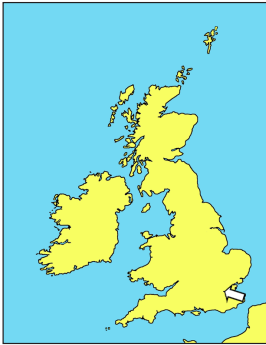


## SYNOPSIS



At approximately 0708 on 6 May 2010 a male passenger on a Delta 8.5m rigid inflatable boat (RIB) suffered lower back compression fractures while the boat was transporting him, with fellow workers, to a jack-up rig on the River Thames. The injury occurred as the passenger landed heavily on a locker lid, where he had been sitting, after he had been momentarily lifted off the lid due to the motion of the craft.

After the accident, the passenger was landed ashore and taken to hospital, where he received prompt attention for his injuries.

He was subsequently fitted with an external body support brace and was unable to return to full-time employment until 6 months after the accident. He was still receiving physiotherapy treatment at the time this report was published, some 8 months after the accident.

Passengers in small high-speed craft are subject to potentially high shock and vibration impacts, and the MAIB is aware of 12 other accidents that have occurred in the 2 years following the similar *Celtic Pioneer* accident in August 2008, which also resulted in lower back compression fractures.

The risk of this type of injury can be reduced by ensuring that:

- occupants are seated in appropriate seating
- the boat's helmsman has received suitable training
- the boat is appropriately designed and outfitted
- procedures are in place to exclude passengers who may be particularly at risk, based on medical grounds.

A recommendation has been made to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) to prioritise and resource the revision of MGN 280 to ensure the updated code of practice for small commercial vessels is published as early as possible.

A recommendation has also been made to the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and the MCA to jointly issue a safety alert to promulgate the lessons learnt from this accident.