



Department
for Transport

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10 January 2025

Dear Henry,

Subject: Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths

I am grateful for your careful consideration of the circumstances of the tragic accident involving Emily Jane Lewis and highlighting the opportunities for improvement in safety in your Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths of 15 November.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that the work currently being undertaken by the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) to replace the Small Commercial Vessel and Pilot Boat Code as annexed to MGN 280(M) (Small Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure Workboats and Pilot Boats – Alternative Construction Standards) is a priority of mine and we are working hard to bring forward new legislation and an updated Code of Practice for Small Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure (the “Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code”) as soon as practical, in line with the required consultation and Parliamentary processes.

To this end, a draft new Statutory Instrument and draft Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code was published for a 12-week public consultation running from 4 December 2024 until 25 February 2025. It should be noted that any interim measures that could be considered to manage risks of high-speed RIB experience rides would not be able to be implemented any sooner than the revised Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code would come into effect.

There have been significant developments in the draft Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code to address concerns you have raised, such as improved requirements for seating in vessels undertaking this type of operation, greater use of vessel Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) and a new mandatory requirement for owners and operators to implement a safety management system.

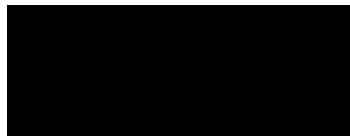
In response to the MAIB recommendations raised, I have tasked the MCA to begin the procurement process to commission an anthropometric assessment of the design and operational requirements for small high-speed passenger craft safety and the protection of passengers and crew provided by the craft with respect to whole-body vibration and sudden decelerations in the event of a horizontal impact.

This assessment will also consider, among other things; the full anthropometric range of passengers and crew, the operational profile of the vessels, including the range of speeds, as well as crash protection and general protection of the seating arrangements including the design and use of handholds and restraints.

The outputs from this assessment are expected in late spring/early summer 2026 and will be incorporated, as appropriate, into the next version of the Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code. The MCA will also use the information and data gathered to provide updated guidance to the wider pleasure vessel sector on passenger safety information.

As well as the proactive steps to improve small commercial vessel safety with the amendments made in the draft Sport or Pleasure Vessel Code, the MCA will continue to work to ensure that owners and operators take seriously their responsibilities for ensuring the safety of those onboard their vessels.

Yours sincerely,

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MINISTER FOR AVIATION, MARITIME AND SECURITY