

News/MAIB report



How a kill cord should be worn



Footage of the Padstow tragedy

MAIB report on Padstow tragedy emphasises need to think safety

May 2013 saw a tragic accident take place in the Camel Estuary in Cornwall, where a family of six was ejected from their RIB during a high-speed turn and subsequently run over by their own boat. Two people were killed and three others injured, two of them seriously.

Over the past nine months, the RYA has worked with the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) in assisting with the enquiry into this terrible incident. Last month the MAIB published the findings of its investigation and the report can be downloaded from www.maib.gov.uk

Whilst the report goes into significant detail about the contributing factors relating to the incident, there are several key safety messages that both the RYA and MAIB are eager to re-emphasize.

- 1) Drivers should ensure they are wearing a kill cord, attached around their leg, at all times when operating small powered craft.
- 2) All crew should be properly seated, with access to good, secure handholds.
- 3) Drivers should communicate with passengers about wash from other vessels and, prior to executing any manoeuvres at speed, ensure they have time to brace themselves.
- 4) Operators should be familiar with the handling characteristics of their craft, particularly more powerful boats and those capable of higher speeds.

5) Drivers should be aware of the increased hazard associated with carrying passengers in the forward section of the boat when travelling at speed.

6) Where an owner is intending to operate faster or more powerful craft they should consider undertaking more advanced training, such as the RYA Intermediate or Advanced Powerboat courses.

Above all, this tragedy should remind us all about the dangers of complacency. The parents involved in this accident had undertaken training and were, by nature,

“Last year’s accident was a reminder of how important it is to always wear a kill cord”

relatively cautious. Despite having been trained in all the safe practices for powerboat operations, at the time of the incident no kill cord was in use and passengers were not securely seated whilst a tight turn during rapid acceleration was executed.

Richard Falk, RYA Training Manager, said: ‘Last year’s accident was a salutary reminder to us all of how important it is to always wear a kill cord when underway. With most incidents there is rarely one single causal factor, but rather a number of contributory factors. In a majority of cases the avoidance

of any one of these factors would have either prevented the accident or, at the very least, minimised its severity.

‘That is why it is so important that boaters should never lose sight of any of these basic safety measures that should be followed every time they go out on the water, in particular to always wear a kill cord when underway.’

Our thoughts are with the Milligan family and we sincerely hope that others may learn from this devastating tragedy.

The RYA Powerboat 2 course is an excellent entry-level course for anyone considering driving a small open powered craft or RIB, with more advanced tuition for powerful or high-performance craft available through the RYA’s intermediate and advanced courses.

The RYA will be implementing the recommendations made with regard to its Powerboat Scheme, as well as taking further steps to highlight hazards associated with high-speed craft through its publications. ‘Think: Wear Your Kill Cord’ stickers are available from the RYA, contact training@rya.org.uk.

More information on safety can be found at www.rya.org.uk/go/safety

