



Roinn na Mara agus Acmhainní Náúúrtha

MARINE NOTICE NO 3 of 2002

TO ALL SHIPOWNERS, SHIPMASTERS, SKIPPERS OF FISHING VESSELS,
YACHTSMEN, DIVING & SALVAGE COMPANIES, COMMERCIAL DIVERS AND
PLEASURE DIVING OPERATORS

**(I) EXPLOSIVES PICKED UP AT SEA IN TRAWLS OR SIGHTED AND
(II) THE REMOVAL OF EXPLOSIVE ITEMS FROM WRECKS**

EXPLOSIVES PICKED UP

Rare but extreme hazards to trawlermen are mines, torpedoes, depth charges, bomb or other explosive missiles which are sometimes picked up in trawls, often in water comparatively distant from where they were laid or dropped.

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS ARE DANGEROUS EVEN IF THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE WATER FOR MANY YEARS.

The following guidance is given in dealing with them: -

- A suspected explosive weapon should not be landed on deck if it has been observed before the codend is opened or while the trawl is still outboard;
- The trawl should be lowered and where possible, towed clear of regular fishing grounds before cutting away the net as necessary;
- The position and depth of water where the mine has been cut away should be reported to the Irish Coast Guard via a Coast Guard Radio Station or to MRCC Dublin.
- The eventual disposal of the mine will be greatly facilitated if the depth of water is no greater than 30 metres, the position very accurately plotted and whenever possible marked by a dan buoy.

- In the event of the weapon not being detected until the contents of the trawl have been discharged on deck, or in the case of a stern trawler, when the codend has been hauled up the ramp, the Skipper of the fishing vessel must decide whether to rid his ship of the weapon by passing it over the side or to make for the nearest port, informing the Irish Coast Guard Coast Radio Station and MRCC Dublin without delay. The decision is the Skipper's and will depend on the circumstances, but he should be guided by the following points: -
 - (i) Great care should be taken to avoid bumping the weapon;
 - (ii) If retained on board it should be stowed on deck, away from heat and vibration, firmly chocked and lashed to prevent movement;
 - (iii) It should be kept covered up and damped down. (This is important because any explosives which may have become exposed to the atmosphere are liable to become very sensitive to shock if allowed to dry out);
 - (iv) The weapon should be kept on board for as short a time as possible;
 - (v) If within two or three hours steaming of the coastline, the safest measure will generally be to run towards the nearest port and lie a safe distance off shore to await the arrival of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit; **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE VESSEL BRING THE MINE OR WEAPON INTO HARBOUR**
 - (vi) Under no circumstances should attempts be made to clean the weapon for identification purposes, open it or tamper with it in any way;
 - (vii) A fishing vessel with an explosive on board or in her gear, should warn other ships in the vicinity by giving her position and if applicable, the intended position for jettisoning the explosive.

EXPLOSIVES SIGHTED

Drifting mines may occasionally be sighted. All drifting mines should be reported immediately to the Irish Coast Guard via a Coast Guard Radio Station or to MRCC Dublin. An "All Ships" broadcast should also be made on VHF Channel 16 to communicate the information to ships in the vicinity. The time of sighting and position of the mine is important in the reporting information.

THE REMOVAL OF EXPLOSIVE ITEMS FROM WRECKS

It has been brought to the attention of the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources that persons, whilst on diving operations on wrecks off the coast, have removed and brought ashore ordnance and /or explosives. **THIS PRACTICE IS ILLEGAL AND HIGHLY DANGEROUS AND SHOULD NOT BE CARRIED OUT.**

When on a diving expedition at a wreck which is found to contain explosives or ordnance, all persons are advised to leave the vicinity of the wreck and report the find to the Irish Coast Guard.

The position of the find, by latitude and longitude or by bearing and distance from a point on land, should be recorded along with the depth of water.

The MRCC Dublin can be contacted at the following numbers:

Tel: 01-6620922/23 Fax: 01-6620795

Secretary-General

Department of the Marine and Natural Resources
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2

20th February 2002

Any enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to: Maritime Safety
Division

Tel: 01-6199358 Fax: 01-6620774 email: marine.notices@marine.gov.ie