McMurdo Fast Find PLB activation results in rescue of solo sailor off the coast of Cornwall

McMurdo, a business of the Orolia Group (NYSE Alternext Paris – FR0010501015 – ALORO) has helped save the life of a solo sailor, who was successfully rescued off the coast of Cornwall after activating his McMurdo Fast Find PLB (Personal Locator Beacon) on the 30th September.

68 year old solo sailing enthusiast, Richard Coles, was returning to his base at Mayflower Marina in Plymouth from Portmellon in Cornwall onboard his 39ft Benteau Oceanis 393 when he ran in to difficulty. On trying to untangle the yacht’s genoa, weather conditions caused the vessel to lurch, forcing Mr Coles overboard – solo and unable to get back onboard, he took the decision to activate his Fast Find PLB.

On receiving the PLB alert, a search and rescue crew from RNAS Culdrose, near Helston was sent. Mr Coles was successfully rescued by Sea King helicopter around six miles south-east of Looe, just one and half hours after activating his beacon, before being taken to the Royal Cornwall Hospital where he was treated for hypothermia.

Commenting on the incident, Mr Coles said, “I purchased my Fast Find PLB in 2007 and always carry it with me when I venture out solo, safe in the knowledge that I will have a direct method of contacting the emergency services if the worst was to happen.

“I was extremely grateful to be carrying my PLB on a pouch around my waist when I was forced overboard and came in to difficulty. It was also very reassuring that on activation, my PLB continued to flash and give out a faint beep so that I
knew it was transmitting and help would be on the way. If it were not for my Fast Find PLB, I’m almost certain I wouldn’t be here today and I would like to thank the rescue services for their amazing help and the speed in which they were able to assist me.”

The latest generation of the hugely popular Fast Find range, the Fast Find 220 is a powerful distress beacon with GPS as standard, which provides a direct method of alerting the search and rescue authorities where no other forms of communication are available, using the 406 MHz search and rescue satellite communication system, COSPAS SARSAT*. As well as sending out a distress signal by satellite, the 220 also transmits a 121.5MHz homing signal and the GPS enables a typical positional accuracy of +/- 62m – taking the ‘search’ out of ‘search and rescue’.

Waterproof to 10 metres and able to operate in temperatures as low as -20°, once activated using a simple three-stage activation function the 220 will transmit continuously for a minimum of 24 hours at a powerful 5 watt output. The beacon is also small in size weighing just 150g and measuring D34mm x W47mm x L106mm, and features an LED flash light to assist with rescues at night or during limited visibility.