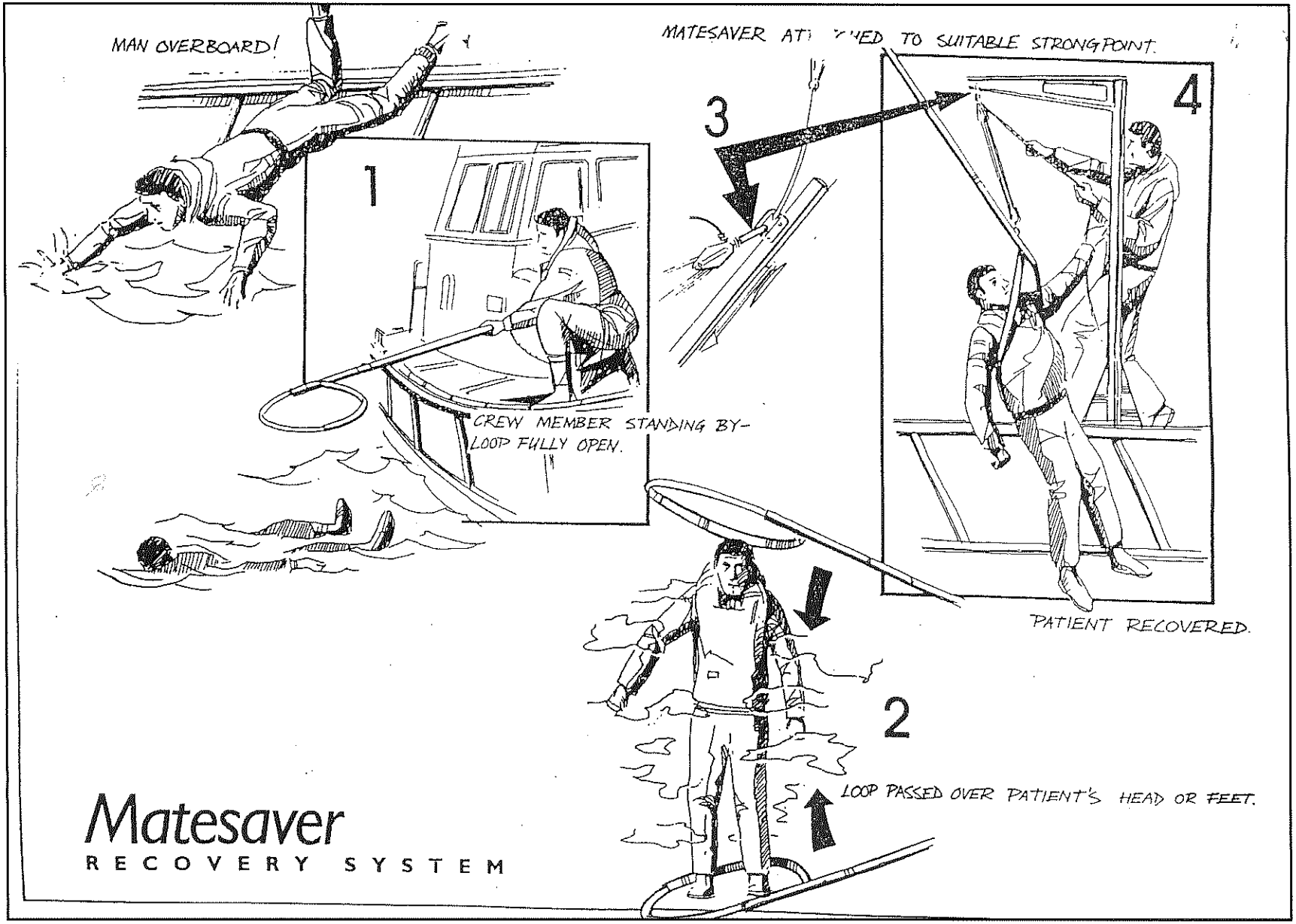


◀ SURVIVOR RECOVERED ABOARD

HUNTING PLC

Halmatic

HALMATIC LIMITED
Saxon Wharf, Lower York Street, Northam, Southampton, Hampshire SO1 1QF. Tel: +44 (0)703 337477. Fax: +44 (0)703 337478.


MAN OVERBOARD!
1
CREW MEMBER STANDING BY-
LOOP FULLY OPEN.
2
LOOP PASSED OVER PATIENT'S HEAD OR FEET.
3
MATESAVER ATTACHED TO SUITABLE STRONGPOINT.
4
PATIENT RECOVERED.
Matesaver
RECOVERY SYSTEM

8.12 Drawing of STRENTEX thermal protective aid (TPA).

strentex

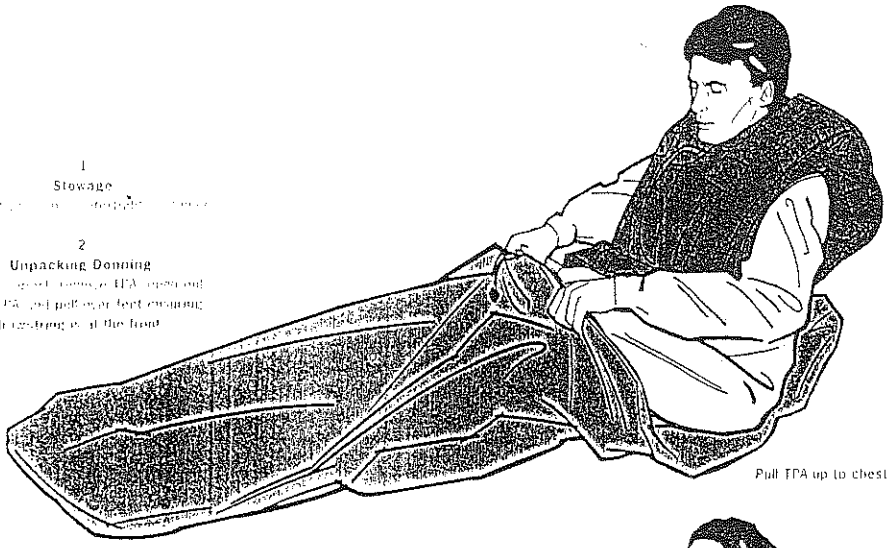
thermal protective aid

DTp (UK) approved

vernoncarus

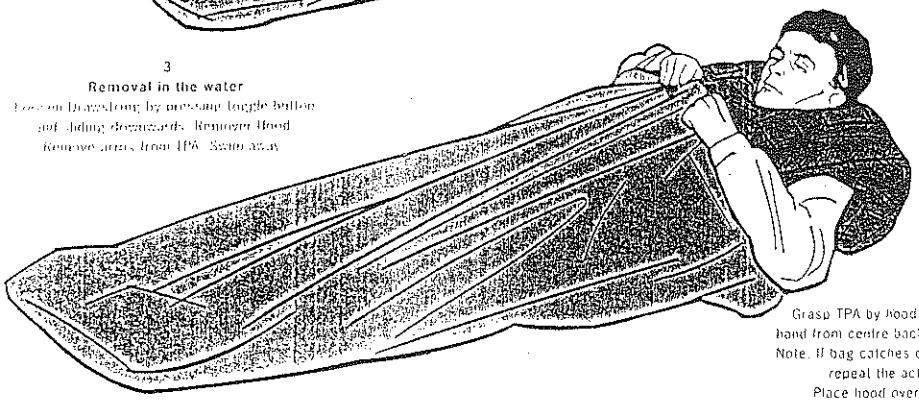
1
Stowage

2
Unpacking Donning



Pull TPA up to chest

3
Removal in the water
Open Drawstring by pressing toggle Button and sliding downwards. Remove Hood. Remove arms from TPA. Swim away.

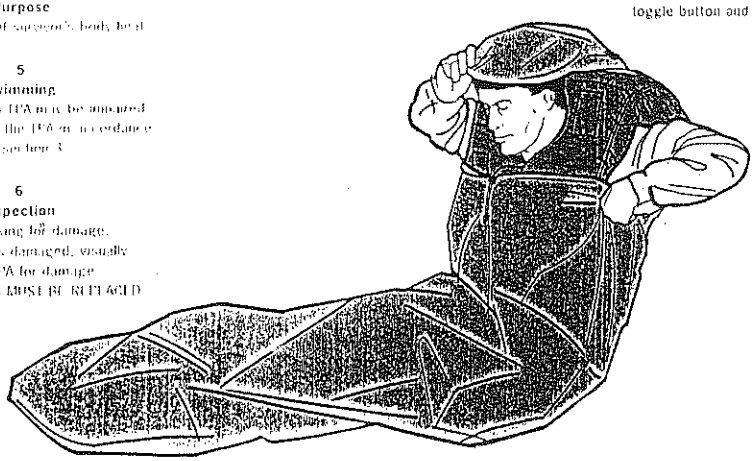


Grasp TPA by hood and bring hand from centre back over head.
Note. If bag catches on Lifejacket repeat the action.
Place hood over head
Close drawstring by pressing toggle button and sliding upwards.

4
Purpose

5
Swimming

6
Inspection
Check packing for damage.
If packaging is damaged, visually inspect TPA for damage.
DAMAGED TPA'S MUST BE REPLACED



Vernon-Carus Limited Penwortham Mills, Preston, Lancashire, England PR1 9SN Tel 0772 744493 Fax 0772-748754 Telex 677119

8.13 Port of Cork Company Standing Orders for pilot launch crews.

STANDING ORDERS

FOR PILOT LAUNCH COXSWAINS AND DRIVERS

A. **DUTIES OF COXSWAINS**

(1) It shall and must be the prime obligation upon Coxwains to embark and disembark Pilots to and from vessels requiring service under conditions of optimum comfort and safety consistent with the operational conditions pertaining. Coxwains shall always bear in the forefront of their minds that the Pilots' lives are, literally, in their hands at all times.

(2) Coxswains shall be responsible for the safe and efficient navigation of launches in their charge and for the manoeuvering of launches for the safe embarkation and disembarkation of the Pilots to and from vessels. Coxswains shall ensure that the water-tight doors are kept secured at all times other than normal access for maintenance/cleaning.

(3) Coxswains shall be responsible for all berthing, unberthing, mooring, unmooring and shifting movements of launches and for the proper ordering of sufficient and efficient moorings according to the weather and tidal conditions prevailing and anticipated.

(4) When operating at Kennedy Pier, Coxswains shall, where possible avoid going alongside other craft in order to minimise damage to the hull. The eastern steps should be used when vacant.

(5) Coxswains shall be responsible for cleanliness and the efficiency of launches in their charge and for maintenance to the satisfaction of the Harbour Master or Deputy Harbour Master.

(6) Coxswains shall be responsible for filling the freshwater and for bunkering as required.

(7) Coxswains shall be responsible for conducting checks in accordance with the attached check lists.

(8) Coxswains shall report, upon the forms provided for the purpose, operational damage resulting from contact with vessels being served, other craft or vessels, wharves, piers, jetties, quays, navigational marks or the sea or river bed; also with any floating or submerged object whether or not it is identified at the time. Coxswains shall also report any excess of vibration experienced in service and any reduced response to helm action.

(9) Coxswains shall be responsible for the correct maintenance of Service Logs and such other Records as may be detailed from time to time.

(10) Coxswains shall ensure that launches in their charges, while on station are not left unattended whilst they are alongside wharves, piers, boat harbour etc., and when circumstances oblige them to go ashore they shall specifically delegate responsibility for the launch to the Driver in their absence.

(11) Coxswains shall ensure that launches left at moorings are properly locked with all portable equipment stores in the forecabin with accesses secured. Engine starting and access keys to be deposited at the Port Operations for safe keeping.

(12) It shall be the prime duty of Drivers to assist and safeguard Pilots embarking and disembarking to and from vessels requiring service ensuring, during their close attendance upon them, that they do not obscure the Coxswain's view of the Pilots during the process of transfer. During the approach to the vessel, both Pilot and Driver should remain inside the cabin until the Pilot Boat is at reduced speed and in the lee of the vessel.

(13) Drivers shall, at all times whilst on deck, wear the lifesaving anorak or the lifevest expecially provided for thier use. He shall also secure himself to the Hadrian Safety Rail without restricting freedom of movement.

(14) Drivers shall assist and accept direction from the Coxswains in the discharge of the duties enumerated in these orders and the attached Check Lists.

B. LAUNCH CREWS GENERAL

(15) Launch Coxswains and Drivers shall, at all times on duty, wear uniform dress as supplied or other suitable clothing and shall always present a clean and seamanlike appearance. The Coxswain and Driver shall report their coming on duty to the Port Operations operator and subsequently report going off duty.

(16) In the clear interest of the safety of life, limb and property afloat in the Pilotage Service, all checks and routines provided for shall and must be conscientiously performed.
Launches shall and must be handed over from watch to watch in a clean and tidy condition and crews taking over craft in an unsatisfactory condition shall report the circumstances forthwith to the Deputy Harbour Master for action.

(17) The duty Pilot Launch shall fly the national and pilot flag between the hours of sunrise/sunset.

C. SERVICE OPERATIONS

(18) Launches occupying their stations on pilotage duty shall limit the quantities of paint, metal polish, cleaning cloths etc., in order to reduce fire risk.

(19) All cleaning appliances must be stored in the forward space when the launch is on service.

(20) Passengers shall not be carried in Pilot Launches without the express permission of the Superintendent of Pilots or his Deputy in every case.

(21) Coxswains are encouraged to seek guidance and advice from Pilots taking passage in launches whenever circumstances indicate the need but nothing shall remove or reduce the responsibilities of command from the Coxwain.

(22) When embarking a Pilot, Coxswains shall always consult with the Pilots concerned regarding precise transfer positions, attitudes and lees to be assumed and Coxswains shall always consult with Pilots before passing relevant requests and instructions to the Masters of vessels accepting services.

(23) When disembarking a Pilot, Coxswains shall establish early V.H.F. contact with the Pilots of vessels requiring attendance so that precise transfer positions, attitudes and lees may be organised having regard to the requirements of individual vessels.

(24) When the weather conditions are such as to preclude the embarkation of Pilots so that launches are obliged to lead vessels through parts of pilotage districts, Coxswains shall position launches relative to vessels being led in accordance with the directions of the Pilot concerned, and thereafter direct course and speed according to his orders, saving only that Coxswains shall not be obliged to place launches at hazard in the so doing.

(25) Whilst pilotage services are ordinarily required to be conducted with despatch, launch speeds must be reduced whilst passing wharves, jetties, piers, moorings, works, craft and persons likely to be adversely effected by launch wash/wake/wave effect. In addition, launch speed should be reduced returning to Station commensurate to the prevailing weather conditions.

(26) Marine diesel engines suffer adverse effect from protracted running at low R.P.M. When launches are required to cruise, heave to or otherwise operate at low speeds therefore Coxswains shall give each engine a burst at full speed either in gear or out according to the circumstances of service, at intervals not exceeding twenty minutes, in order to alleviate adverse effect.

(27) The engines must be warmed up gradually before operating at full speed. It is extremely important that the engines are allowed to cool down gradually before shutting off. If necessary the engines should be run at a fast idle for five minutes before switching off.

(28) Upon every occasion of starting and re-starting launch main engines, Coxswains shall direct their Drivers to check that exhaust sytems are discharging cooling water in proper and sufficient quantities.

(29) In the interest of fuel economy, pilot launches shall operate at reduced speed whenever the exigencies of service allow.

D. CLEANING

The interior and exterior of the launch is to be cleaned thoroughly on a daily basis. particular attention is to be paid to each of the following areas as follows:

MONDAY:	Wash down and clean for'd space including the toilet.
TUESDAY:	Wash down engine room bulkheads and engines. Check bilge spaces and remove debris where necessary.
WEDNESDAY:	Clean out wheelhouse thoroughly and wash down bulkheads. Clean out spaces under seats and remove unnecessary equipment.
THURSDAY:	Wash down void space (avoid water on heater) check bilge spaces and remove debris where necessary.
FRIDAY:	Wash down outside surfaces and deck, use cleaners to remove any stain where necessary..
	All safety equipment to be checked and any defects noted.

E. MAINTENANCE

When weather and circumstances permit, maintenance is to be carried out on the duty launch and standby launch.
Timber surfaces to be cleaned, sanded, primed and painted as necessary.

8.14 Photograph showing a front view of the Pilot launch.

8.15 Crewing and Training Arrangements.

CREWING AND TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS

(a) The Port of Cork Company employs nine crew who operate a. two person watch system of twelve hour shifts on board the pilot launch. The two duty crew are referred to as the "coxswain" and the "driver". All crews are said to be equally proficient and are interchangeable.

(b) The coxswain is the person in charge and would normally be seated in the Navigators chair at the port side of the console with the helm and engine controls to hand. The coxswain maintains a lookout and also navigates and manoeuvres the vessel as required from this position. He suffered no apparent physical injuries following the collision.

(c) The second crewmember has a main duty to assist and safeguard pilots embarking and disembarking. He is referred to as the "driver". The term "driver" is a probably a misnomer. This particular title does not mean that he drives the launch. He suffered no apparent physical injuries following the collision.

(d) The two crew were well rested before going on duty at 0800 hours on the morning of the accident. They were due off duty at 2000 hours the same day.

(e) The coxswain had previous experience in the Merchant Marine and is the holder of Lifeboat Certificate No. 183786 and AB Certificate No. 63290. He joined the Port of Cork Company on 02 August 1972.

(f) The driver had previous experience in the Irish Naval Service as a Chief Petty Officer and joined Port of Cork Company on 14 November 1980.

(g) Both employees had exemplary records with their employer.

(h) Neither of the crew held formal certificates of competency nor are they required to under current regulations for vessels operating in smooth or partially smooth waters, i.e., vessels not proceeding to sea. It is for the competent harbour authority to be satisfied as to the competence and fitness of the crew of its pilot launch (See Appendix 7.12).

(i) Records of training are retained by The Port of Cork Company.

(j) All crews are experienced handlers in small craft and semi displacement vessels of this size.

(k) The crew have been well trained and drilled in:

(a) Man over board recovery;
(b) Liferaft launching;
(c) Resuscitation

(l) There are no records regarding formal training or instructions in navigation, use of radar and watchkeeping.

(m) The owner/skipper of "Maureen" holds a valid Masters Foreign-Going Certificate of Competency No. CSS 677 with a Dangerous Cargo Endorsement for Petroleum Products. He has good knowledge of Cork Harbour and is experienced in sailing yachts.

(n) The other crew on the "Maureen" was the owners' son who is a young adult and was preparing to enter the Department of Nautical Studies at Cork Institute of Technology. He suffered from shock and bruising though otherwise he had no apparent physical injuries.

9. INDEX OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Mr. William Horgan

Mr. Dick Heron
Secretary ,Marine Casualty Investigation Board
29/31 Adelaide Road,
Dublin 2

Mallow Co. Cork
1ST. JAN 2004

Ref MCIB 45

Dear Sir,
With reference to your letter of 9th Dec.re- Draft Report of the investigation into the collision between Cork Pilot launch 'Sonia' and sailing yacht 'Maureen' in Cork Harbour on Thursday 27th August 1998, I have the following comments to make:-

(a) In addition to being in breach of Colregs 5 (lookout), 7(b) (Risk of collision & use of radar) and 18(iv) ('giving way vessel) it is obvious to me that the pilot launch was operated in a careless and unseamanlike manner.
(b) The above breaches may be due to a complete lack of formal training of the boat operators in Colregs observance, use of radar etc. but I am not in a position to substantiate this as fact.From your report findings there isn't evidence of this training having been carried out.
(c) Training: The inadequacy or the boat crew's training should have been addressed by Port of Cork by now and a detailed description of the training notified to the Dep. of Marine.
(d) Ref Appendix 8.13
Port of Cork Standing Orders for Pilot Launch Coxwains and Drivers should be modified. In it's present form it is mainly a technical or maintenance specific SO with only a very general reference to safe operation of the vessel. Colreg observance and keeping a good lookout both visually and by radar in accordance with the practice of good seamanship should be stressed in this document.
(e) I would also take issue with the non observance of para 25 of above SO- Service Operations which states 'In addition, launch speed should be reduced returning to Station ,commensurate to the prevailing weather conditions'
From observation this is seldom if ever observed.
The necessity of remaining particularly vigilant when proceeding at speed should be stated in this document.

You may include any of the above comments in your appendix to the report if you so wish.

Yours sincerely

William Horgan

MCIB Response

MCIB RESPONSE TO THE LETTER FROM MR. WILLIAM HORGAN OF 1ST JANUARY 2004.

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter, however, the points raised are outside the remit of the MCIB. We would refer you to the two letters (dated 8th Dec. 2000 and 19th Dec. 2003) received from the Port of Cork.

Port of Cork
MCIB Response

Port of Cork Company, Custom House Street, Cork, Ireland • Tel: 353 21 4273125 • Fax: 353 21 4276484
Email: info@portofcork.ie • Web: www.portofcork.ie

PORT of CORK
DEEPWATER MULTI-MODAL PORT

19 December, 2003

Mr Dick Heron,
Secretary,
Marine Casualty Investigation Board,
29/31 Adelaide Road,
Dublin 2.

Dear Mr Heron,

I refer to the letter of the 9th December addressed to Mr Pat Keenan, who retired in 2001,and the draft report of the investigation into the collision between the pilot launch "Sonia" and yacht "Maureen".

A draft report of the investigation, requesting comment, was first received from the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources in November 2000. A copy of the reply, sent in December 2000, is attached for your information. We do not have any further comments to add to except to advise that all of the recommendations were implemented subsequent to the issue of the draft report and that the two pilot launch crew members are now retired. We note that the "Boatmans's Licence" has not yet been introduced.

Yours sincerely

Brendan Keating,
Chief Executive

MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter.

Port of Cork Company, Custom House Street, Cork, Ireland • Tel: 353 21 4273125 Fax: 353 21 4276484 • email: info@portofcork.ie

PORT of CORK
DEEPWATER MULTI-MODAL PORT

8th December, 2000.

Mr. Paul Dolan,
Maritime Safety Division,
Department of the Marine
& Natural Resources,
Leeson Lane,
Dublin 2.

Dear Mr. Dolan,

The Port of Cork Company (hereinafter referred to as the Company) acknowledges and accepts that this accident was caused by human error of the crew insofar as a proper lookout was not being kept.

Arising from an internal investigation completed by the Harbour Master (the findings of which investigation concurs with the Department's Report as to the cause of this accident) disciplinary action was taken against the crew of the Pilot Launch, one of whom has since retired.

The Company is pleased to note that the Report acknowledges that both employees had exemplary records with the Company, having had twenty six and eighteen years experience respectively as at the date of the accident.

The Company is satisfied as to the competency and fitness of the crew with regard to the operation of the Pilot Launch. Launch crews are recruited with local marine knowledge and small craft experience. A number of the existing crew members have been recruited from the Naval service. All would be experienced in the use of radar and boat handling in confined waters. As is normal practice the radar is primarily used in conditions of poor visibility and during the hours of darkness.

At various stages, the crews have undergone assessment by independent competent persons as to their suitability in handling fast pilot launches to Trinity House standards.

The Company has noted and will implement the recommendations as set out in section 7 of the Report and would comment as follows:

1. Training/Qualifications - The Company has arranged for all launch crews to attend courses in radar and navigational training. In the absence of guidelines from the Department these courses have been devised in co-operation with experienced nautical instructors. The Company would welcome the introduction, by the Department, at an early date of the proposed "Boatmans Licence" which will allow the skipper and crew of commercial craft the opportunity to attain a recognised competency standard.

2. Driver/Watch System - Direction has been given to "drivers" to be part of the watch system for keeping a proper lookout when the pilot boat is underway and when not attending to their primary duty.

3. Radar - The Company has given a direction to the crew of the Pilot Launch that the radar be switched on and in use at all times while the launch is in operation.

Yours sincerely,

P. J. KEENAN,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

NOTES