



National  
Operational  
Guidance

## Control measure

**Appropriate techniques: Water  
management systems**



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

Developed and maintained by the NFCC

---



## Contents

Control measure - Appropriate techniques: Water management systems ..... 3



## Control measure - Appropriate techniques: Water management systems

---

### Control measure knowledge

When attending incidents on canals, all lock gates and paddles should be completely closed before any rescue attempt. Personnel should not attempt to open the lock gates or paddles to empty the lock. When a sluice or lock gate is opened to release water, strong currents and turbulence can occur downstream.

Where possible, an exclusion zone should be established on the high-pressure side of the lock gates and paddles. Access to the lock should be via the fixed raking ladder. Mud and silt will be present on the canal bottom and lock walls

Any attempt to drain the lock should consider the potential of trapping the casualty. A 50mm gap will create sufficient pressure to pin a person. Where the incident involves a casualty below the surface of the water and it is not possible to assist without sub-surface equipment then a specialist underwater rescue and recovery team should be requested.

More information on canals can be found here:

<http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/for-businesses>

<http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/boating/navigating-the-waterways/boaters-handbook>

Responders should not enter the operating areas of the pumping station unless confirmation that isolation has been achieved is received from a responsible person. Any related machinery including weed screen cleaners should be isolated prior to a rescue attempt.

Weirs and sluice gates vary greatly in their potential for harm. Fire and rescue services should identify appropriate means of rescue, control measures and exclusion zones for water management systems in their area.

### Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Identify high-risk water management facilities and systems and put in place arrangements and safe systems of work where appropriate



## Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Consider taking control of lock systems when working near or rescuing casualties from water management systems