

Woman suing fish farm after partner was crushed

Marc Horne

The partner of a fish farm worker crushed and drowned between two boats is suing a salmon company over his death.

Clive Hendry, 58, stepped off the deck of a moving vessel on to the ladder of a barge, suffering severe injuries. A colleague grabbed his lifejacket, but Hendry fell into the sea.

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) found no effective safety management system had been in place.

Catriona Lockhart, Hendry's partner of 28 years, has lodged a claim against his employer, Mowi Scotland, and is seeking compensation for the fall at Ardintoul fish farm on Loch Alsh, near the Kyle of Lochalsh in the northwest Highlands, in February last year.

"Some people have told me to move on and get on with my life, but Clive was my life," Lockhart said. "We were together every day for 28 years. Nothing can bring him back, but I want justice and an apology. I truly believe that Clive would be here today if Mowi had done what they were meant to."

Marine investigators found a litany of health and safety failures. It said: "The crew on board Beinn Na Caillich were not fully prepared to deal with the emergency situation.

"They had not conducted regular man overboard recovery drills and



Clive Hendry fell from the boat Beinn Na Caillich and was crushed and drowned

were not familiar with the use of the vessel's recovery equipment.

"The transfer of personnel by workboat had not been properly risk assessed, and the absence of a documented safe system of work meant that these operations were not being properly controlled. The company lacked both staff with the experience to oversee marine operations and an effective marine safety management system."

Mowi made the use of lifejacket crotch straps optional, in contravention of published guidance. The report said: "The use of a crotch strap, in addition to correct fitting of the lifejacket, might have prevented it from slipping off, and therefore would have increased [Hendry's] chances of survival once in the water."

Lockhart, who was speaking on what

would have been her partner's 60th birthday, said: "Every morning without fail, no matter what, we would give each other a cuddle and a kiss. That day we didn't and that haunts me.

"I remember seeing his yellow wellies as he went out the door. That was the last time that I saw him. I never got to say goodbye."

Lockhart is being supported by Scottish Hazards, a charity that campaigns for better workplace health and safety.

Louise Taggart, a trustee with the charity, said: "It should not be too much to ask for Catriona to get justice and an apology and for these to be provided swiftly."

Thompsons Solicitors Scotland confirmed that it had lodged papers with the Court of Session on Lockhart's behalf.

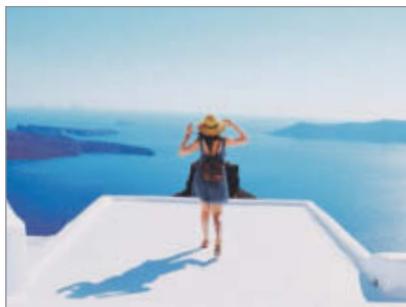
Mowi Scotland, which owns 48 fish farms and employs 1,500 staff, did not respond to a request for comment.

This year it said: "Clive had been a truly valued member of our team for 12 years and we all continue to be deeply affected by his death. Our sympathies go to Clive's family, friends and colleagues.

"As detailed in the MAIB accident report, preventative actions were immediately implemented and we are now reviewing the learnings from this report that include two recommendations made by the MAIB."



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