



MCIB

Marine Casualty Investigation Board
Bord Imscrúdú Taisní Muirí

**REPORT INTO A
FATAL INCIDENT AT
LOUGH MASK
8th MARCH 2019**

**REPORT NO. MCIB/287
(No.6 OF 2020)**

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 to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport for the avoidance of similar marine casualties in the future, thereby improving the safety of life at sea and inland waterways.

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.



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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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Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CG	Coast Guard
CoP	Code of Practice
CGR	Coast Guard Radio
ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
GRP	Glass Reinforced Plastic
IRCG	Irish Coast Guard
LOA	Length Overall
m	metre
MRSC	Marine Rescue Sub-Centre
MSO	Marine Survey Office
PFD	Personal Flotation Device
SAR	Search and Rescue
SRR	Search and Rescue Region
VHF	Very High Frequency (marine radio)

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Produced 25th August 2020.

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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 On the 8th March 2019 a local angler departed the slip at Cushlough near Ballinrobe Co. Mayo for an afternoon of angling on Lough Mask. He failed to return that evening and a search and rescue operation was launched. The search was hampered due to bad weather. The lake boat belonging to the angler was found on the eastern shore of Lough Mask on the 9th March. Following a continued search effort the body of the angler was found the 30th March.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 Vessel Details

Type:	Lake Boat (see Appendix 7.1 Photo 1).
Length:	5.70 metres (m).
Beam:	1.60 m.
Maker:	Angler Fancy Boats.
Built:	2000 with the CE mark.
Boat construction:	Hull - Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) with built in buoyancy in the forward and aft sections. Hardwood gunwale and thwarts (seats). A keel band of 7.5cm Larch.
Engine:	15HP Yamaha outboard engine (vessel rated for a maximum horse power outboard of 9.9HP).
Engine details:	2006, 07 model, Mass 36 - 38 kg.
Fuel Type:	Petrol, with approximately 10 litres remaining in the fuel tank.

2.1.1 Vessel safety equipment

The equipment carried aboard included;

- Personal Flotation Device (PFD) -150N inflatable lifejacket.
- Pair of Oars and rowlocks (also known as oar pins).
- Hand bailer.

2.2 Casualty's Details

Lived locally, male, 78 years of age, no known medical conditions.

2.3 Marine Incident Information

2.3.1 Incident Type

This was a very serious marine casualty leading to a loss of life.

2.3.2 Weather

The weather conditions for the afternoon were moderate to fresh with an occasionally strong breeze, force 4 to 6 with gusts of up to force 7 expected. Wind direction veering from south westerly to westerly (air temperature 10°C and water temperature 8°C). The weather continued to deteriorate throughout the day. Rescue personnel report on-scene weather conditions as westerly wind force 8 and gusting force 9, with a wave height of 2 to 4 meters.

'(see Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report)

2.3.4 Voyage Particulars

At approximately 12.30 hrs on the 8th of March, 2019 the angler was seen departing from the slip at Cushlough, Lough Mask near Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo. He was observed proceeding in a northerly direction (see Appendix 7.2 Chart 2).

2.4 Emergency Response and Timeline

2.4.1 8th March 2019

19.23 hrs A local person contacts An Garda Síochána at Ballinrobe to advise them of a missing angler (Note: this call was diverted to Claremorris Garda Station as Ballinrobe is not manned 24/7).

19.30 hrs Claremorris Garda Station logs the call of the missing angler and shortly thereafter commences an investigation. The duty Sergeant was advised and a Garda car tasked to the slip at Cushlough.

(Note: An Garda Síochána checked the mobile telephone activity of the angler and noted a termination of activity of the phone from 14.00 hrs)

19.50 hrs Corrib Mask Search and Rescue was contacted by the same local person advising them of the missing angler.

20.00 hrs At approximately 20.00 hrs An Garda Síochána were on-scene at Cushlough.

20.10 hrs Marine Rescue Sub Centre (MRSC) Malin contacted by An Garda Síochána to assist in the search for missing angler.

20.15 hrs Corrib Mask Search and Rescue are on scene and assess local conditions.

20.25 hrs Corrib Mask Search and Rescue make an extensive review of the local conditions including weather, wave height, marine hazards, and in consultation with MRSC Malin determine it is not suitable to launch a rescue vessel.

A shoreline search is carried out by An Garda Síochána with the assistance of members of the public.

- 20.28 hrs Coast Guard search and rescue (SAR) helicopter Rescue 118 alerted by MRSC Malin to assist in the search.
- 21.45 hrs Coast Guard SAR helicopter R118 on scene.
- 23.12 hrs Coast Guard SAR helicopter R118 completes search with nothing to report.
- 23.17 hrs An Garda Síochána suspend the search until the following morning.

2.4.2 9th March 2019

06.51 hrs Corrib Mask Search and Rescue launches a vessel from Tourmakeady to continue the search. Two additional rescue vessels standby on the eastern shore awaiting an improvement in the weather conditions.

09.21 hrs The angler's vessel is found on the eastern shore of Lough Mask on Aghinish Rocks in position 53° 38.7'N 009° 17.5'W. No person is on-board.

Corrib Mask Search and Rescue continues searching the area for the missing angler (see Appendix 7.1 Photograph 2 and Appendix 7.2 Charts 1 and 2).

10.47 hrs Divers tasked to assist. Arrive at 12.00 hrs and commence search.

12.00 hrs At approximately 12.00 hrs An Garda Síochána along with a member of the public commence a shoreline search along the eastern shore by Aghinish Point.

Corrib Mask Search and Rescue continues a coordinated search of the area with the assistance of an additional seven vessels.

14.26 hrs Coast Guard SAR helicopter R118 on-scene to commence second search.

15.51 hrs Coast Guard SAR helicopter R118 reports search completed with nothing to report.

17.49 hrs Search suspended for the day.

2.4.3 10th to 29th March 2019

An extensive search for the missing angler continued between the 10th and 29th March assisted by:

- An Garda Síochána shoreline search assisted by volunteers.
- Corrib Mask SAR.
- An Garda Síochána Dive Unit and Gráinne Uaile Sub Aqua Search and Rescue.
- Inland Fisheries personnel, local anglers and kayakers.
- River Moy SAR and Boyne SAR.
- Westport Coast Guard unit and Mayo Civil Defence.

2.4.4 30th March 2019

The body of the missing angler is found by the dive search team and assisted ashore by Corrib Mask Search and Rescue.

3. NARRATIVE

- 3.1 On the 8th March 2019 at approximately 12.30 hrs an angler who lived locally, was seen launching his lake boat from the slip at Cushlough on Lough Mask, Ballinrobe Co. Mayo (see Appendix 7.2 Charts 1 and 2). The angler was proceeding out on the lough alone and once underway his vessel was observed heading in a northerly direction. The weather forecast for the afternoon was westerly wind 3 or 4, gusting force 5 or 6. The water condition on the lough at the time was choppy with a westerly swell.
- 3.2 At approximately 18.00 hrs it was observed by another concerned angler that the angler had failed to return to the slip at Cushlough. The missing angler was well known locally and it was common for him to return late to the slip. An attempt was made to call the angler but his mobile phone was off. A local person travelled to the angler's house which was nearby to ascertain if he had returned home from an alternative route as the angler was known to have done this in the past. It was also known that the angler lived alone so it was unlikely that he would be missed by others.
- 3.3 On arriving at the angler's home there was no evidence that he had returned. The alarm was raised at 19.23 hrs by calling the Garda Station at Ballinrobe and an emergency response ensued.
- 3.4 The search and rescue operation got underway that evening with a joint effort by:
- An Garda Síochána - coordinated coastal search, assisted by local volunteers.
 - The Irish Coast Guard SAR helicopter R118 to search eastern Lough Mask.
 - Corrib Mask Search and Rescue assist in the coastal search, however, is unable to launch its rescue vessel due to the weather conditions.

Following an aerial and costal search nothing was found.

- 3.5 On the following day (9th March 2019) the search resumed at first light. Approximately 2 hrs into the search the angler's vessel was found on the eastern shore of Lough Mask, on Aghinish Rocks, approximately 1.5 nautical miles north of Cushlough slip. There was no sighting of the missing angler (see Appendix 7.1 Photograph No. 2 and Appendix 7.2 Charts 1 and 2).

When the vessel was located it was in the upright position and in good order (see Appendix 7.1 Photograph No. 2). The outboard engine was in the lifted position and the port side oar was in the shipped position. The starboard side oar was subsequently found in the water nearby along with the angler's cap. A PFD, fishing gear, supplies and rod were in the stowed position.

- 3.6 The search for the missing angler continued between the 10th and 29th March and was hampered due to periods of prolonged bad weather.

- 3.7 On the morning of the 30th March the body of the angler was located in the water on the lough bed near the location where the vessel had been found. The angler was dressed in green fishing attire. He was not wearing a PFD. His mobile phone was later found on his person.

(Note: It is a requirement of the Code of Practice (CoP): The Safe Operation of Recreational Craft 2017* to wear a PFD at all times when afloat on a vessel of this type).

*Updates to the Code of Practice: The Safe Operation of Recreational Craft 2017 (Marine Notice No. 51 refers) were published in November, 2019. The updates can be downloaded in electronic format at:
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/66ff7e-safe-operation-of-recreational-craft/>

4. ANALYSIS

- 4.1 There were no witnesses to the event which resulted in the Casualty entering the water. The Casualty was considered locally to be an experienced angler. It was reported that he had been angling on Lough Mask for many years and had entered numerous fishing competitions. The Casualty was a 78 year old male with no known medical conditions. Once in the water fully clothed and not wearing a PFD, he would have struggled to re-board the vessel.
- 4.2 The vessel was found in the upright condition with a small amount of water on-board (see Appendix 7.1 Photograph No. 2). The vessel was in reasonable order with provisions for a day of angling (see Appendix 7.1 Photograph No. 3). Once ashore the vessel's hull was inspected and there was no evidence of a collision or heavy impact.
- 4.3 The outboard engine was found in the lifted position (see Appendix 7.1 Photograph No. 2).

The engine was also found in gear which would not be the normal practice (see Appendix 7.1, Photograph No. 5). This suggests that the engine may have been lifted with a degree of urgency. Also, the outboard engine kill cord was not being used in the correct manner and was clipped to the transom of the vessel (see Appendix 7.1 Photograph No. 5).

Note: The 15HP outboard engine exceeded the boat manufactures recommendations.

- 4.4 The port side oar was in the shipped position. However, the starboard oar was found in the water near the vessel, which suggests it was in use at the time of the incident.
- 4.5 The location of where the vessel was found and the distance it had travelled from the shoreline indicates there was a significant wave height at the time of the incident, or shortly thereafter, making the conditions unsuitable to be out in a vessel of this type.
- 4.5 The Casualty was not wearing a PFD. A PFD was stowed in the forward part of the vessel (see Appendix 7.1 Photograph No. 4). The wearing of a PFD is a statutory requirement for the safe operation of recreational craft as stated in the CoP. The water temperature was 8°C and would have been cold to the human body on immersion. This would lead to the potential of cold shock for a person being suddenly immersed in the cold lake water. This along with the fact he was not wearing a PFD would have greatly reduced his chances of survival.
- 4.6 The weather conditions deteriorated as the day progressed from westerly force 4 to force 6 with wind gust of force 7. This is a significant change in the weather

conditions and even an experienced angler would have found the conditions challenging. It also meant that the eastern shore of Lough Mask was very exposed to the elements and the wind conditions would have been onshore with choppy waters.

The fact that the vessel was found a distance away from the shoreline suggests that there was a significant wave height. The weather on-scene later that night reported by the search and rescue personnel described the conditions as westerly wind force 8 or 9 with a wave height of 2 to 4 meters making conditions unsuitable for even a larger rescue vessel.

- 4.7 The coverage on inland waterways for marine VHF radios is not guaranteed as advised in the CoP: The Safe Operation of Recreational Craft 2017, an extract of which is included in Appendix 7.4 of this report. Irish Coast VHF radio coverage is provided on Lough Derg and Lough Ree as set out in the CoP Section 11.4 - Marine VHF Communications Network.
- 4.8 The Coroner's autopsy report and the Coroner's inquest on the 27 November 2019 records the cause of death as asphyxia due to drowning.
- 4.9 The Maritime Safety Strategy published in 2015 identifies a number of issues relating to key factors contributing to fatalities and incidents on recreational craft (see Appendix 7.5).

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The time or cause of the incident is not known. However, it is possible given the Casualty's mobile phone ceased activity at 14.00 hrs that he entered the water around that time.
- 5.2 The weather conditions deteriorated later in the day, making it unsuitable to be out on the water alone in a small vessel. If a vessel were to get into difficulty on an exposed shoreline it would have compounded the situation, as in fact appears to have been the case.
- 5.3 Lough Mask has no navigation marks to warn water users of danger and with water levels at the time of the year when the incident occurred, awareness of hazards below the water would be all the more difficult.
- 5.4 Once the Casualty entered the water he would probably have experienced the shock of cold water. The water temperature of Lough Mask at the time of the incident was 8°C - cold water shock is a factor in water temperatures below 15°C. This combined with the Casualty not wearing a PFD would have considerably reduced his chances of survival.
- 5.5 The events leading up to the Casualty entering the water are unknown. However, it is possible that the vessel was set into shallow water by the prevailing weather conditions. Once in shallow water the outboard engine would then have been lifted to protect the propeller. The fact that the outboard engine was found in gear suggests that this was done with a level of urgency. As a means of getting to deeper water it is possible that the starboard oar was used to push off the rocky shoreline. In choppy water the Casualty's balance may have been adversely affected. This may have been the point the Casualty fell overboard. The fact that the vessel's oar and the Casualty's cap were found in the water by the vessel supports this theory.
- 5.6 The construction of the vessel and the absence of a boarding ladder would have made getting back on-board arduous, and without assistance - as was the case here - likely to be impossible. Furthermore, in the strong wind that prevailed it is possible that the Casualty lost contact with the vessel.
- 5.7 The Casualty had not advised others as to his return time resulting in a delayed emergency response time.

6. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport issue a Marine Notice reminding mariners of their obligations to comply with the 'Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft'*

A special emphasis should be made on the following:

- The need to be aware of the current forecast for the area.
- The requirement to wear a PFD.
- The need for a boarding ladder or other effective means of quickly re-boarding a vessel.

Clubs should be requested to bring this notice to the attention of their members.

*The Code of Practice: The Safe Operation of Recreational Craft 2017 was updated in November 2019. The Code and updates can be downloaded in electronic format at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/66ff7e-safe-operation-of-recreational-craft/>

7. APPENDICES

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Appendix 7.1 Photographs



Photograph No.1 - Type of lake boat involved in the incident.

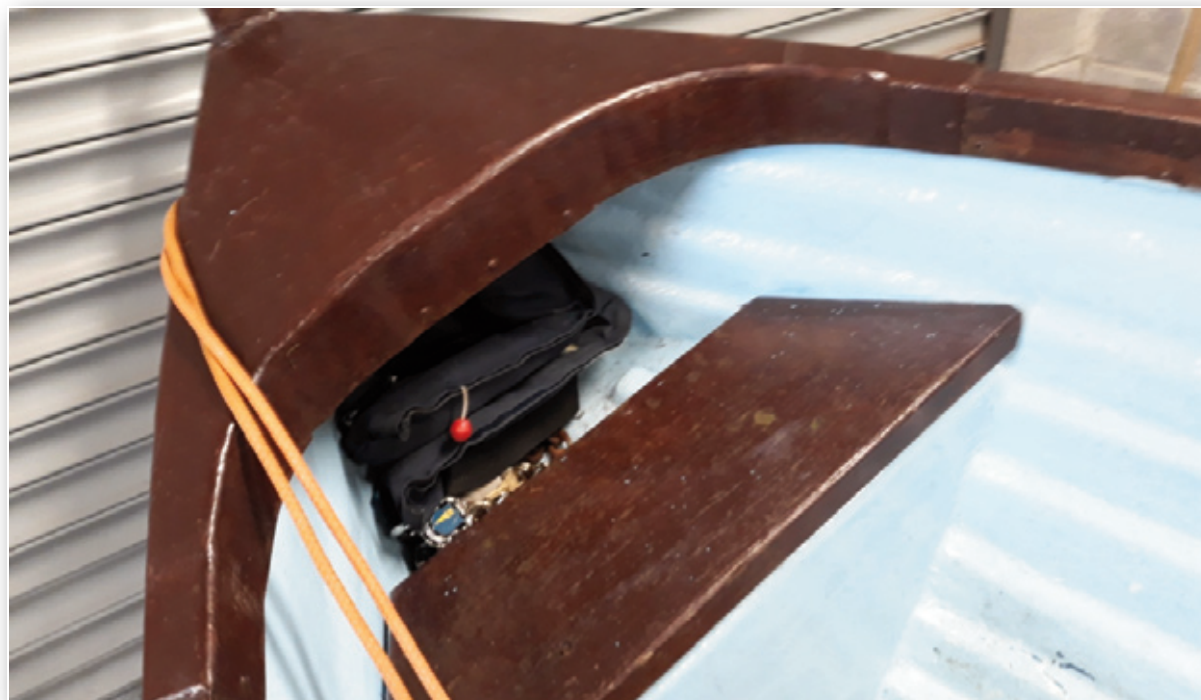


Photograph No.2 - The lake boat involved in the incident.

Appendix 7.1 Photographs



Photograph No.3 - Lake boat interior.



Photograph No.4 - PFD stowed in forward part of the lake boat under the gunwale.

Appendix 7.1 Photographs



Photograph No.5 - Outboard engine found in gear and kill cord attached to transom.

Appendix 7.2 Charts of the Incident Area

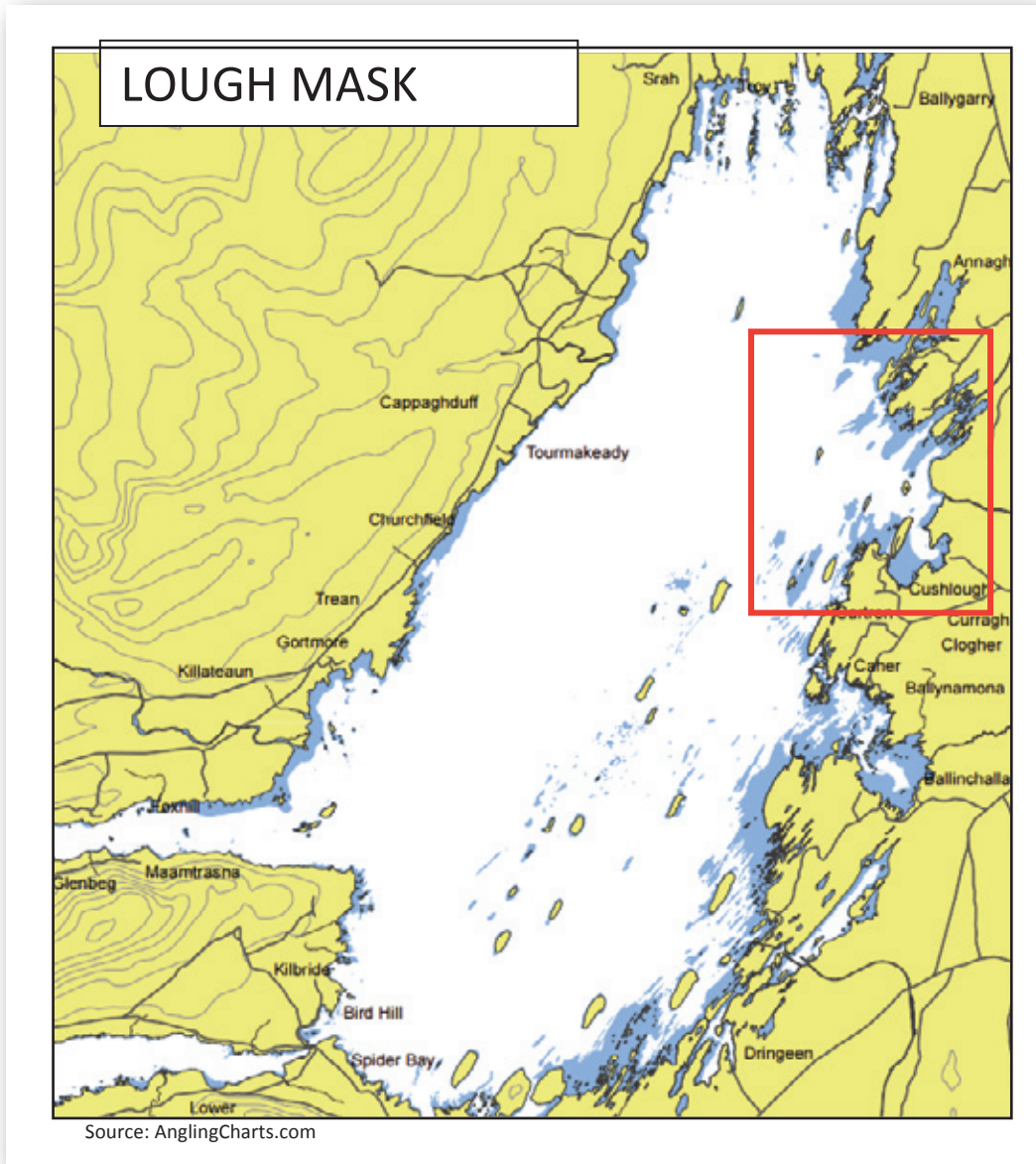


Chart 1 - Lough Mask, incident area bordered in red.



Appendix 7.2 Charts of the Incident Area

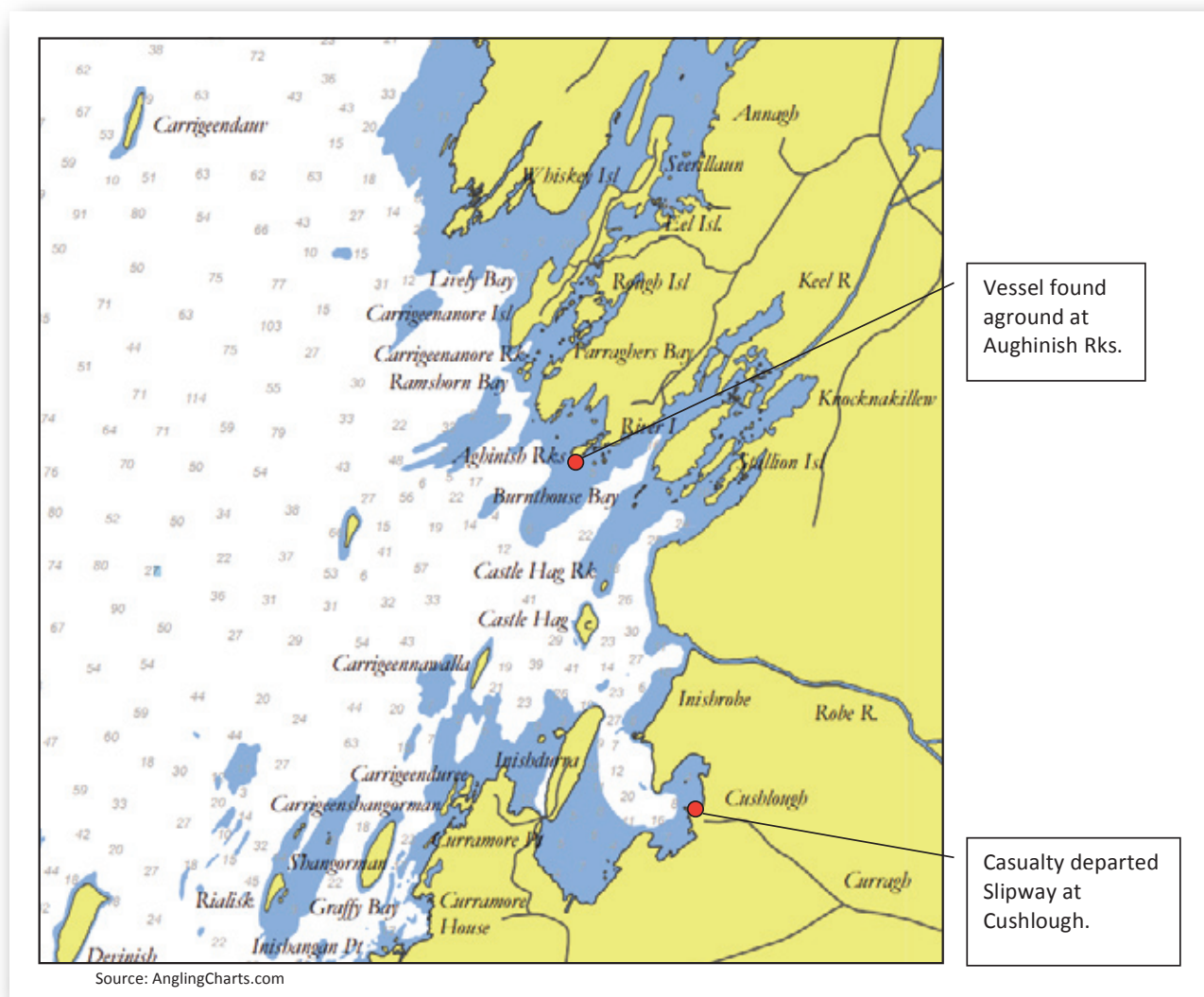


Chart 2 - Location of lake boat and Casualty.

Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report

Forecast for Lough Corrib and Lough Mask until nightfall today:

WIND: Southerly force 2 or 3, veering westerly force 3 or 4 later this afternoon, gusting force 5 or 6.

WEATHER: Rain developing this morning, clearing later this afternoon with showers following.

VISIBILITY: Good, decreasing moderate or poor in rain, increasing good except in showers.

Met Éireann Inland lakes Forecast for Lough Mask Issued 0630 Friday 8th March 2019.

Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report



Met Éireann

The Irish Meteorological Service

Climate Services
Glasnevin Hill
Dublin 9

Seirbhís Aer/Eide
Cnoc Ghlas Naíon
Baile 'tha Cliath 9

Tel: +353-1-8064260
Fax: +353-1-8064216
Email: LEGAL@MET.ie

Our Ref. WS1730/1905_19
Your Ref. MCIB/287

Re: Estimate of weather conditions for Lough Mask area Co Mayo between 06:00 hours on Friday 8th to 06:00 hours on Saturday 9th March 2019

Meteorological synopsis: A moderate and unstable southwesterly airflow covered Ireland on the 8th March 2019 and an active weather front (occlusion) brought scattered outbreaks of rain at first followed by occasional light rain and drizzle in the afternoon. Winds veered westerly and increased fresh and gusty for a time in the afternoon. During the night from 8th to 9th March winds backed southwesterly and abated for a while before another frontal system (cold front) with heavy and thundery showers moved in and southwesterly winds veered west-northwesterly and increased to near-gale and gusty by early morning on the 9th.

Estimate of weather conditions for Lough Mask area Co Mayo:

Friday 8th March 2019 06:00 – 12:00 hours UTC:

Weather: Scattered outbreaks of rain (estimated rainfall accumulation: 4 to 6 mm)
Temperature: Air temperature between 5 and 7 degrees Celsius.
Wind: Moderate (Force 4) southerly or south-southwesterly (mean speed up to 15 knots and occasional gusts of up to 17 knots).
Visibility: Mostly good visibility (more than 5 nautical miles) but occasionally moderate in rain.

Friday 8th March 2019 12:00 – 18:00 hours UTC:

Weather: Overcast; with occasional light rain or drizzle (estimated rainfall accumulation: less than 2mm)
Temperature: Air temperature between 7 and 12 degrees Celsius.
Wind: Moderate to fresh - occasionally strong breeze; Force 4 to 6 (mean speed between 12 and 24 knots with frequent gusts up to 30 knots between 2pm and 5pm). Wind direction veered from southwesterly to westerly.
Visibility: Moderate visibility in rain and drizzle (between 2 and 5 nautical miles) otherwise good visibility.

Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report



Met Éireann

The Irish Meteorological Service

Climate Services
Glasnevin Hill
Dublin 9

Seirbhís AerÉide
Cnoc Ghlas Naíon
Baile 'tha Cliath 9

Tel: +353-1-8064260
Fax: +353-1-8064216
Email: LEGAL@MET.ie

Our Ref. WS1730/1905_19

Your Ref. MCIB/287

Re: Estimate of weather conditions for Lough Mask area Co Mayo between 06:00 hours on Friday 8th to 06:00 hours on Saturday 9th March 2019

CONTINUED

Friday 8th March 18:00 – 24:00 hours UTC:

Weather: Mostly cloudy with isolated outbreaks of light rain (estimated rainfall accumulation: less than 2mm)
Temperature: Air temperature between 5 and 7 degrees Celsius.
Wind: Strong westerly at first Force 6 (mean speed up to 22 knots) decreased Force 3 or 4 and backed southwesterly (mean speed 8 – 14 knots)
Visibility: Good visibility (more than 5 nautical miles)

Saturday 9th March 00:00 – 06:00 hours UTC:

Weather: Heavy, blustery showers with thunder and hail affected the area from 3am onwards (estimated rainfall accumulation: 2 – 4 mm)
Temperature: Air temperature rose at first to 8 degrees but with the passage of the cold front air temperatures fell to 5 degrees Celsius around 3am.
Wind: Southwesterly Force 5 veered west-northwesterly and increased Force 6 to near-gale Force 7 (25 – 32 knots with occasional gusts up to 38 knots)
Visibility: Moderate or poor visibility in heavy showers (2 – 5 nautical miles).

Please address all correspondence to legal@met.ie with reference number WS1730/1905_19

Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report



Met Éireann

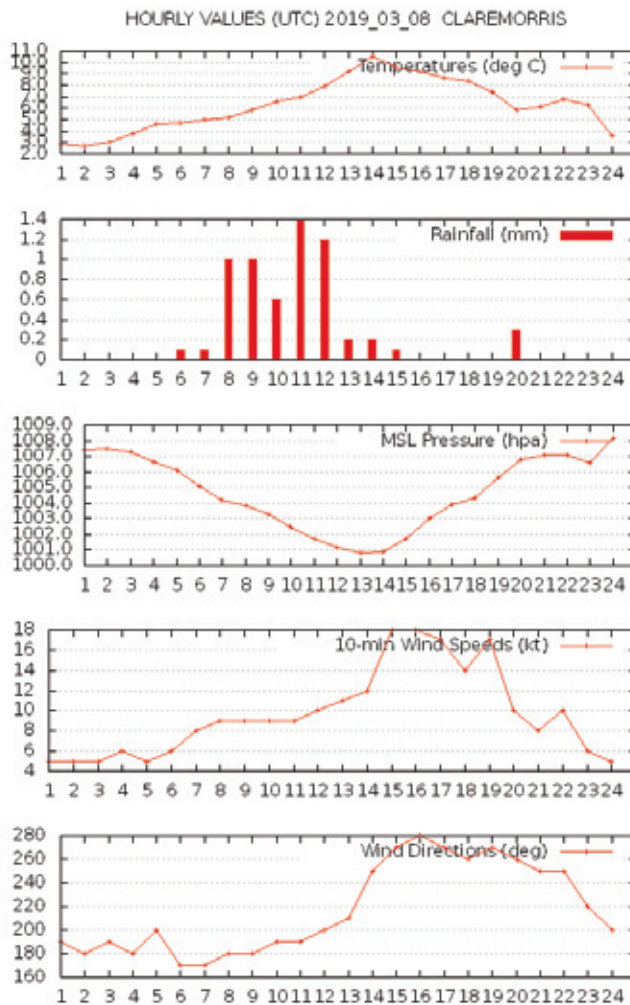
The Irish Meteorological Service

Climate Services
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**APPENDIX 1. Daily Station Report 8-March-2019 nearest Meteorological Station
Claremorris (approximately 20 km east of Lough Mask)**



Appendix 7.4 Extract from Code of Practice: The Safe Operation of Recreational Craft

3.4 Boat Angling – Inland Waters

While inland water conditions are different to those of coastal or sea areas, they can be equally as dangerous to small craft due to rapid local deterioration of weather and surface conditions that can occur. There have been multiple fatalities among users of small boats on our inland waters in recent years.

Fishing from small boats on larger rivers and inland lakes is a popular past time. Craft used are predominantly of a small, narrow beamed, low freeboard design, propelled by either oars or outboard engines. Historically these boats were wooden boats of clinker type construction. In latter years they have been replaced by fiberglass replicas.

Fiberglass boats constructed after 1998 must comply with the Recreational Craft Directive and each hull must have a CE marking and plate fitted.

It is essential that owners do not modify or alter boats from their original design. Doing so may compromise the stability, handling characteristics or sea keeping qualities of a boat. Examples of such modifications are:

- Modification of seating

arrangements by fitting of swivel seating for anglers on thwarts or directly to gunwales;

- Fitting of permanent launching wheels to the transom;
- Using an outboard engine of a power rating in excess of the boats design rating. Maximum power ratings will be displayed on the boat's CE/RCD plate;
- Allowing repairs or alterations to be undertaken by unqualified persons using unsuitable or inappropriate materials.

Anglers and operators of boats should always be aware of their stability limitations. **Never overload or overpower such boats and always exercise the following best practice in their use:**

- Be aware of the area weather forecast in advance and check on it regularly throughout the day while on the water;
- Be aware of local conditions and dangers on the lake. If new to the area, always seek local advice before launching;
- Always wear a suitable PFD of a type that can be worn when fishing but which offers sufficient buoyancy to an individual in the water. Take into consideration clothing such as waders, boots, etc. that may be worn when fishing;
- Be aware of the contact details

Appendix 7.4 Extract from Code of Practice: The Safe Operation of Recreational Craft

- for local rescue services;
- Always inform a person ashore of details of the persons on board, the areas of intended operation, and launching and return times;
- Do not overload the boat beyond its design rating;
- Never overpower the boat with an outboard engine in excess of the boat's maximum power design rating;
- Carry sufficient anchoring equipment and have it readily available to anchor the boat quickly in an emergency. Practice regularly!
- If operating single handed, make sure a means of quickly reboarding the boat is available in the event of a person overboard situation occurring;
- Pre-plan prior to departure, to deal with possible rapid deterioration of conditions on the water, for example:
 - Identify alternative safe landing points;
 - Check radio/phone coverage in the area of operation;
 - Be aware of other boats operating the area;
 - Check that all boat safety equipment is present and operating;
 - Carry sufficient fuel/spares to deal with emergencies;
 - Brief crew on the actions to take in emergency situations.

Appendix 4 provides information in relation to anchoring, stability and boat handling.

3.5 Communications

It is recommended that all vessels operating on inland lakes and waterways carry a VHF radio. Hand-held VHF batteries should be fully charged prior to departure. Vessels should also consider carrying an EPIRB or PLB on board. (See Radiocommunications section 1.2.11 for more information on EPIRBs and PLBs).

Vessel operators are reminded that a ship radio licence issued by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and a suitably qualified operator are required for vessels carrying marine radio equipment.

It is recommended that all vessels operating on inland lakes and waterways carry a mobile phone, ideally stored in a waterproof pouch or container. The mobile phone should be fully charged prior to departure.

Vessels on inland lakes and waterways are recommended to carry a Global Positioning System (GPS) to allow the vessel to indicate its position accurately to the search and rescue services in the event of an emergency.

Appendix 7.4 Extract from Code of Practice: The Safe Operation of Recreational Craft

Users of inland lakes and waterways are reminded that Coast Guard VHF and mobile phone network coverage is not guaranteed on inland lakes and waterways, particularly in remote locations.

Regular testing of communications equipment should be carried out to confirm correct operation.

3.6 Spread of invasive species by boats on inland waters

In recent years a number of new invasive species of flora and fauna, such as the Zebra Mussel and Asian Clam, have been introduced into Irish lakes and rivers. These species impact in a negative manner on existing natural species, in many cases leading to their extinction.

Many lakes and waterways now require boats to be registered to operate and visitor boats are controlled. Measures have been put in place, which boat owners should follow, to limit the propagation of new species into our inland waters, including:

- If travelling to a new area, make prior enquiries regarding any control measures that may be applied by the relevant authorities. For example, the National Parks and Wildlife Service should be contacted

where boats/water craft are being introduced into a National Park or Nature Reserve, as a licence or permission may be required;

- Always thoroughly clean/wash your boat, engine and trailer prior to launching;
- Angling equipment, including nets and waders, should be thoroughly washed and dried out before being used on a fishing trip;
- Anglers should use artificial lure in place of live bait;
- Avoid launching boats/engines on multiple waterways. Use locally hired boats if possible.

Further information is available from the National Parks and Wildlife Service:

National Parks & Wildlife Service
7 Ely Place
Dublin 2
D02 TW98

Telephone: +353 (0)1 888 3242
LoCall: 1890 383 000
Fax: +353 (0)1 888 3272
Email: nature.conservation@ahg.gov.ie
Website: www.npws.ie

Information regarding the spread of invasive species is also available at www.invasivespeciesireland.com.

Appendix 7.5 Extracts from the Maritime Safety Strategy

Section 3:

Taking Personal Responsibility for Maritime Safety

1. The IMA cannot act alone in improving maritime safety in Ireland. This Section sets out a range of practical steps which individuals, families, communities and organisations can take to improve maritime safety, and to help to prevent maritime fatalities and incidents from occurring.

2. Every trip on the water should be a safe one, which means planning for a safe trip every time, behaving responsibly once afloat, and maximising the chances of survival in the water should an incident occur.
3. Influences on safety behaviour are many and varied, as are the ways that the safety message can be conveyed, and kept relevant and refreshed. There is a diverse range of interested parties in the maritime sector, be they individuals, families, communities, voluntary groups, fisheries organisations, sporting organisations, representative groups, public bodies or agencies. All those involved should think about what they themselves can do at a practical day-to-day level to improve safety and to save lives and prevent accidents, including what can be achieved by working together.
4. A number of behaviours have been identified to illustrate the kinds of practical actions that could make a significant difference to reducing maritime fatalities and incidents. The list is not exhaustive but should act as a guide to the type of practical initiatives that can be put into action. The actions are particularly relevant to the fishing and recreational sectors where most fatalities arise.

What individuals can do when taking to the water

5. Think 'safety first', which includes:

- 5.1 Planning all voyages, even if they are short and familiar;
- 5.2 Taking weather and sea conditions into account;
- 5.3 Having a safe vessel, safe equipment, well-maintained and serviced engines, and safe operations (including loading and stability);
- 5.4 Having well trained, competent, crew; everyone on board should know what their role is;
- 5.5 Logging a traffic report with the Coast Guard, keeping in touch, and letting someone on shore know what route is being taken, what the estimated time of arrival to shore is, and what to do if that time is exceeded;
- 5.6 Recognising the safety implications of fatigue;
- 5.7 Avoiding alcohol and drugs before or during a voyage;
- 5.8 Wearing suitable Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs - lifejackets and buoyancy aids) and suitable clothing;
- 5.9 Making sure that the right emergency communications equipment is carried, that it works and is properly registered, and that it is used properly; and
- 5.10 Calling for assistance from the Irish Coast Guard at the first sign of trouble, even if it is just to set up a safety watch.

Appendix 7.5 Extracts from the Maritime Safety Strategy

What families and friends can do

6. Families and friends can:

- 6.1 Encourage those who take to the water to take maritime safety seriously and to always think about safety issues (e.g. weather conditions and forecasts, tides, wearing Personal Flotation Devices, logging journey information, using emergency beacons, and maintaining emergency contacts for each trip);
- 6.2 Discourage persons from taking to the water if weather conditions are unfavourable and/or if they have not heeded safety requirements; and
- 6.3 Telephone the Irish Coast Guard on 112 immediately if concerned in any way about someone who has taken to the water (e.g. is late returning).

What organisations can do

7. Agencies, organisations and representative bodies can:

- 7.1 Incorporate an enhanced focus on personal responsibility for maritime safety at every opportunity, including as part of training courses;
- 7.2 Consider where the safety message needs to be targeted, how that target audience is best reached, and how they can do this in their own activities, including using technologies such as the internet and social media; and
- 7.3 Work on joint initiatives and on co-ordinating their safety messages, including in media campaigns, providing safety information, workshops and coming together regularly to pool their expertise and resources.

- 8. The next Section outlines the actions the IMA will lead and implement to address the risks to maritime safety, seeking to eliminate maritime fatalities and reduce incidents requiring the assistance of the emergency services.

Encourage
those who
take to the
water
to take **maritime**
safety
seriously

SECTION 36 PROCESS

Section 36 of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000

It is a requirement under Section 36 that:

- (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 received under the Section 36 process. 'Noted' does not mean that the Board either agrees or disagrees with the observation.

8. SECTION 36 PROCESS - CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

PAGE

8.1 Correspondence from Corrib Mask Search & Rescue and MCIB response 32

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

Correspondence 8.1 Corrib Mask Search & Rescue and MCIB response



Cong,
Co. Mayo.

Marine Casualty Investigation Board,
Leeson Lane,
Dublin 2.

By Registered Post.

Your Reference: MCIB/12/287

14th April 2020.

RE: Draft Report

Dear [REDACTED]

I write in connection with the Draft Report forwarded to me as per the above reference.

We have concerns in a number of areas regarding its compilation and content but will address below the elements that Corrib Mask Search and Rescue (CMSAR) feels are the most important.

Section 2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

Item 2.4.1 8th March 2019. The Draft Report correctly states that CMSAR arrived on scene at 20.15hrs and again is correct to state that the decision not to launch was taken at 20.25hrs. However a vital part in the launch process that was carried out is absent from the Draft Report. CMSAR is a 'Declared Resource' of the Irish Coast Guard (ICG) and as such we clarify incident details and seek an Incident Number from ICG prior to launch.

MCIB RESPONSE: Noted.
The Report has been amended.

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CHY 3950

Correspondence 8.1 Corrib Mask Search & Rescue and MCIB response

On the night in question I requested an Incident Number and this was declined by ICG, Malin Head Radio. The radio operator correctly pointed out that the weather conditions were at the extreme end of both launch and operational capacity of a D-Class inshore rescue boat, an opinion with which I concurred. Combined with both my presence on the ground and knowledge of the search area we agreed to wait until first light to deploy a rescue boat as the search area is notorious for the presence of jagged limestone rocks and sub-surface shallows. A shore search was undertaken by foot that night and this is not included in the Draft Report.

Item 2.4.2 9th March 2019. There is no mention of the shore search that was ongoing in conjunction with the rescue boats and divers. The shore search was carried out by locals, anglers and other volunteers under the supervision of An Garda Síochána.

Item 2.4.3 9th March 2019. The Draft Report states that the search was suspended and this is incorrect. A shore search continued and indeed was ongoing when the missing fisherman was located. Many people dedicated themselves unselfishly to the search efforts for the three week period. CMSAR kept a presence at the search base and launched every day that the weather allowed.

Item 2.4.4 30th March 2019. This sub-section does not fully reflect the search effort put in by the many voluntary groups, individuals and An Garda Síochána. CMSAR was present when the body was recovered and a crew member who is a registered practitioner supervised and participated in both the recovery and transporting of the remains ashore.

Section 3. NARRATIVE

This section of the Draft Report gives a better picture of events following the reporting of the missing fisherman and although much of the information is factual that same information is omitted from **Section 2 FACTUAL INFORMATION**.

Aside.

The Draft Report states the boat was recovered in good condition with equipment intact which is true. I submit that an indication of the weather conditions at the time of the incident is revealed in Photograph 2. There is considerable experience of rescue and recovery scenarios within CMSAR and more often than not a boat when

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MCIB RESPONSE: Noted.
The Report has been amended.

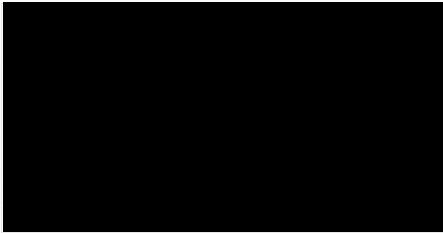
MCIB RESPONSE: Noted.

Correspondence 8.1 Corrib Mask Search & Rescue and MCIB response

recovered is badly damaged and usually broken up by rocks or other shoreline obstacles, this was not the case in this instance. The boat, when located by CMSAR, was intact and positioned 'side on' to the prevailing wind and looked as if it had been literally lifted up and placed on the rocky shoreline. This fact, in my opinion, is an indication that the wave pattern at the time of the incident was of a sufficient height and force to carry and deposit the boat as found thus confirming the decision not to launch the D-Class inshore rescue boat in darkness was the correct one. The larger Rigid Inflatable Boat(RIB) was launched the following morning as this boat was more suitable for the prevailing weather conditions.

MCIB RESPONSE: Noted.

Yours sincerely,



Corrib Mask Search and Rescue (CMSAR) is a voluntary not for profit local organisation.
CHY 3950



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