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## INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF EMILY JANE LEWIS

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I [REDACTED], Director of Red Bay Boats Limited, write this statement, in response to the Prevention of Future Deaths Report, made by the Coroner of Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton, following an inquest which took place on 31 October 2024.

### **Background**

1. On 31 October 2024, the inquest into the death of Ms Lewis concluded and the Coroner gave the following narrative conclusion:
  - a. *On 22 August 2020 the Deceased died at Southampton General Hospital, Temon Road, Southampton, Hampshire.*
  - b. *On the morning of 22 August 2022, Ms Lewis had sustained upper abdominal injuries when the RIB Seadogz, on which she was a passenger, collided with a buoy, projecting her forward into the extended handhold in front of her, causing fatal injuries: the Deceased's liver was compressed against her spinal column leading to transection, along with contusion of the pancreas.*
2. We also received a Regulation 28: Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) Report, which we understand was sent to several parties following the inquest. The Report related to the following concerns raised by the Coroner:
  - a. *Whether consideration should be given to licensing arrangements for port authorities and local authorities to achieve an early, uniform and comprehensible framework for the use of RIB craft on high speed*

*experience rides, including crewing levels, manoeuvres, craft standards and risk assessments;*

- b. Whether interim measures should be considered to manage risks of high-speed RIB experience rides;*
- c. Whether the existing BS EN ISO 11591 needs revision (or supplementing) to take into account the effect on forward visibility of passengers about RIB craft and whether any practicable retrospective steps can be identified to improve forward visibility on RIB craft;*
- d. The need for consideration of seat and handrail design: as well as the injuries sustained by Emily Lewis, I note the MAIB's concerns about handholds for jockey seats;*
- e. The need to consider whether there should be provision of AIS for RIB craft to facilitate monitoring of RIB craft operations and intervention in the event of unsafe practices being identified;*
- f. The need to consider how timely and comprehensive review of MAIB recommendations can be achieved.*

- 3. Firstly, everyone at Red Bay Boats Limited, the owners and employees, extend our heartfelt condolences to the friends and family of Ms Emily Jane Lewis during this difficult time.
- 4. We would like to extend our gratitude to the Coroner for reaching out to us with the concerns raised and affording us with the opportunity to respond. We greatly appreciate the chance to address these matters.
- 5. Red Bay Boats Limited has been a trusted leader in the boat building industry for 47 years. Throughout this extensive history, we are proud to report that we have not been aware of any injuries or fatalities caused by our vessels. Our

commitment to safety, quality craftsmanship, and innovation continues to guide every aspect of our operations.

6. Safety at sea is at the core of our ethos in boat building. Many of our employees are also proud volunteers for the RNLI, further demonstrating our commitment to maritime safety.
7. At the time that the Seadogz vessel was built in 2012, it was designed and constructed for commercial use and was approved in accordance with the Marine Guidance Note (MGN) 280 (M) Small Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure, Workboats and Pilot Boats – Alternative Construction Standards and its annex the Small Commercial Vessel and Pilot Boat Code ('SCV Code') and was built to comply with the requirements laid down in the Recreational Craft Directive ('RCD') design category B. At all times, the Seadogz was built with the expectation that it would be operated by two persons, a helmsman and a navigator.
8. We acknowledge the concerns raised by the MAIB Report that the SCV Code does not make any reference to the number of seats required on a RIB, what constitutes suitable seating, nor any specific considerations relating to crash protection characteristics of the seating arrangement in the event of a high-speed impact and gives no generic requirements for forward visibility. We also note that there appears to be inconsistency between the *'Passenger Safety On Small Commercial High-Speed Craft & Experience Rides: A Voluntary Code of Practice'* and the MAIB Report on whether or not a RIB should have an aft helm.
9. The Company is also concerned that the design of Seadogz is a design replicated by a number of those in the boat building industry and that Marine Guidance Note 436 does not provide any guidance on load factors on the design of the seating. That is, to what 'crash' or load standard should seats be tested to?
10. Sadly, the Operations Manager for Red Bay Boats Limited, who was responsible for design, engineering, finance, and human resources, passed

away unexpectedly in February 2024. However, action had already been taken before his untimely death, and these efforts have continued since. The following steps have been implemented:

a. Review and Update of Owner's Manuals:

- i. All owner's manuals for vessels built by Red Bay have been reviewed and updated to confirm compliance with ISO 10240:2022. The manuals are now fully customised and tailored to the individual customer and vessel.

b. External Naval Architect Audit:

- i. McCollum Marine, an external naval architect, has been instructed to conduct a comprehensive audit of all Red Bay-built vessels. The final report is expected by the end of January 2025. The audit will cover, but is not limited to, drawings, sketches, calculations, scantlings, and stability tests. Any recommendations from the external architects will be acted upon as soon as reasonably practicable.

c. Seating and Handhold Testing:

- i. A testing company has been commissioned to assess the designs of the seating and handholds on Red Bay vessels. The loads on the pod seats will be tested to determine their endurance in the event of a collision. Test results are expected by the end of February 2025. These results will help set load factor and stress conditions on future vessels, influencing the design of new seating, which will be commissioned by the end of May 2025 and re-tested thereafter.

d. Compliance with Marine Guidance Note 436:

- i. All Red Bay vessels are in compliance with Marine Guidance Note 436.
- e. Commissioning of Passenger RIBs:
  - i. Red Bay has not accepted any commissions for thrill-seeking passenger RIBs in the past three years and is unlikely to do so until the Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA) updates its regulations in this area.
- f. Monitoring Legislation Changes:
  - i. Red Bay is closely monitoring the MCA's anthropometric study and any review of 'The Sport & Pleasure Vessel Code' to ensure full compliance with future legislative changes.
- g. Recruitment of Compliance Officer:
  - i. Red Bay is in the process of recruiting a compliance officer to maintain management systems for all policies related to the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), MCA, and to keep abreast of any information or guidance from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB).
- h. Request for MAIB Report:
  - i. Red Bay has requested the STC report from the MAIB, including its raw data, to assist its experts in understanding the concerns raised in the report and to inform Red Bay's response. These results are yet to be received.

## **Actions**

11. We have taken the Coroner's concerns as an opportunity for Red Bay to

systematically work through the range of boats to ensure accuracy and compliance and improve quality standards.

12. During the time of the MAIB investigation, the late Operations Manager became aware that the owner's manual was not as specific as it could be. In response, he immediately assigned the task to oversee a project to bring all manuals up to the required standard.

13. To ensure thoroughness, and as stated above, we have appointed external naval architects, McCollum Marine, to review all of our documentation to aid in ensuring our Owner's Manuals are fully compliant. This process is expected to be completed by the end of January 2025.

14. The general aim is to implement a detailed report for each vessel that clearly demonstrates compliance to standards and conformity. From this basis, we then intend to review our owner's manuals, and indeed, update and recertify our business to the quality standard ISO90001.

15. We are keen to meet the WorkBoat Code 3.

16. To enhance our compliance and documentation efforts for this project, ensuring full regulatory and safety adherence, the following actions have been suggested:

a. ISO Scantling Requirements:

i. This will include analysing all current hulls against ISO scantling requirements in preparation for Workboat 3 certification.

ii. Implementing detailed drawings of layups, structural elements and bonding materials.

b. Superstructure Requirements for Cabin RIBs:

- i. Specifying layup requirements for structures
  - ii. Perform self-righting calculations for all cabin RIBs.
- c. Stability and Flotation Compliance:
  - i. Assess compliance with the following standards:
    - 1. ISO 6185-3:2024 (boats <8m, motor power  $\geq 15$  kW).
    - 2. ISO 6185-4 (boats with hull lengths between 8m and 24m, motor power  $\geq 15$  kW).
    - 3. ISO 12217-1: Stability and buoyancy assessments for small craft with hull lengths  $\geq 6$ m (non-sailing boats).
- d. Transom Analysis:
  - i. Ensure compliance with ISO 12215-5 and ISO 12215-6, verifying transoms can withstand:
  - ii. Maximum stresses from engine power and torque
  - iii. Engine mass under normal operational conditions.
- e. Maximum Power Determination:
  - i. Establish the maximum allowable power for each model according to ISO 11592.

f. Manoeuvring Speed Testing:

- i. We will test and verify the maximum manoeuvring speed for each model as per ISO 6185-4.

g. Field of Vision Compliance:

- i. We will include field of vision assessments as per ISO 11591.

**Seating design improvements**

17. Our objective is to test our existing pod seating against the International Maritime Organisation HSC 2000 Standards and to seek recommendations for any improvements.

18. We intend to model the current pod seat (000-0051) in accordance with the load cases prescribed in the HSC 2000 Standards Annex 10. Then, to separately assess handhold strength as per the requirements outlined in ISO 15085, Section 9.3.

19. We have instructed Scot Seats, a sector specialist, who have confirmed they have received our seats at their premises in Scotland and will be testing them early in 2025. A copy of the testing protocol provided by Scot Seats which is currently being used to carry out tests on their own range of Shock Mitigation Jockey Seats to meet the HSC 2000 Standards, is enclosed at **Exhibit RB/1**.

20. Should a customer approach us now, we would recommend the installation of Scot Seats, as they provide better safety and comfort for both passengers and crew. This recommendation aligns with the voluntary guidance currently in place. If customers are unable to afford suspension seats, we will ensure that the seats we provide have been rigorously tested to meet safety standards. Our seats will be presented as the next best option, with a clear proviso that they



are to be used under certain conditions and within specific provisions.

### **Conclusion**

21. We would like to again acknowledge the tragic loss of Emily Jane Lewis, and extend our heartfelt condolences to her friends and family. Red Bay Boats remains committed to working alongside regulators and industry experts to enhance the safety of passenger vessels.
22. The law currently allows individuals with minimal experience to operate sea safari craft, but we firmly believe that such operations should be more regulated. Specifically, we feel that sea safari craft should not need to exceed 25 knots.
23. We have made a decision to not accept any commissions in the thrill-seeking market at this time.
24. At Red Bay Boats Limited, our priority is to ensure that our vessels are as safe as possible. We strongly believe that the industry should be better regulated, and that there should always be two people in command of a craft to enhance safety and reduce risks.

  
Director of Red Bay Boats Limited

Signed: 

Dated: 17/01/2025.