



National
Operational
Guidance

Control measure

Cordons: Water rescue and flooding



NFCC
Fire Central
Programme Office

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Control measure knowledge

When working near, on or in water, it may be appropriate to establish hazard zones to restrict movement of personnel depending on levels of training and available equipment. Where possible, areas should be indicated using physical barriers and access should be controlled but due to the large geographical area covered by some flooding and water incidents this may not be feasible. Where cordons or hazard zones are required it may be necessary to control access using comprehensive briefings and physical landmarks.

Hazard zones are separated into hot, warm and cold zones. It may not always be appropriate to establish any zones, or access to the hot zone may be prevented depending on the risk assessment. Known bodies of water, with limited risk may not require any hazard zones to be established.

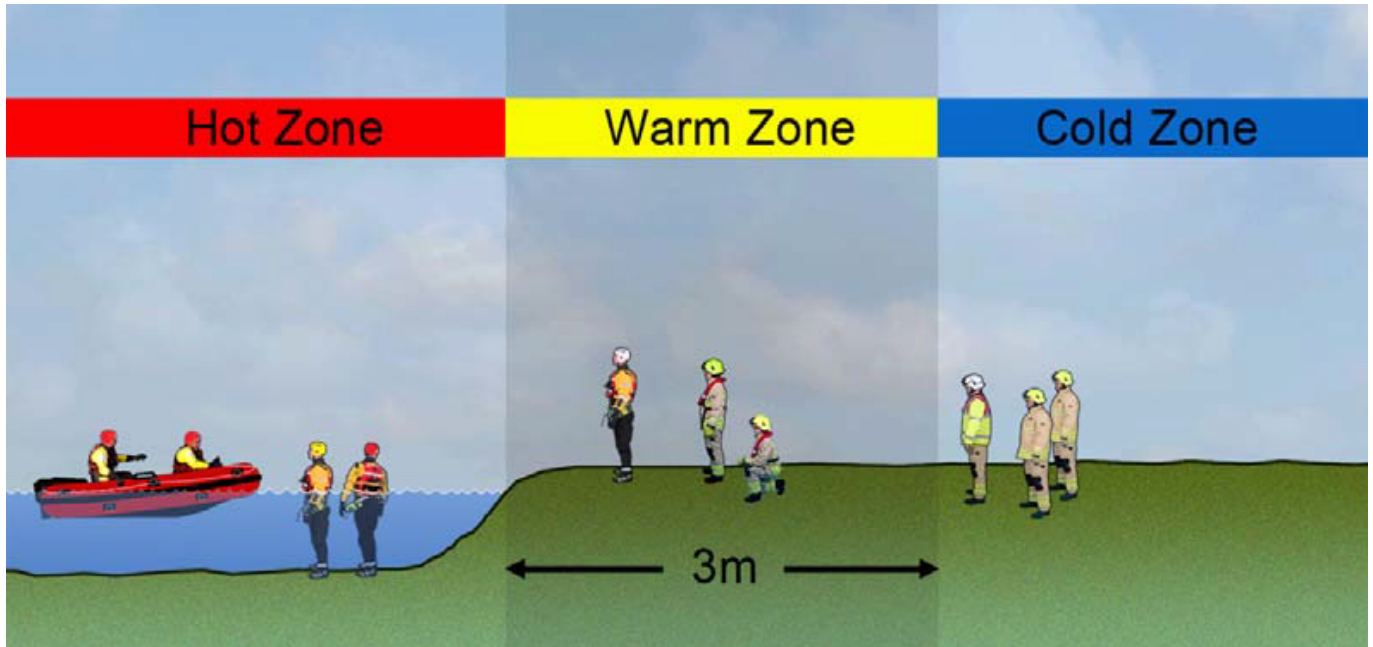
The hot zone is usually defined as the area of water or unstable surface. This area may be expanded based on the risk assessment of the incident commander. The hot zone is the area of greatest risk where rescues will be carried out and should only be entered by rescuers with the appropriate training and personal protective equipment (PPE).

The warm zone is the working area adjacent to the hazard, usually within three metres but this distance may be extended or reduced following a risk assessment. There may be a significant risk of uncontrolled entry into the water in this area. A warm zone may not be required when accidental entry into water can be prevented, or the hazard from entry is minimal such as still bodies of water with known depths. Personnel working in the area should be suitably trained, equipped and briefed to carry out specific tasks.

The cold zone is the safe area located outside the hazard zones. Equipment dumps, holding areas, casualty reception centres and marshalling areas should all be located in this area.

The cold zone is usually established 3 metres from the water's edge, but this distance will depend on the ground conditions, slope and presence of barriers around the edge of the water and may be extended or reduced depending on the hazard and risk of uncontrolled entry.

It is important that control zones are established, effectively implemented and communicated to all emergency responders as early as possible to maintain safe working areas and to assist in defining role responsibilities and objectives.



Hazard zones for water related incidents

The geographic scale of operations during responses to wide area flooding can make management of personnel difficult. To establish greater levels of command and control incident commanders should consider logging the number of personnel committed to the risk area. This should include the times of entry of personnel, assigned tasks and equipment. If necessary, consider placing appropriate limits on durations committed to the risk area. The duration of commitment will depend on the required tasks and environmental conditions. Regular radio contact should be maintained and where possible a dedicated officer appointed to manage the safety of personnel.

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Provide appropriate means of implementing control zones and cordons at incidents involving water
- Provide all operational firefighters with water awareness training

Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:



- Consider establishing control zones at incidents involving water and communicate to all responders
- Consider using cordon control gateways at incidents involving flooding
- Ensure that personnel operate on the safe side of existing guarding near water or unstable surfaces
- Consider establishing an exclusion zone around any body of water or unstable surface where no guarding exists
- Manage hazards in the working environment that could lead to slips, trips and falls into bodies of water or unstable surfaces