

Safety Recommendation Number:	IRLD2017004
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Safety Recommendation Status:	Implemented, closed

Safety Recommendation:

CHC Ireland should provide documented guidance to their SAR crews that can be used to assess and address the operational and medical risks associated with winching casualties, whether conscious or unconscious, by use of a helicopter rescue strop.

Response:

March 2017

A response was received from CHC Ireland on 7 March 2017, advising that “Flying Staff Instruction (FSI) 2017-407 Winching of Unconscious Person(s) from the Water” had been issued on 3 March 2016. The FSI included the following proposed changes to the CHC Ireland OMF:

“The following caution shall be added to section 'Hydrostatic (double strop) lift' in OMF chapter 3:

3.13.5 Hydrostatic (double strop) lift
(...)

Caution:

All SAR crews are reminded to take extreme care when recovering casualties, conscious or unconscious, from the water using either the standard hydrostatic double lift strop method or the single lift strop method, with either one or two casualties. Winch crews are to continuously, dynamically, risk assess each situation in order to minimise the operational and medical risk to the casualty, crew, and associated supporting services. Consideration should be given at all times to the casualty being secured / restrained in the strop during recovery. If a casualty is unconscious, extra care should be taken to ensure the casualty is securely supported in strop until the recovery is completed.

The first paragraph of section 'Stretcher lift' in OMF chapter 3 is reworded as follows:

3.13.7 Stretcher lift

When a casualty is injured or unconscious and conditions permit, a stretcher lift should be considered. No stretcher should ever be winched from an S92 without the use of a Hi-line. When a casualty is injured or unconscious, on land or on board a vessel, and where conditions permit, a stretcher lift should be considered. No stretcher shall ever be winched to or from a S92 without the use of a Hi-line.”

The FSI stated that it would remain valid until incorporated into the OMF.

August 2018

On 20 August 2018, CHC Ireland provided the AAIU with written confirmation that the content of “Flying Staff Instruction (FSI) 2017-407 Winching of Unconscious Person(s) from the Water” had been incorporated into the most recently issued version of the OMF.

AAIU Comment:

On 25 April 2017, the AAIU responded to CHC Ireland, noting the content of “FSI 2017-407 Winching of Unconscious Person(s) from the Water”. The AAIU acknowledged in its response to CHC Ireland that the FSI was an intermediate step in the process to amend the OMF. The AAIU requested CHC Ireland to provide a copy of the amended OMF once the FSI 2017-407 had been incorporated so that the status of the Safety Recommendation could be updated.

On 6 June 2017 the AAIU wrote to CHC Ireland requesting that the AAIU be notified when the Flying Staff Instruction (FSI) 2017-407 Winching of Unconscious Persons from the Water was incorporated into the OMF.

On 30 July 2018, the AAIU wrote to CHC Ireland requesting an update on the implementation of the SR. .

20 August 2018

The AAIU considers the status of this Safety Recommendation to be “Implemented, Closed”.