



Marine Notice No. 58 of 2020

Notice to all Masters, Owners, Boating Clubs and Users of Pleasure and Recreational Craft.

Two separate fatal incidents involving recreational fishing by persons operating alone

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to draw the attention of all masters, owners, boating clubs and users of pleasure and recreational craft to the Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft in response to Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) recommendations contained in two recent MCIB reports concerning separate marine casualties. The full reports into fatal incidents on Lough Mask, Co. Mayo ([Report No. 287](#)), and in Dunmanus Bay, West Cork ([Report No. 294](#)), may be viewed on the website of the MCIB at mcib.ie.

The Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft is a valuable source of information, advice and best practice guidance for owners, masters, operators and users of a range of pleasure and recreational craft operating in Irish coastal and inland waters. Part A of the Code of Practice outlines the legislative requirements that apply to all recreational craft or specific types or size of craft. Owners and operators must comply with the requirements appropriate to their craft. Part B contains recommended guidelines and best practice for safe operation. This includes Chapter 2, Coastal Operation of Sail and Motor Boats, and Chapter 3, Operation of Sail and Motor Boats on Inland Waterways. Section 2.10 of Chapter 2 contains specific advice relating to sea angling boats while section 3.4 of Chapter 3 contains advice on boat angling on inland waters.

The Department would like to remind the operators of recreational craft of the following advice and recommendations:

- The importance of abiding by the legal requirements in relation to the wearing and carrying of Personal Flotation Devices/Lifejackets. It is a statutory requirement to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) when on board an open craft of less than 7 metres in length overall or whilst on deck onboard a decked craft of less than 7 metres in length overall. Wearing a PFD will increase your chance of survival in the event of entering the water. Please see [Marine Notice No. 32 of 2019](#) (Personal Flotation Device for Pleasure Craft and Personal Watercraft) for further information.

- The importance of checking current weather forecasts and sea / lake /river conditions prior to departure and to plan your voyage accordingly (see Appendix 6 (Weather, Sea States and Tides) and Appendix 8 of the Code of Practice for an example of a passage planning template).

The Department also wishes to highlight the increased risks involved with single person operation. Particular attention is drawn to the following safety advice:

- Users should carry out a risk assessment of the intended operations and take appropriate actions to reduce/mitigate the inherent risks that arise when nobody else is on-board to render assistance or to raise the alarm.
- When operating single handed, make sure an effective means of quickly re-boarding the boat is available in the event of a person overboard situation occurring, for example, a boarding ladder.
- Ensure that a designated person ashore is aware of your departure and return times, where you are going, and have a procedure in place to raise the alarm if necessary.

The Code of Practice is a free document and hardcopies can be obtained on request, in both English and Irish, from the Maritime Safety Policy Division of the Department at email MarineLeisureSafety@transport.gov.ie.

The Code is also available to view or download from the Department's website at the following link: [Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft](#).

All recreational craft users are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Code of Practice and to heed the safety advice and recommendations. Boating Clubs are urged to circulate this Marine Notice to their members.

Safety information and advice is also available on the Department's Safety on the Water Website at the following link [Safety on the Water](#).

Note: Marine Notices are issued purely for maritime safety and navigation reasons and should not be construed as conferring rights or granting permissions.

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