

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 23rd OCTOBER 2007

Question

Following the sailing on Monday 24th September 2007 of a wavepiercer to and from the United Kingdom, when the shipping forecast was of a wave height of 8ft locally and 12ft to the north, would the Minister advise whether such seas are within the operating limits of the vessel, and further advise what monitoring, if any, takes place to ensure that vessels do not exceed their approved operational limits?

Answer

There were eight channel crossings undertaken by wavepiercers on Monday 24th September 2007. Two crossings were made between Poole and Cherbourg in the morning. Two crossings were also made between Weymouth, Guernsey, Jersey and Poole in the morning and a further two made from Poole, Guernsey, Jersey and Weymouth in the evening. The final two crossings were made between Poole, Guernsey, St Malo and Poole in the evening.

Whilst the local forecast gave seas of 8ft (2.4m) locally and 12 ft (3.65m) in the north this service does not operate on local forecasts alone. Actual central channel conditions forecast for that day indicated 3.0m by midday rising to 3.4m by 1800 and then decreasing again to below 3.0m by 2400. These vessels are operated to a 3.5m significant wave height limit and were within limits on each occasion on that date. Strongest winds recorded in Jersey occurred between 0400 and 0600 indicating that a cold front passed through the Channel Islands area before either wavepiercer embarked on its first channel crossing of the day

The significant wave height limit placed on high speed craft is contained in their Permit to Operate, as issued by the flag authority. An operator who knowingly embarks on a voyage when wave heights are forecast in excess of a vessel's limitation risks committing a criminal offence.