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**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
INTO FATAL INCIDENT OFF
CASTLETOWNSHEND,
CO. CORK
ON
30th MAY 2010.**

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/188
(No.6 of 2011)**



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1. SYNOPSIS

- 1.1 On 30th May 2010, Mr. Didier Heneault and Mrs. Margaret Heneault entered the water in their kayaks at the League close to Raheen Town, Co. Cork, Ireland and paddled South South-East, for about 40 minutes until they reached Horse Island.
- 1.2 The pair rested in their kayaks for about 20 minutes observing sea birds and then continued on their journey, leaving the Island from the western side. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Heneault turned and noticed that Mr. Heneault was in the water. His kayak was about 10 metres away from him.
- 1.3 Mr. Heneault was pronounced dead at the Accident and Emergency in Cork University Hospital at 16.50 hrs. that evening. Post mortem report gave the cause of death as cardiac failure due to hypertensive cardiomyopathy following immersion in cold water and associated hypothermia, with a medical history of hypertension.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 The kayaking party comprised:

- Mr. Didier Heneault, Kinsale, Co. Cork
- Mrs. Margaret Heneault, Kinsale, Co. Cork

2.2 Kayak details:

Make/Model	Belouga Caugek
Length	4.6 m
Width	65 cm
Weight	23 kg
Max Load	150 kg

2.3 Other Equipment

- 2 x Standard Paddles attached to the kayaks with shock cord
- 2 X Canvas Spray Decks

2.4 Safety Equipment

- 1 x Wetsuit
- 1 x Set of dingy style foul weather gear
- 2 x Spray jackets
- 1 x Standard Horizon HX 270 hand held VHF
- 2 x Baltic Dingy pro buoyancy aids
- 2 x Emergency paddles
- 2 x Hand held flares
- Duct Tape
- Selection of safety ropes of varying lengths

EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 On the day of the incident there had been outbreaks of rain and drizzle. The visibility was moderate to good. The air temperature was 11 °C, the breeze was from the south-east, Force 2 to 4.
- 3.2 Sea state was slight to calm.
- 3.3 At approximately 10.00 hrs. they departed from the League close to Raheen Town.
- 3.4 Mr. and Mrs. Heneault paddled in a south south-west, direction for about 40 minutes towards Horse Island at the west side of the entrance to Castle Haven Harbour.
- 3.5 Upon arriving at the south side of Horse Island they passed through a rock tunnel and stopped for about 20 minutes to observe the bird life.

4. THE INCIDENT

- 4.1 They exited the tunnel into some choppy water at approximately 11.00 hrs. with Mrs. Heneault leading at Mr. Heneault's request.
- 4.2 Mrs. Heneault turned and noticed that Mr. Heneault was in the water, his kayak was about 10 metres away from him.
- 4.3 Mrs. Heneault returned to lend assistance to Mr. Heneault. First she righted his kayak and brought it to him. She called to him to hold on to the rope at the front of his kayak.
- 4.4 In the sheltered water Mr. Heneault made one attempt to get into his kayak but as he tried the kayak capsized.
- 4.5 Mrs. Heneault re-righted Mr. Heneault's kayak and told him to use the front of her kayak as support to aid himself when getting back into his kayak. She put her paddle across the two boats to counter balance his weight.
- 4.6 When he took hold of the front of her kayak she paddled back to more sheltered water, but by that time he could only barely hold on to her kayak and began to slip under water.
- 4.7 Mrs. Heneault then untied one of the safety ropes from her kayak and passed it under his arms in order to keep him afloat.
- 4.8 Mr. Heneault only spoke one word after that, "Radio". There was a hand held VHF radio in his kayak, however Mrs. Heneault knew that getting it meant that she would have to leave go of the rope which was holding him up.
- 4.9 Mrs. Heneault began to scream and shout for help. Mr. Heneault weakened and after about ten minutes he became unresponsive.

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

5. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

- 5.1 Some time after 14.00 hrs. two kayakers, Mr. Barry Whelan and Mr. Traolach Layton, were returning from Toe Head Point when they heard Mrs. Heneault's calls for help.
- 5.2 They arrived on the scene and lent assistance. Mr. Whelan helped Mrs. Heneault hold Mr. Heneault clear of the water while Mr. Layton towed the crafts to shore. This journey took approximately one hour.
- 5.3 Mr. Layton used his mobile phone to call for assistance as soon as he got coverage and the emergency services were contacted at 14.25 hrs.
- 5.4 They arrived at a beach at the North-East end of Horse Island at around 14.40 hrs. and the two men started CPR.
- 5.5 At 14.48 hrs., approximately 10 minutes after they came ashore, the Baltimore Inshore Lifeboat arrived at the beach, shortly followed by the Toe Head Coast Guard Unit which arrived at 14.52 hrs.
- 5.6 The combined crews of the Toe Head Coast Guard Unit and the Baltimore Inshore Lifeboat began to administer first aid. A H.S.E ambulance crew waiting at Castletownshend Pier were informed of the situation and asked to have a defibrillator ready on arrival of the inshore lifeboat.
- 5.7 The casualty was transferred to Castletownshend Pier on the inshore lifeboat where he received advanced paramedic treatment before being transferred to the Coast Guard Helicopter and flown to Cork University Hospital.
- 5.8 Mr. Heneault was pronounced dead at 16.50 hrs. at Cork University Hospital.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Mr. Heneault and his wife were very experienced kayakers, the equipment that they brought was correct for this kind of activity and typical of that recommended by kayaking associations.
- 6.2 The pathologist report concluded that Mr. Heneault suffered an acute cardiac event following falling from the kayak due to a hypertensive cardiomyopathy, with the known physiological responses to cold water immersion and then developed hypothermia after prolonged immersion, with a medical history of hypertension.

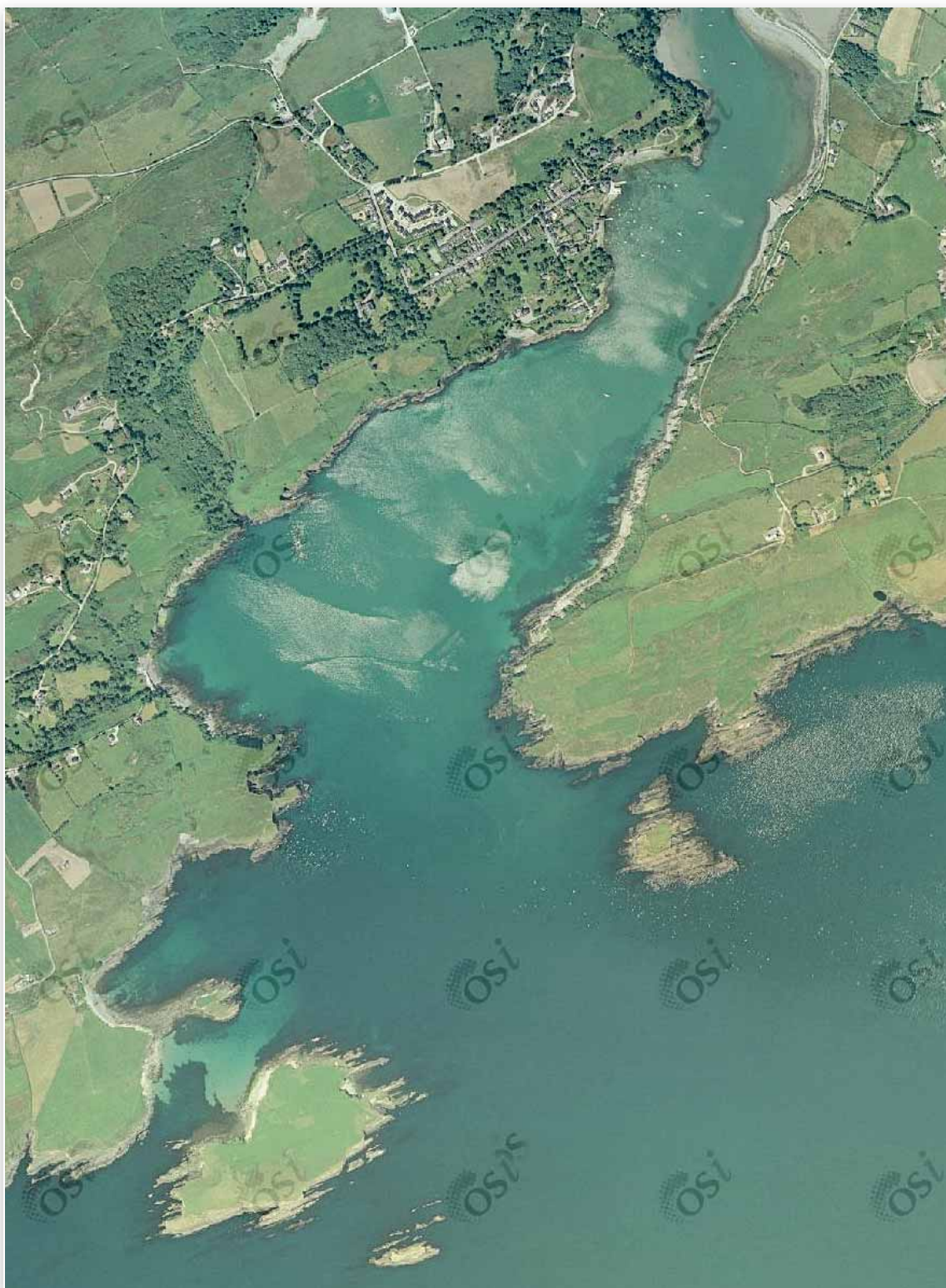
7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from its investigation into this incident, the Board makes the following recommendations:-

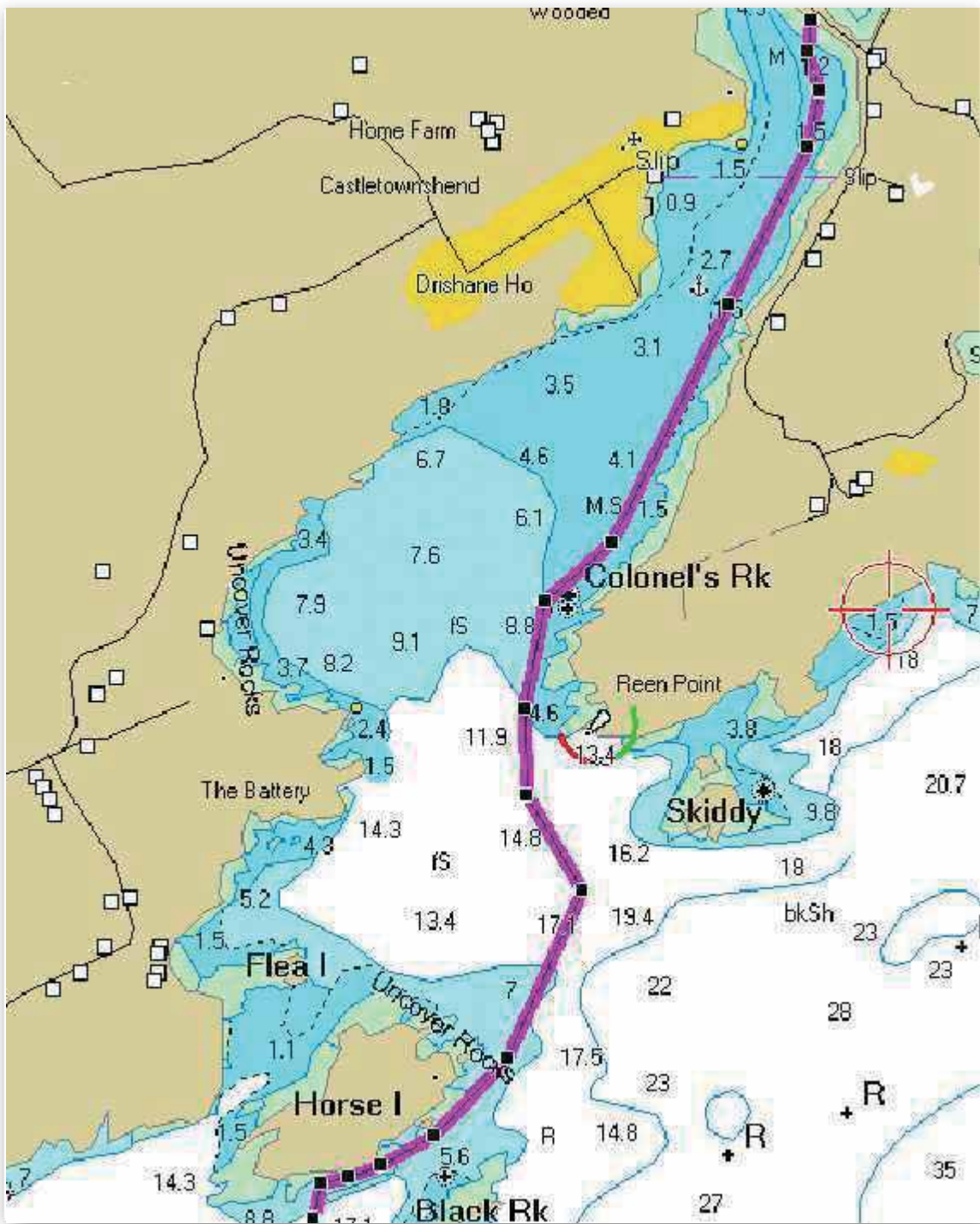
- 7.1 Consideration should be given to the use of life jackets as opposed to buoyancy aids, when offshore kayaking, where capsize is far less likely than in white water. A life jacket of 150 Newtons or more would have kept the casualty's head above water at all times.
- 7.2 The established Irish Canoe Union recommendation that kayakers should not proceed to sea in parties of less than three should receive greater prominence and emphasis during ICU training activities.

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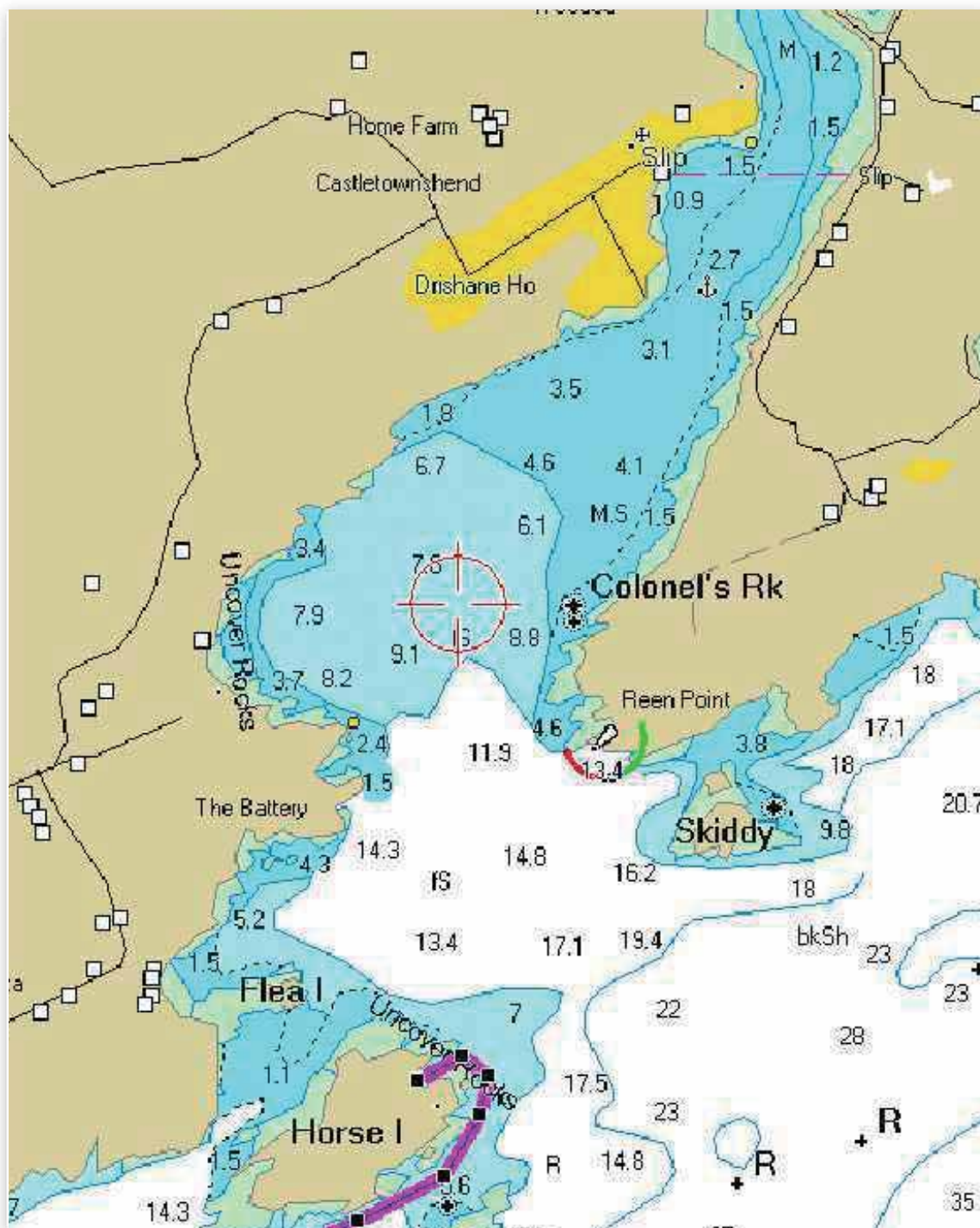
Appendix 8.1 Aerial photograph of Castle Haven Harbour.



Appendix 8.2 Chart of departure route.



Appendix 8.2 (a) Chart of route to the beach.

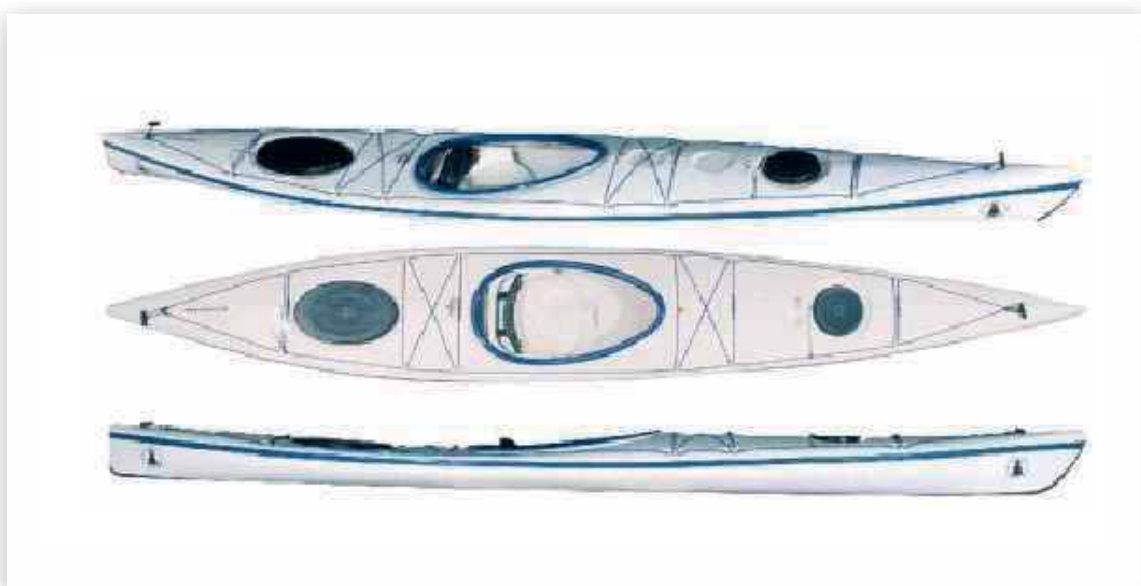


APPENDIX 8.3

Appendix 8.3 Description of vessel.

Kayak details:

Make/Model	Belouga Caugek
Length	4.6 m
Width	65 cm
Weight	23 kg
Max Load	150 kg



Appendix 8.4 Weather for the period.



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

4/6/2010

Our Ref: WS 3018/2B_13695

Estimate of weather conditions in the sea area off Castletownshend, Co. Cork, on the 30th May 2010, between 6 and 18 hours

General Situation

There was a slack airflow over the west and south coasts of Ireland in the morning. There was a deep depression in mid Atlantic, and associated frontal troughs moved eastwards over the south and west coasts in the morning. The troughs became slow moving in the area in the afternoon.

Details for the Castletownshend sea area

6 to 12 hours

Winds: Light to Moderate, Force 2 to 4, mainly from a south-easterly direction
Weather: outbreaks of rain and drizzle
Visibility: moderate to good
Waves: Moderate
Sea temperatures: 11°C

12 to 18 hours

Winds: Light to Moderate, Force 3 to 4, gusting Force 5
Weather: outbreaks of rain, some prolonged and heavy spells later in the period
Visibility: moderate in rain otherwise good
Waves: Moderate
Sea temperatures: 11°C

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



Appendix 8.4 Weather for the period.

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

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

Wave Heights / State of Sea

The wave height is the vertical distance between the crest and the preceding or following trough. The table below gives a description of the wave system associated with a range of significant wave heights.

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

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

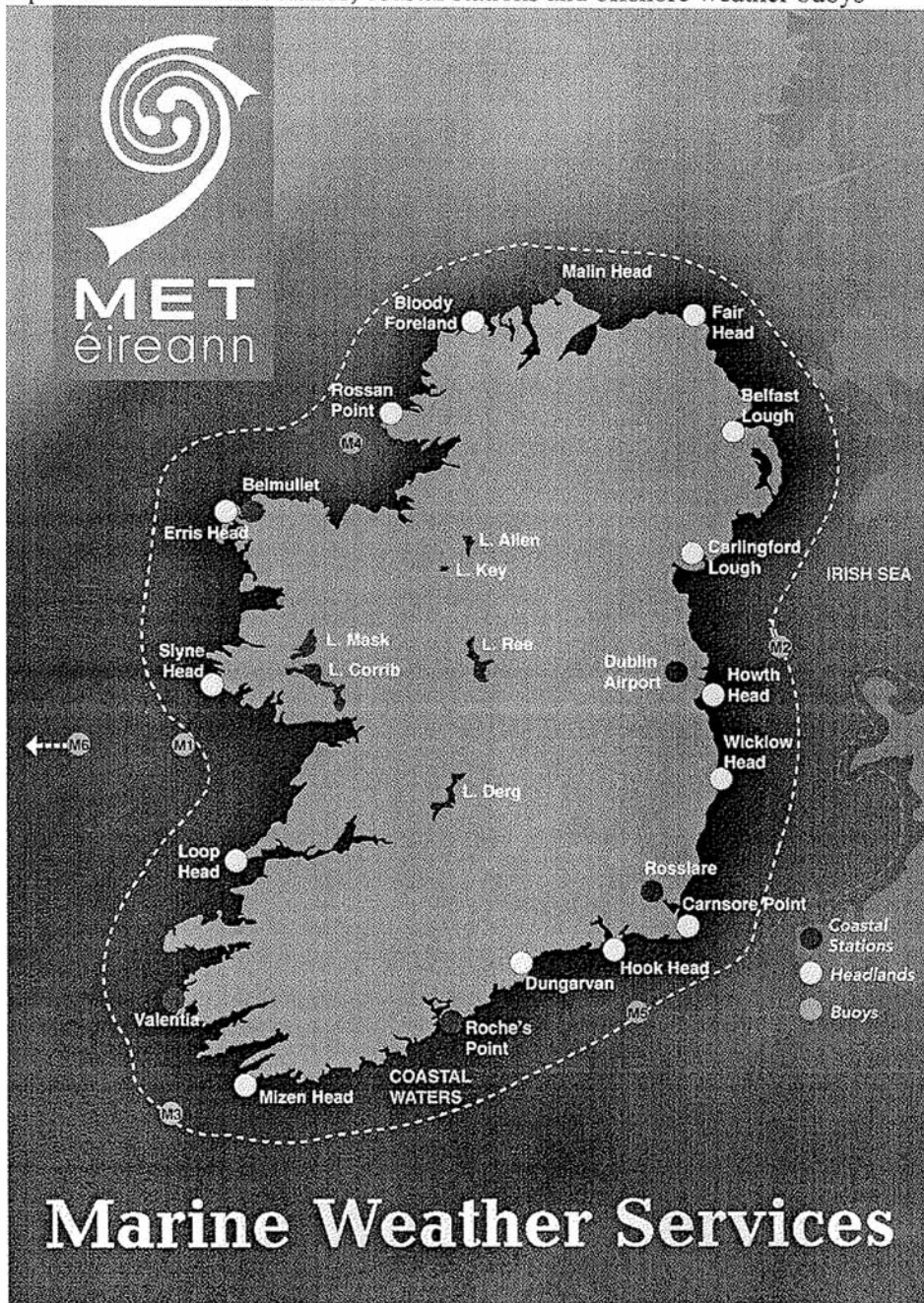
Visibility

Descriptions of visibility mean the following:

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

Appendix 8.4 Weather for the period.

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



9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

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Note: The address and contact details of individual respondents have been obscured for privacy reasons.

mcib.txt

Page 1

Kenilworth,

Dear Ms Reddin,
I have read report 'DRAFT Report of the Investigation into fatal incident off Castletownshend, Co Cork on 30th May 2010' your ref MCIB/188 and I have no comments or observations to be included.

Yours Sincerely

John Whelan



MCIB RESPONSE

The Board notes the contents of this correspondence.



4th April 2011.

Your reference: MCIB/188

Mr John O'Donnell
Chairman
Marine Casualty Investigation Board
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2.

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Irish Coast Guard has received your Draft Report on the fatal incident which occurred off Castletownsend, Co. Cork on 30th May 2010.

I wish to confirm that we have no observations or comments to make on this report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth Smith".

Elizabeth Smith,
Irish Coast Guard



Administration Office, Irish Coast Guard, Department of Transport, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Oifig Riaracháin, Garda Cóstá na hÉireann, An Roinn Iompair, Lána Chill Mochargán, Baile Átha Cliath 2, Éire.
Tel: + 353 1 6783455 / 3427, Fax: + 353 1 6783459, email: admin@irishcoastguard.ie

MCIB RESPONSE

The Board notes the contents of this correspondence.

Margaret Heneault

4th April 2011

Ms Eve Reddin,
Secretary,
Marine Casualty Investigation Board,
Leeson Lane,
Dublin 2

Re: Your reference MCIB/188
Draft Report of the Investigation into the fatal incident off Castletownshend Co. Cork on
30th May 2010

Dear Ms Reddin,

I refer to your letter and Draft Report above.

After reading this report I have no comments or observations to offer.

Yours sincerely,



Margaret Heneault



MCIB RESPONSE

The Board notes the contents of this correspondence.

Mr John O'Donnell
MCBI
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2

Your Reference; MCIB/188

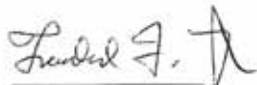
March 30th 2011

**Draft report of the investigation into fatal incident off Castletownshend, Co.
Cork on 30th May 2010**

Dear Mr O'Donnell,

I have read the draft report and am satisfied that it adequately represents the incident
and that the recommendations are appropriate.

Yours sincerely,



Traolach Layton



MCIB RESPONSE

The Board notes the contents of this correspondence.

An Garda Síochána

An Leas-Choimisinéara
(Oibríochtaí)
An Garda Síochána
Ceanncheathrú na nGardai
Páirc an Fhionn-Uisce
Baile Atha Cliath 8



Deputy Commissioner
(Operations)
An Garda Síochána
Garda Headquarters
Phoenix Park
Dublin 8

Tel. / Teileafón (01) 666 2057/8/9
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Please quote the following Ref. No.

Web Site : www.garda.ie
E-mail : commissioner_ops@garda.ie

OPS 79.13/10
MCIB/188

AN GARDÁ SÍOCHÁNA
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER'S
OFFICE

- 6 MAY 2011

OPERATIONS
GARDA HEADQUARTERS

**Mr. John O'Donnell,
Marine Casualty Investigation Board,
Lesson Lane,
Dublin 2.**

**Re: Draft Report of the Investigation into fatal incident off
Castletownshend, Co. Cork on 30th May 2010.**

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

I am directed by Deputy Commissioner, Operations, to refer to your letter of the 23rd March 2011 to the Garda Commissioner in the above and to advise that having reviewed the draft report, An Garda Síochána is in agreement with its findings and conclusion.

Yours sincerely,

**Frank Walsh
Superintendent for
Deputy Commissioner**

FW May, 2011



Mission Statement / Ráiteas Misin :

Working with Communities to Protect and Serve / Ag obair le Pobail chun iad a chosaint agus chun freastal orthu

MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this correspondence.

