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**REPORT INTO A COLLISION
BETWEEN TWO
JET SKIS IN CASHLA BAY,
CO. GALWAY
ON 2nd OCTOBER 2006,
RESULTING IN SERIOUS INJURY
TO ONE INDIVIDUAL**

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REPORT No. MCIB/131

Report MCIB/131 published by The Marine Casualty Investigation Board
5th December 2008

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SYNOPSIS

1. SYNOPSIS

- 1.1 On Monday 2nd October 2006, three friends set out for an evening adventure from Struthan Pier, Cashla Bay, Co. Galway. Mr. David Folan led on his jet ski followed almost immediately by Mr. Stephen Lydon also on a jet ski and followed a short distance behind by Mr. Padraig Mullen on his inflatable craft (RIB). They headed out to sea at approximately 17.30 hrs. Some fifteen minutes later a collision occurred between Mr. Folan on his jet ski and Mr. Lydon on his jet ski. Mr. Folan was seriously injured in the incident.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 Technical Description of the Jet Skis.

General Specification

Both jet skis were manufactured by Bombardier USA Group. They were built in Canada to SEADOO GSX specifications. Both jet skis were powered by Marinated 2 stroke engines. The jet skis were single seaters of S.M.C. (Sheet Moulding Compound) construction: fibreglass sheet and resin pressed into a mould.

On inspection of both crafts, no indentation or structural damage was noted. The hulls were intact, with slight gel coat abrasion damage, which would not affect the stability or buoyancy of these crafts. In addition the rub rail/fender of Jet Ski (B) was damaged at point of contact. (See Appendix 8.1)

2.2 Operation and Control.

A functional test was carried out on the following systems for both of these crafts:

- Steering System
(Minimal play due to excessive wear on the connecting pinions).
 - Engine power management i.e. throttle cable connection from trigger to engine control. As a result of the inspection it was discovered that the engine speed control (throttle cable) on Jet Ski (B) was stuck in the Max position. However, it is now accepted that this condition materialised after the craft was taken ashore as it manoeuvred normally after the collision.
 - Dead man Switch. Both devices activated on impact and behaved as designed.

Names and addresses
of the Parties:

Mr. Stephen Lydon
Pheistin Road, Galway

Mr. Padraic Mullen
An Ceathru Rua, Co. Galway

EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 Between 17.30 hrs. and 17.45 hrs. on the evening of Monday 2nd October 2006, Mr. David Folan, Mr. Stephen Lydon and Mr. Padraig Mullen launched two jet skis and a RIB from an area known as Struthan Pier on the North East side of Cashla Bay opposite Rossaveal Harbour. (See Appendix 8.2)
- 3.2 Weather at the time was good with a slight sea and low swell. Although it was dark visibility was reported to be good due to the presence of a near full moon.
- 3.3 All three individuals with their respective craft proceeded south towards the mouth of the bay.

4. THE INCIDENT

- 4.1 Mr. David Folan led on his jet ski followed almost immediately by Mr. Lydon also on a jet ski. A short time later Mr. Mullen launched his RIB and followed his two friends towards the mouth of the bay.
- 4.2 Whilst heading south, in the vicinity of Temple Point (As indicated on Chartlet (2) at Appendix 8.2), Mr. Folan, commenced a turn to his left describing an arc of approximately 260 degrees placing him in the direct path of Mr. Lydon. (As indicated at Appendix 8.3)
- 4.3 By their own admission it is accepted that by now both craft had accelerated to approximately 40 Knots. Immediately prior to impact both craft were in the wake of craft (A) which would have the same effect as a short, heavy swell. Craft (B) rose on the crest of the wave striking craft (A) and injuring the right side of Mr. Folan. On impact both men were thrown from their craft. The dead-man mechanism operated automatically thereby cutting the engines. Although Mr. Lydon was in a temporary state of shock he managed to remount his jet ski. Unfortunately Mr. Folan had sustained serious injury and had to be rescued.

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

5. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

- 5.1 Mr. Mullen, on satisfying himself that Mr. Lydon was not in danger, took Mr. Folan into his RIB. They proceeded to Struthan (See Appendix 8.2, Chartlet 1). Mr. Lydon followed on his own jet ski with Mr. Folan's jet ski in tow.
- 5.2 On arrival at Struthan Pier, Mr. Folan was transported by car to a nearby house where a doctor was summoned. Due to the nature of his injuries, the doctor requested an ambulance and Mr. Folan was brought to University College Hospital Galway where he was treated for three broken ribs, a punctured lung and a broken fibula of right leg compounded by deep lacerations.
Mr. Folan spent two weeks in hospital as a result of the injuries sustained in this incident.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Both Mr. Folan and Mr. Lydon had experience of jet skis. Mr. Folan had operated such craft approximately thirty times both here and abroad while Mr. Lydon claims to have operated jet skis approximately seven or eight times. Both men were wearing personal floatation devices. These young men arranged for a colleague to accompany them in a RIB.
- 6.2 The Rossaveal Fishery Centre bye-laws prohibit any craft from operating at speeds in excess of 5 Knots in Cashla Bay.
- 6.3 Personal water craft are, by law, prohibited from operating anywhere during hours of darkness or in reduced visibility as they are unable to comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea in that they fail to comply with the carriage of navigation lights as prescribed by these rules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Due to the escalating incidence of jet ski accidents, it is recommended that the Department of Transport explore the feasibility of mandatory training. This should be developed with the Marine Survey Office and provided by properly authorised bodies that would be subject to regular auditing. The course should provide practical training in all aspects of handling jet skis, a clear understanding of the operational controls of the jet ski and a limited knowledge of maintenance of the craft. The course should also incorporate instruction on the following aspects of legislation:
- Collision Regulations
- Solas Chapter V
- Personal Floatation Devices and Operational Safety Regulations 2005
- Recreational Craft Directive 94/25/EC and amendment 2003/44/EC
- Investigation of Marine Casualties Act 2000
- Harbours Act 1946 and 1996
- Fisheries Harbour Act 1980
- Maritime Safety Act 2005.
- 7.2 The MCIB recommends that all jet skis be registered and that any person wishing to operate a jet ski should complete a recognised training course.
- 7.3 A further recommendation is that all such craft should be regularly serviced and carry a minimum of life saving equipment on board as outlined in the Department of Transport's "Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft". In addition, the MCIB strongly recommend the compulsory wearing of safety helmets by all persons on jet skis.
- 7.4 Under the provisions of the Maritime Safety Act of 2005, Local Authorities, Harbour Authorities and Fishery Harbours have been granted clear powers to make bye-laws to regulate and control the use of jet skis and other fast powered recreational craft. These powers should be exercised and enforced.

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

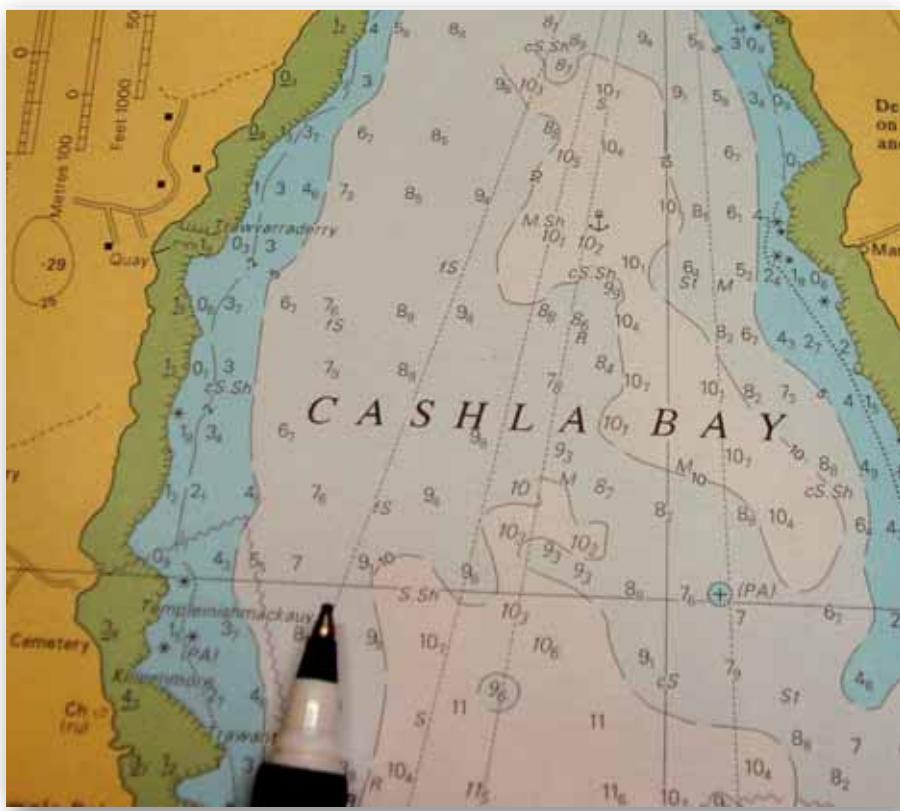
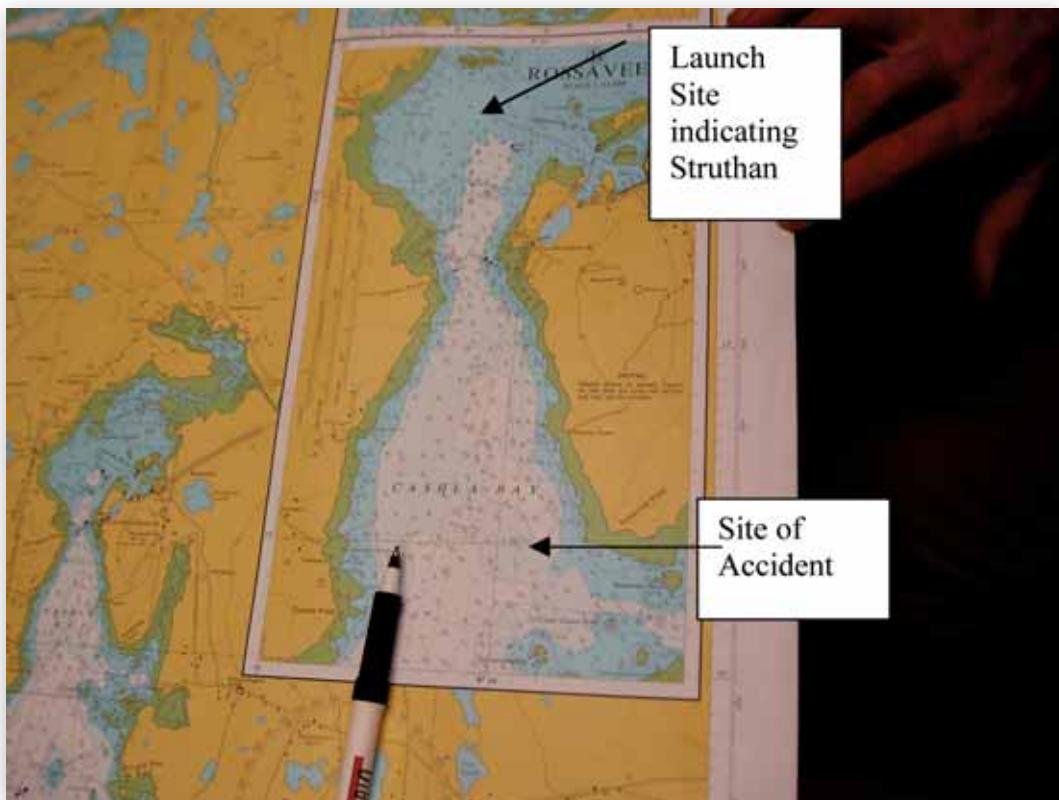
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APPENDIX 8.1

Appendix 8.1 Photographs of Jet Ski (A) and Jet Ski (B).

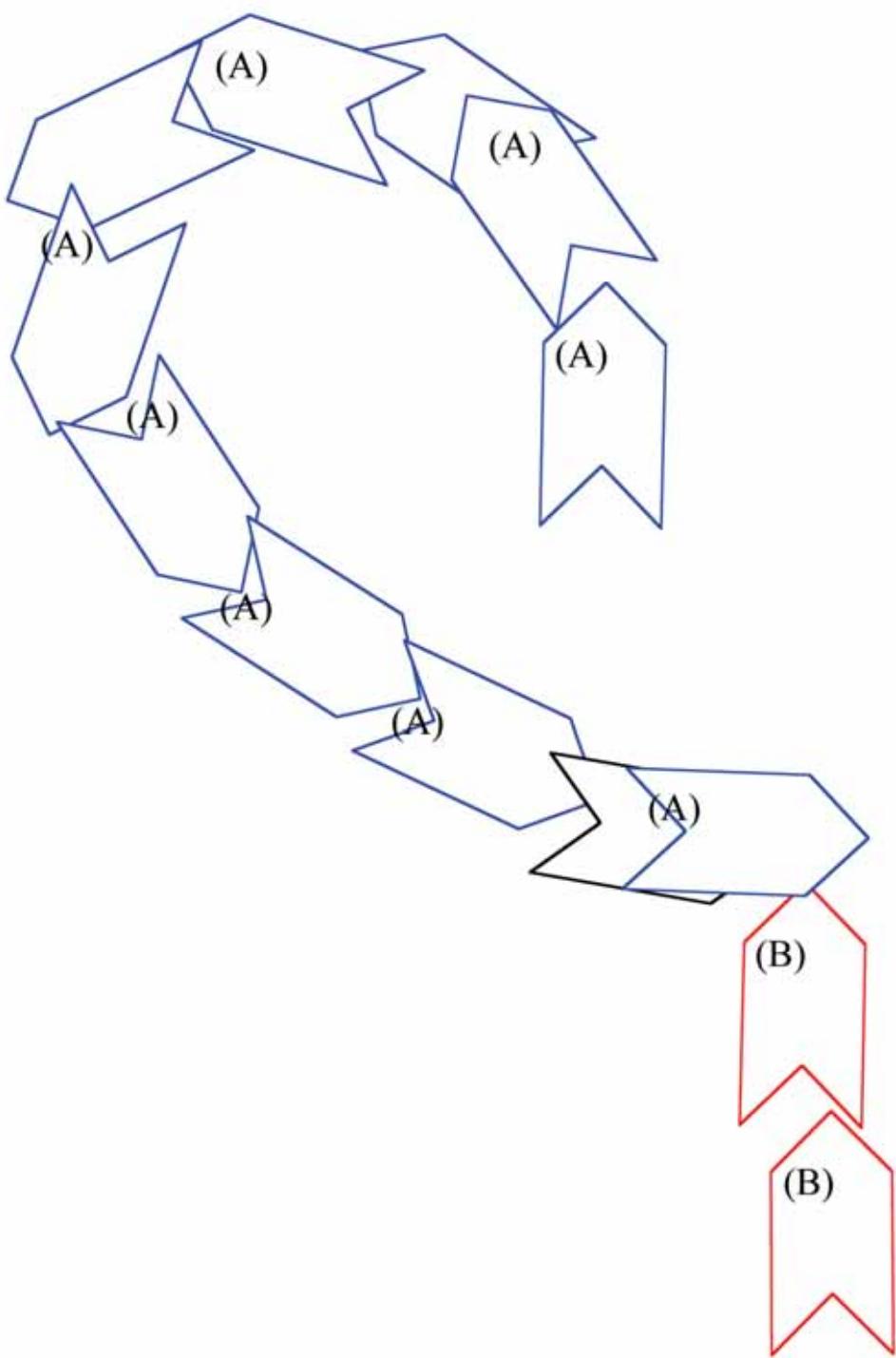


Appendix 8.2 Chartlets of the area.



APPENDIX 8.3

Appendix 8.3 Diagram showing how the Jet-Skis collided.



Appendix 8.4 Warning signs attached to all Jet Skis.



CORRESPONDENCE

9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

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An Roinn Cumarsáide,
Mara agus Acmhainní Nádúrtha



Department of Communications,
Marine and Natural Resources

Ms. Bridie Cullinane,
Secretary,
Marine Casualty Investigation Board,
93 Lower Leeson Street,
Dublin 2

13th February 2007



Your Ref MCIB/131

Ms. Cullinane, a chara,

I received a Draft Report dated 6th February 2007 from the MCIB on a collision between two jet skis (personal watercraft) in Cashla Bay on 2nd October 2006.

The MCIB recommends in section 7 (7.2) of the draft report "... that all jet ski's be registered and that any person wishing to operate a jet ski must be licensed..."

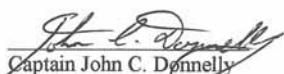
Another possible recommendation following on from this could be as follows:
It is a condition of the license that the owner/operator of a personal watercraft (jet ski) must, prior to launching any such craft in the water, familiarise themselves with any relevant bye laws or local regulations made by a harbour authority in whose jurisdiction it is intended to operate the craft.

Reason: This would encourage potential Jet Ski owners/operators to check out any rules or regulations pertaining to the area they intend to operate the craft. Most harbour areas, which are governed by a harbour authority, would have bye laws and/or local regulations governing the safe operation of Jet Ski's and recreational craft in the jurisdiction of the harbour authorities waters. These may even prohibit the use of such craft or restrict their use to certain designated areas and/or times etc.
Additionally it would serve to highlight to owners/operators of craft that in certain waters there is a governing management authority whose regulations must be obeyed.

In addition all harbour authorities should be encouraged to review their existing bye laws in order to provide clarity and to give effect to the appropriate provisions within the Maritime Safety Act 2005 as stated in section 7 (7.4) of the draft report.

I trust these comments will be of some assistance to the MCIB when finalising the report.

Mise le meas


Captain John C. Donnelly
Harbour Master

Láirionad Chuan lascaigh Ros a' Mhíl
Ros a' mhíl
Co. na Gaillimhe

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MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter.

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