



National
Operational
Guidance

Control measure

Specialist resources



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Developed and maintained by the NFCC



Contents

Control measure - Specialist resources 3



Control measure - Specialist resources

Control measure knowledge

A variety of specialist resources may be required at an incident, either from within the fire and rescue service, external specialist resources or partner agencies.

Fire and rescue service specialist resources

When planning an incident strategy, fire and rescue services should consider the potential contribution of specialist personnel, not only for operational tasks, but also in improving safety and efficiency on the incident ground. These considerations should form part of the pre-planning stage when personnel are familiarising themselves with the risks at an incident.

Fire and rescue services should arrange and maintain specialist capabilities according to the identified risks within the area of the service. They should also be aware of the specialist resources available from neighbouring fire and rescue services, and consider establishing mutual aid arrangements or memoranda of understanding (MoUs). This can be for the shared use, procurement or availability of specialist resources.

Specialist fire and rescue service resources may include:

- Aerial fire appliances
- Water supply and management (including high volume pumps)
- Bulk foam
- Bulk dry powder
- Cutting extinguishers
- Drones (classified as a type of unmanned aircraft system by the Civil Aviation Authority)
- Marine firefighting
- Water rescue
- Flood response
- Wildfire firefighting
- Technical rescue (including USAR teams)
- Extended duration breathing apparatus (EDBA)
- Animal rescue
- Fire safety and investigation
- Hazardous materials incident response units
- National Resilience capabilities

Some of these resources may be accompanied by or only mobilised on the provision or guidance of a specialist adviser – See Specialist advice

External specialist resources

There is a wide range of external specialists who may be able to provide assistance at incidents. More extensive details are provided for specific types of incidents in other sections of National Operational Guidance, but include:

- Environmental specialists
- Search and rescue organisations
- Local authorities
- Police specialists
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
- Government departments responsible for the natural environment
- Hazardous materials companies
- Defence Fire and Rescue Service
- Military specialists
- Building engineers
- Utility providers
- Transport network specialists

Fire and rescue services should be aware of the external specialist assistance that may be required according to the identified risks within their area. Pre-planning and exercises may help to establish arrangements and assist with understanding the capabilities of the external specialist resources. This activity may also be a good opportunity to explain the incident command system to specialists who may attend an incident.

Partner agencies

The incident commander may also require specialist assistance from partner agencies, such as the police, ambulance service or environmental agencies.

Fire and rescue services should consider establishing memoranda of understanding (MoUs) where relevant, and participate in joint pre-planning and exercises to improve incident response.

Further information may be found in Incident command: Knowledge, skills and competence: [Organisation at an incident.](#)

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:



- Ensure relevant information for all available service specialist resources (including those resources used by neighbouring and partner agencies) is made available to all personnel
- Have arrangements with neighbouring fire and rescue services on the shared use, procurement or availability of specialist resources
- Ensure relevant personnel have a thorough knowledge of the capabilities of specialist resources to support selection of the appropriate resource for an incident
- Where beneficial, include recommended specialist resources in Site Specific Risk Information
- Ensure relevant personnel have an understanding of the National Resilience capabilities
- Maintain a directory of specialist resources for incidents
- Consider pre-planning and exercises with external specialist resources

Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Consider requesting specialist resources from own or neighbouring fire and rescue services, or partner agencies
- Consider requesting external specialist resources appropriate to the type, size and complexity of the incident