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

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**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION  
INTO A FATALITY ON BOARD  
THE MPV "IKOM K"  
AT BEAL LOCH,  
CASTLETOWNBERE, CO. CORK  
ON  
27th MAY 2009**

**REPORT No. MCIB/167  
(No. 6 of 2010)**

Report MCIB/167 published by The Marine Casualty Investigation Board  
17th June 2010

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## 1. SYNOPSIS

- 1.1 On the afternoon of Wednesday 27th May 2009 the MPV "Ikom K" sailed from the slip at Beal Loch, Castletownbere, Co. Cork and was proceeding towards Bere Island, Co. Cork when the passengers noticed the vessel taking an unexpected sheer to starboard.
- 1.2 Shortly thereafter, the vessel ran violently aground on the mainland about 200 metres from the entrance to Beal Loch.
- 1.3 On arrival on the bridge, the passengers found the skipper, Mr. Patrick Murphy collapsed on the deck. Mr. Murphy was later pronounced dead by shore based medical personnel.
- 1.4 There were no other crew on board the vessel at the time of the incident.
- 1.5 The Board extends its sincere condolences to those bereaved by this tragic incident.

## 2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

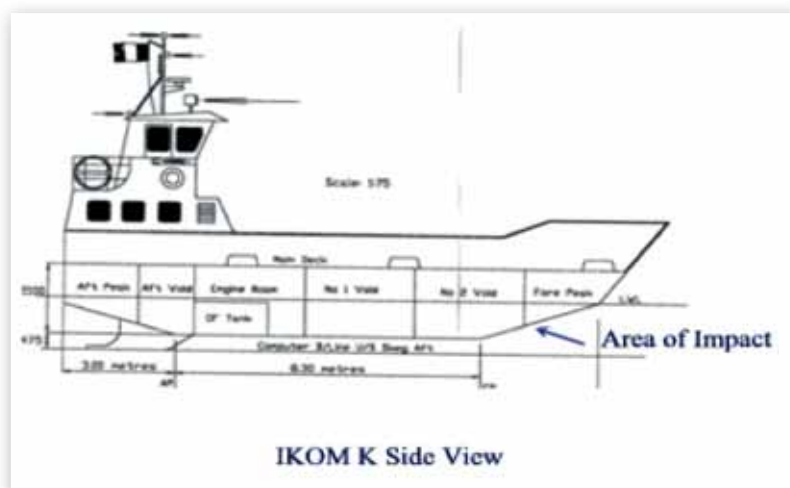
### 2.1 Vessel Particulars

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Name of Vessel:     | MPV "Ikom K"       |
| Registered length:  | 14.24 metres       |
| Beam:               | 6 metres           |
| Depth:              | 2.10 metres        |
| Gross tonnage:      | 55                 |
| Year of Build:      | 1999               |
| Main Engines:       | 2 x Perkins Sabre  |
| Car Capacity:       | 6 cars             |
| Passenger Capacity: | 50 passengers      |
| Truck Capacity:     | 1 x 30 tonne truck |

### 2.2 Technical description of the vessel

The "Ikom K" held a Class V Passenger Ship Certificate valid until 21st of January 2009. The Marine Survey Office last inspected the ship on the 22nd of January 2009. The lifesaving equipment as set out on the Passenger Ship Certificate, with the exception of two parachute distress flares, were on board and in a serviceable condition after the incident. (See Photograph and General Arrangement drawing).





### 2.3 Timeline of incident

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 14.30 hrs.               | "Ikom K" left Bere Island with military personnel and vehicles.                                   |
| 15.00 hrs.               | Alongside at Pontoon.   |
| 15.00 hrs. to 16.10 hrs. | During which a return trip to Bere Island was (approximately) undertaken.                         |
| 16.35 hrs.               | "Ikom K" sailed from Pontoon with military personnel and one civilian nurse - as foot passengers. |
| 16.40 hrs. (approx)      | Vessel struck rocks.  |
| 16.44 hrs.               | Emergency call routed to MRSC Valentia.   |
| 16.45 hrs.               | Two parachute emergency flares released.  |
| 16.50 hrs. (approx)      | "Oileán na hÓige" crewman boards "Ikom K" and brings vessel to Pontoon.                           |
| 16.57 hrs.               | "Ikom K" alongside at Pontoon.  |
| 17.00 hrs.               | Emergency services in attendance.   |
| 17.09 hrs.               | Mr. Murphy pronounced dead.   |

### 3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 The "Ikom K" operates scheduled services between Bere Island and Pontoon, Co. Cork. The ferry was operating normally on the day of the incident. Due to tidal conditions most of these crossings were made between Pontoon and Lawrence Cove.
- 3.2 Castletownbere tides for 27th of May 2009  
Low Water 12.30 - 0.50 m  
High Water 19.00 - 3.31 m
- 3.3 A number of Defence Forces personnel and vehicles left Bere Island on the 14.30 hrs. crossing arriving in the Pontoon at 15.00 hrs. and arrangements were made for them to return as foot passengers at about 16.30 hrs. from the Pontoon.
- 3.4 The second crewman left the vessel after the first couple of trips of the day to take care of some personal business.
- 3.5 The "Ikom K" made a further return trip to Bere Island between 15.00 hrs. and 16.10 hrs. approximately. As sufficient tide was present it was planned for the 16.30 hrs. crossing to be from Pontoon to 'Trá Gabhla' (Ballinakilla Slipway) and the return service ex. Bere Island would operate from Ballinakilla Slipway instead of Lawrence Cove. (The routes the ship operates are shown on Map 1).



Map 1

# THE INCIDENT

## 4. THE INCIDENT

- 4.1 The "Ikom K" left Pontoon at approximately 16.35 hrs., with 7 people on board, i.e. the skipper, and six passengers. Five of these passengers were members of the Defence Forces.
- 4.2 The passengers stated that instead of taking a course to the South towards Ballinakilla Slipway the ship appeared to continue to turn to starboard. Shortly afterwards the vessel struck the shore between Pontoon and Berehaven Golf Club.
- 4.3 The impact appeared to have been taken by the starboard forward section of the ship. (The approximate estimated track of the vessel is shown on Map 2).



Map 2

- 4.4 Capt. Will Collins, Defence Forces, went to the wheelhouse where he found Mr. Murphy lying on the deck, apparently unconscious. A nurse on board with members of the Defence Forces party, commenced to administer first aid to Mr. Murphy.
- 4.5 All five Military personnel had first aid training.



## 5. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

- 5.1 A member of the Defence Forces took over the controls of the ship. He described the position of the controls when he entered the wheelhouse as follows; port and starboard combined speed and reversing controls both in the half ahead position, hydraulic power take off clutch in the declutched position, ships wheel hard to starboard and rudder angle indicator showing full starboard rudder.
- 5.2 The ship was manoeuvred astern until clear of the shore, during which a scraping noise was heard as the ship came free. As the Defence Forces personnel had no experience in ship handling they endeavoured to keep the ship headed towards Castletownbere and clear of the shore.
- 5.3 As the ship was manoeuvred clear Capt. Collins contacted the emergency services via a 999 call, which IRCG MRSC Valentia timed at 16.44 hrs. An attempt was also made to raise the alarm by using the DSC Distress button on the VHF fixed radio and by voice over Channel 16. The passengers were not familiar with this equipment but it was found to function correctly when tested later.
- 5.4 Two rocket parachute flares were also used in an attempt to attract attention. There was some difficulty in locating these initially, however, the Investigation recognises that the passengers could not be expected to have direct knowledge of where the ships emergency equipment was stowed.
- 5.5 The Shannon rescue helicopter (R115), Castletownbere Lifeboat and Coastguard units were tasked by MRSC and a 'Pan Pan' message broadcast. Local boats on sighting the flares and hearing the Pan message also responded. A crewmember from the ferry "Oileán na hÓige" boarded the "Ikom K" at 16.50 hrs. (approximately) and brought the ship back to Pontoon at 16.57 hrs.
- 5.6 All emergency services were at Pontoon by 17.00 hrs. Medical personnel using a defibrillator and oxygen therapy were unable to revive Mr. Murphy and he was pronounced dead at 17.09 hrs.
- 5.7 None of the passenger's on board the "Ikom K" were injured in the incident.
- 5.8 As the ship had sustained grounding it was taken out of service and inspected on 29th May 2009.
- 5.9 The Marine Casualty Investigation Board would like to commend the nurse and military personnel travelling as passengers on the "Ikom K" at the time of the incident and the crew of the ferry "Oileán na hÓige" for their efforts that they made to revive Mr. Murphy and also to ensure the safety of the vessel and her safe return to port.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The post mortem report found that Mr. Murphy died from very severe ischaemic heart disease with marked ventricular hypertrophy with fibrosis and coronary atherosclerosis.
- 6.2 From the position of the wheelhouse controls it appears that Mr. Murphy completed the vehicle ramp raising operation as the hydraulic power take off (PTO) was declutched. However, the throttle setting was still at 'harbour speed' setting indicating that the PTO had only been declutched shortly before Mr. Murphy took ill whilst he was at the helm. No other crewmember was on board to take control of the vessel with the result that it went aground. (The PTO is driven from the port main engine and this engine would normally be kept at reduced power during declutching operations).
- 6.3 Given that the throttle was not at service speed and that a considerable amount of starboard helm was being applied (the rudder requires three turns on the wheel for full movement to port or starboard), Mr. Murphy may have caused the wheel to turn further as he collapsed to the starboard side of the wheelhouse. It is considered most likely these events occurred immediately after the ship cleared Beal Loch.
- 6.4 There is a licence requirement that there be two crew on board. In this instance, the second crewman had earlier been permitted to go ashore by the skipper to take care of some personal business.
- 6.5 With the exception of the nurse, all passengers were all military personnel and were trained to handle emergency situations.
- 6.6 Weather conditions were not a factor in this casualty.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Board recommends that the Minister:-

1. Ensures effective enforcement of passenger ships' manning regulations;
2. Establishes a training requirement that will ensure that other crewmembers are able to undertake the duties of critical crew in an emergency;
3. Establishes a medical fitness requirement for the skippers and crews of passenger vessels and passenger boats;
4. Applies a Domestic Safety Management System to all Passenger Ships, and
5. Issues a Marine Notice which recommends that the location of emergency equipment on passenger vessels should be clearly indicated in a manner readily understood by non-seafaring persons.

# LIST OF APPENDICES

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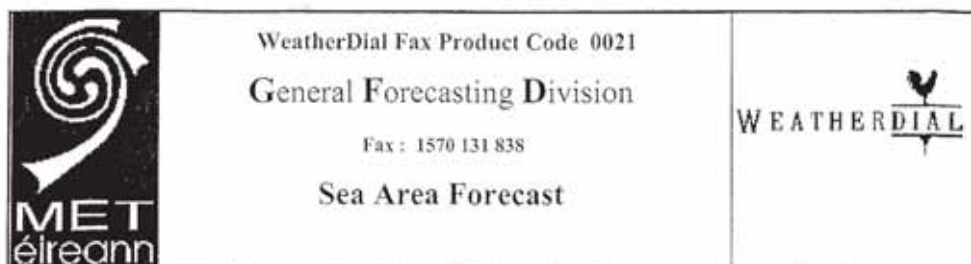
## 8. LIST OF APPENDICES

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8.1 Met Éireann Sea Area Forecast Weather Report.

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Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann Sea Area Forecast Weather Report.



**Sea Area Forecast until 0600 Thursday 28 May 2009  
 Issued at 0600 Wednesday 27 May 2009**

- 1. **Gale warning:** In operation  
**Small craft warning:** In operation
  
- 2. **Meteorological situation at 0300:** A frontal trough and associated fronts are moving eastwards across Ireland. A strong south to southwest airflow will veer west to southwest today and ease somewhat
  
- 3. **Forecast for coasts from Valentia to Erris Head to Fair Head:**  
**Wind:** Southwest force 5 or 6, becoming west to southwest later this morning, decreasing force 4 or 5 this afternoon, backing southwesterly force 3 or 4 early tonight and continuing the same overnight  
**Forecast for coasts from Fair Head to Wicklow Head to Valentia and for the Irish Sea:**  
**Wind:** South to southwest force 6 to gale force 8, veering west to southwest force 5 to 7 later this morning, decreasing mainly westerly force 4 to 6 this afternoon, strongest in the south, decreasing force 3 or 4 early tonight and backing southwesterly overnight.  
**Weather for all sea areas:** Rain and drizzle today, clearing slowly northeastwards this evening and tonight with drier weather following.  
**Visibility:** Moderate to poor, increasing moderate to good as rain clears later
  
- 3a. **Warning of heavy swell:** Nil
  
- 4. **Outlook for a further 24 hours until 0600 Friday 29 May 2009:** Moderate to fresh south to southwest winds, strongest on west and northwest coasts. Fair weather.

**Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann Sea Area Forecast Weather Report.**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Warning of heavy Atlantic swell: NIL</b> |
|---|

|  |
|--|
| <b>Text of Gale Warning</b>  |
| South to southwest winds will occasionally reach gale force for a time this morning on coasts from Fair Head to Wicklow Head to Valentia and for the Irish Sea |

|  |
|--|
| <b>Text of Small Craft Warning</b>   |
| West to southwest winds will reach force 6 or higher today on all Irish coastal waters |

| Coastal Reports            | at 5 AM Wednesday 27 May 2009   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Malin Head                 | South, 08 Knots, Gust 21 Knots, Light rain, 10 Miles, 1009, Falling   |
| Buoy M5                    | South-Southwest, 24 Knots, Gust 44 Knots, The visibility at Tuskar Lighthouse is Greater than 10 Miles, 1018, Falling |
| Roche's Pt (Automatic)     | Southwest, 26 Knots, MOD. DRIZZLE, Greater than 10 Miles, 1015, Falling rapidly                                       |
| Valentia                   | Southwest, 17 Knots, Light rain, 1.6 Miles, 1014, Falling slowly  |
| Belmullet                  | Southwest, 18 Knots, Gust 28 Knots, Rain/drizzle, 1.0 Miles, 1007, Falling rapidly                                    |
| Dublin Airport             | South, 11 Knots, Gust 21 Knots, Light rain, 13 Miles, 1013, Falling rapidly   |
| 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 | West-Southwest, 25 Knots, Gust 36 Knots, WAVE HT 04.5 m, 1015, Falling slowly   |
| Buoy M4 55° 0'N 10° 0'W    | South, NOT AVAILABLE Knots, WAVE HT 03.4 m, 1006, Falling rapidly   |
| Buoy M5 51° 41'N 6° 42'W   | South-Southwest, 24 Knots, Gust 44 Knots, WAVE HT 02.4 m, 1018, Falling   |
| Buoy M6 53° 4'N 15° 56'W   | West-Southwest, 18 Knots, Gust 28 Knots, WAVE HT 02.8 m, 1010, Steady   |

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

| Sea Crossings          | State of sea until 0600 Friday 29 May 2009 |
|------------------------|--|
| Dublin - Holyhead      | Moderate to Rough, decreasing slight       |
| Rosslare - South Wales | Rough decreasing moderate                  |
| Cork - South Wales     | Rough decreasing moderate                  |
| Rosslare - France      | Mostly Rough                               |
| Cork - France          | Mostly Rough                               |

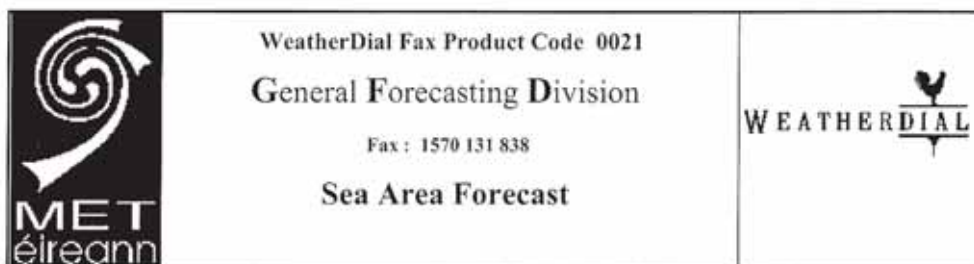
**Next update before 1300 Wednesday, 27 May 2009**

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 Sea Area Forecast Weather Report.



Sea Area Forecast until 1200 Thursday 28 May 2009  
 Issued at 1200 Wednesday 27 May 2009

1. Gale warning: NIL

Small craft warning: in force

2. **Meteorological situation at 0900:** A mild, humid westerly airflow is developing over Ireland, and will back southwesterly tonight and tomorrow. A warm front lying east-west across Munster and south Leinster will slowly move northwards today and tonight, clearing the northeast coast by dawn.

3. **Forecast for coasts from Rossan Point to Fair Head to Carlingford Lough and for the north Irish Sea:**

**Wind:** West force 3 to 5. Backing west to southwest force 4 or 5 tonight - possibly force 6 tomorrow on the northwest coast.

**Forecast for coasts from Carlingford Lough to Carnsore Point to Mizen Head and for the south Irish Sea:**

**Wind:** West to northwest force 5 to 7, decreasing west force 4 to 6 today. Backing southwest force 3 to 5 tonight, and becoming southerly or variable in direction in places tomorrow.

**Forecast for coasts from Mizen Head to Slyne Head to Rossan Point:**

**Wind:** West to southwest force 5 or 6. Decreasing southwest force 4 or 5 later today or tonight. Backing southwest to south tomorrow.

**Weather for all sea areas:** Widespread mist, with fog in places (mainly in the west and south). Scattered outbreaks of rain and drizzle also.

**Visibility for all sea areas:** Mostly moderate or poor - but moderate to good at times where winds are offshore.

4. **Outlook for a further 24 hours until 1200 Friday 29 May 2009:** Winds mostly between southwest and southeast in direction - generally moderate or fresh, but decreasing light to moderate at times in eastern sea areas. Fair weather in many areas, but mist and fog patches also.

**Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann Sea Area Forecast Weather Report.**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Warning of heavy Atlantic swell: NIL</b> |
|---|

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| <b>Text of Gale Warning</b> |
| NIL                         |

|  |
|--|
| <b>Text of Small Craft Warning</b>   |
| Winds between southwest and northwest in direction will reach force 6 at times today on coasts from Carlingford Lough to Roche's Point to Rossan Point |

| <b>Coastal Reports</b>            | <b>at 12 Noon Wednesday 27 May 2009</b>  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Malin Head</b>                 | West, 13 Knots, Recent drizzle, 10 Miles, 1010, Rising   |
| <b>Buoy M5</b>                    | West-Southwest, 26 Knots, The visibility at Tuskar Lighthouse is Greater than 10 Miles, 1018, Rising |
| <b>Roche's Pt (Automatic)</b>     | West, 15 Knots, Gust 28 Knots, Greater than 10 Miles, 1018, Rising                                   |
| <b>Valentia</b>                   | West, 20 Knots, Gust 31 Knots, Recent drizzle, 3 Miles, 1020, Rising                                 |
| <b>Belmullet</b>                  | West-Southwest, 16 Knots, Recent drizzle, 2 Miles, 1013, Rising                                      |
| <b>Dublin Airport</b>             | West-Southwest, 22 Knots, Cloudy, 18 Miles, 1012, Rising slowly                                      |
| <b>Buoy M1 53° 8'N, 11° 12'W</b>  | NOT AVAILABLE,   |
| <b>Buoy M2 53° 29'N, 5° 26'W</b>  | NOT AVAILABLE,   |
| <b>Buoy M3 51° 13'N, 10° 33'W</b> | West, 21 Knots, WAVE HT 04.0 m, 1022, Rising   |
| <b>Buoy M4 55° 0'N 10° 0'W</b>    | West, NOT AVAILABLE Knots, WAVE HT 03.6 m, 1011, Rising  |
| <b>Buoy M5 51° 41'N 6° 42'W</b>   | West-Southwest, 26 Knots, WAVE HT 02.9 m, 1018, Rising   |
| <b>Buoy M6 53° 4'N 15° 56'W</b>   | Southwest, 18 Knots, WAVE HT 02.7 m, 1015, Rising  |

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

| <b>Sea Crossings</b>          | <b>State of sea until 1200 Friday 29 May 2009</b> |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Dublin - Holyhead</b>      | Moderate or rough, decreasing slight              |
| <b>Rosslare - South Wales</b> | Moderate or rough, decreasing slight              |
| <b>Cork - South Wales</b>     | Rough, decreasing moderate                        |
| <b>Rosslare - France</b>      | Rough or very rough, decreasing moderate          |
| <b>Cork - France</b>          | Rough or very rough, decreasing moderate          |

**Next update before 1900 Wednesday, 27 May 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 Sea Area Forecast Weather Report.



**MET ÉIREANN**  
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Specialist field: Marine Meteorology  
Reference: WS3018/2B/20090527m.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 (< 1km)                  |



Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann Sea Area Forecast Weather Report.



**MET ÉIREANN**  
The Irish Meteorological Service

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Specialist field: Marine Meteorology  
Reference: WS3018/2B/20090527m.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 Sea Area Forecast Weather Report.



**MET ÉIREANN**  
*The Irish Meteorological Service*

|                                       |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
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|---------------------------------------|--|--|

Specialist field: Marine Meteorology  
Reference: WS3018/2B/20090527m.doc

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



## CORRESPONDENCE

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The Board received no correspondence under Section 36 of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, Act 2000 in relation to this report.