



National
Operational
Guidance

Control measure

**Multi-agency working: Water rescue
and flooding**



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Developed and maintained by the NFCC



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Control measure knowledge

It is vital for the successful rescue of a person from water that agencies can work together, share situational awareness and agree a plan.

Request attendance of the police to manage the following:

- Co-ordination of search operations, carried out by police search advisors (PoISA)
- Police underwater search teams

The ambulance services Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) or Specialist Operations Response Team (SORT) may be able to provide an on and in water response to assist personnel when stabilising casualties prior to extrication and provide tactical advice.

Other agencies are likely to include:

- Swift water and flood rescue teams from other agencies
- Voluntary search teams and community assets such as mountain or lowland rescue teams
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), HM Coastguard (HMCG) rescue teams, land based and air sea rescue helicopters
- Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)
- Mines rescue
- Public technicians and specialists

Additional resources available from other agencies may include:

- Search dogs
- Drones
- Technical rope rescue teams
- Inland Waterways Rescue Association members

The police service is responsible for recovering bodies from the water. Any incident where a body is discovered should be treated as a crime scene and disturbance should be kept to a minimum.

For further information see National Operational Guidance: Performing rescues: [Search](#) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) [Flood Rescue Concept of Operations](#).

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Train and participate in exercises with anticipated multi-agency partners
- Maintain information regarding local volunteer and charitable groups
- Have procedures for multi-agency co-operation at incidents involving rescue from water

Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Establish communications with police search advisors (PoISA) and other agencies
- Co-locate, communicate and co-ordinate water searches with multi-agency partners