



HM Coastguard

MAJOR INCIDENT PLAN

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Distribution

This plan is available to MCA staff via OmS and to multi-agency partners via the Maritime and Coastguard Agency pages on Resilience Direct.

Integrity of the Document

Printed copies are discouraged as once printed it will not be considered a controlled document. Any necessary printed copies are the responsibility of the individual printing.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Glossary of Abbreviations and Terms	3
3. Definition of an Emergency and Major Incident	6
4. Major Incident Arrangements	8
4.1 Demarcation of Co-ordination Responsibilities:	8
4.2 UK Operational Zones:	9
4.3 Network Management:	10
4.4 National Contingency Plan:	11
4.5 Declaration and Reporting Lines:	12
4.6 Media Management:.....	13
4.7 Strategic and Tactical Arrangements – Incidents at Sea:.....	14
4.8 Strategic and Tactical Arrangements – Incidents on the Coast:.....	18
4.9 Major Incidents within the UKSRR - Aviation:	20
4.10 Operation WAYPOINT:.....	21
5. Training and Exercising	22
6. Business Continuity Arrangements	23
ANNEX 1 – Agency Responsibilities.....	24
ANNEX 2 – Command Responsibilities	32
ANNEX 3 – Communications.....	37

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's (MCA), and specifically HM Coastguard's, operational arrangements for dealing with a Search and Rescue Major Incident. The need for understanding of the risks that may lead to a Major Incident, the planning that ensures arrangements are put in place to deal effectively with it, and the training and exercising that ensure the organisation is prepared to deal with the incident, are of vital importance.
- 1.2 The objectives of this Major Incident Plan are:
- To ensure HMCG staff within the MCA understand the arrangements for responding to a Major Incident
 - To provide understanding to partner Emergency Services and other Civil Resilience partners of the MCA's arrangements for responding to a Major Incident
 - To ensure that effective coordination and cooperation is realised between responding emergency services, resilience groups and other agencies
 - To ensure an effective command structure is in place
 - To provide an understanding of the implementation of specialist response resources
 - To provide a foundation for Major Incident training and exercising
 - To aid the recovery phase towards a return to normality for the community and environment following a Major Incident
- 1.3 This Plan, together with other National and Local or Regional multi-agency documents, provides a framework which draws together all inter-agency emergency preparedness procedures, and identifies arrangements for the response to a Major Incident.
- 1.4 The MCA has an obligation as a Category 1 Responder under the [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#) to put in place a arrangements to plan for and respond to civil emergencies. It must ensure it can co-operate with other emergency services and agencies responding to an emergency in line with the full set of civil protection duties outlined in the Act.
- 1.5 Further relevant information related to the Act can be found on the [Emergency Preparedness](#) and [Emergency Response and Recovery](#) pages of the GOV.UK website.
- 1.6 HM Coastguard is unique in being the only single emergency response and coordination authority that covers the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. This means its response arrangements must meet the needs of all CCA mechanisms in all administrations, while remaining consistent in approach across the whole of the UK Search and Rescue Region (UKSRR).

2. Glossary of Abbreviations and Terms

AoR	Area of Responsibility
ARCC	Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
CAP 999	Helicopter Search and Rescue in the UK National Approval Guidance
CGOC	Coastguard Operations Centre
CCA	Civil Contingencies Act 2004
COAC	Coastal Operations Area Commander
CODC	Coastal Operations Divisional Commander
CPSO	Counter Pollution and Salvage Officer
CRO	Coastguard Rescue Officer
CRS	Coastguard Rescue Service
CRT	Coastguard Rescue Team
CTAC	Combined Tactical Air Cell
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfT	Department for Transport
DOD	Duty Operations Director
HF	High Frequency
HMCG	Her Majesty's Coastguard
IAMSAR	International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue
LGD	Lead Government Department
LRF	Local Resilience Forum (England and Wales)
LRP	Local Resilience Partnership (Scotland)
MAIB	Marine Accident Investigation Branch
MAIC	Multi Agency Information Cell
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MHCLG-RED	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government – Resilience and Emergencies Division

MF	Medium Frequency
MHWS	Mean High Water Springs
MOCtrl	Maritime Operations Controller
MOTL	Maritime Operations Team Leader
MRO	Mass Rescue Operation
CSG	Coastguard Strategic Group
CTG(s)	Coastguard Tactical Group(s)
NCP	National Contingency Plan
NILO	National Inter-agency Liaison Officer
NMIC	National Maritime Information Centre
NMOC	National Maritime Operations Centre
OIC	Officer In Charge
TCG	Tactical Coordination Group
TDA	Temporary Danger Area (Applies to airspace)
TETRA	Terrestrial Trunked Radio (Airwave)
TEZ	Temporary Exclusion Zone (Applies to Sea Area)
TSO	Training and Standards Officer
RRP	Regional Resilience Partnership (Scotland)
RRS	Remote Radio Site
SCOO	Senior Coastal Operations Officer
SCG	Strategic Coordination Group
SMC	Search Mission Coordinator
SMOO	Senior Maritime Operations Officer
SMS	Safety Management System
SOSREP	Secretary of State's Representative for Maritime Salvage and Intervention
UKEEZ	United Kingdom Exclusive Economic Zone
UKSRR	United Kingdom Search and Rescue Region
VHF	Very High Frequency

VOIP

Voice Over Internet Protocol

3. Definition of an Emergency and Major Incident

- 3.1 The Civil Contingencies Act defines an 'emergency' as *"an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare or to the environment in the United Kingdom, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the United Kingdom's security. This includes events occurring in territorial waters. The threat itself may emanate from outside the United Kingdom."*
- 3.2 Emergency Service organisations may have their own definition of a Major Incident, but most are aligned closely to that given under the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP), which defines a major incident as *"an event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one (or more) emergency responder agency"*.
- 3.3 There are various types of Major Incident:
- **Big Bang** – a serious transport accident, explosion, or series of smaller incidents
 - **Rising Tide** – such as a developing infectious disease epidemic / pandemic resulting in incapacity / staffing crisis, or flooding due to continuous rainfall
 - **Headline News** – public or media alarm about a personal threat from internal incidents – fire, breakdown of utilities, major equipment failure, flooding
 - **Mass Casualties** – including the potential for large passenger vessels requiring evacuation
 - **Pre-planned major events** – that require specialist planning – demonstrations, sports fixtures, concerts, air shows
- 3.4 More specifically, these incidents will require the implementation of special arrangements for:
- The rescue, triage, treatment and transportation of large numbers of casualties
 - The involvement either directly or indirectly, of large numbers of people
 - The handling of a large number of enquiries, likely to be generated from both the public and the news media
 - Large-scale combined resources and integrated management of two or more of the emergency services
 - Mobilisation and organisation of the emergency services and partner organisations to cater for threat of death, serious injury or displacement of a large number of people
- And for HM Coastguard, for example:
- The mobilisation of specialist resources such as Counter Pollution stockpiles
- 3.5 HM Coastguard identifies the following risk types as being potential major incidents:
- The search for, or rescue of, large numbers of people from (for example) a passenger ship, offshore installation, isolated area, or many small craft in distress simultaneously in a geographic region
 - The release, or potential release, of hazardous, noxious or polluting materials at sea or along the coast

- The effects of an emergency situation on MCA and/or its partner organisations' own staff, facilities or infrastructure which limits the ability to respond
- 3.6 A major incident may be declared by any organisation within a Resilience Forum that considers any of the criteria outlined above have been satisfied. A major incident for one organisation may not be a major incident for another. However, other agencies are expected to respond in support as appropriate. (See 4.5 for declarations within HM Coastguard)
- 3.7 Many incidents that HM Coastguard co-ordinates can include moderate to large numbers of persons affected. Whilst these incidents can be handled with HM Coastguard resources in the maritime environment, the impact on other emergency services once ashore, may require them to activate their major incident plan.¹
- 3.8 The importance of declaring a major incident and early notification to fellow Category 1 and 2 organisations cannot be understated. Doing so serves to inform those agencies that may be stretched in supporting such an incident and allows them to consider the impact upon their resources.

¹ Passenger Ferries carry up to 1500 persons, and cruise liners between 2500 and 8000 persons.

4. Major Incident Arrangements

4.1 Demarcation of Co-ordination Responsibilities:

- 4.1.1 The Coastguard functions, as outlined in [ANNEX 1 – Agency Responsibilities](#), are geographically restricted, depending on the type of incident and the scale of involvement of UK flagged vessels or UK persons.
- 4.1.2 For Search and Rescue, HM Coastguard will assume coordination responsibility for any incident within the UKSRR (excepting military incidents unless HM Coastguard is agreed as taking the lead for SAR operations). This is irrespective of the nationality of the vessels or aircraft in distress, or the nationality of the persons involved.
- 4.1.3 Outside the UKSRR, HM Coastguard will, on the receipt of information that indicates a vessel, aircraft or person is in distress, ensure that a suitable coordination authority has assumed coordination of the incident, and that suitable actions are being taken to resolve the situation. If this cannot be confirmed, then HM Coastguard will assume coordination of the incident and task appropriate assets as far as is practicable until the incident is resolved, or another appropriate SAR coordination authority assumes coordination.
- 4.1.4 Inside the UKEEZ, the responsibility for incidents involving pollution or disabled vessels rests with HM Coastguard's Counter Pollution and Salvage Officers (CPSOs) and, if necessary, the Secretary of State's Representative – (SOSREP) . Outside the UKEEZ, HM Coastguard's CPSOs and SOSREP will provide advice and assistance as far as is reasonably practicable given the limitations of resources and ability to intervene.
- 4.1.5 The [Strategic Overview of Search and Rescue in the UK and Northern Ireland](#) sets out the demarcation of Search and Rescue coordination responsibility between the Police and HM Coastguard. The demarcation line is Mean High-Water Springs (MHWS), whereby to seaward is HM Coastguard primacy, and landward is Police. By agreement, incidents occurring on the cliffs or shoreline (the littoral area) are normally coordinated by HM Coastguard.
- 4.1.6 The [Port Marine Safety Code](#) sets out the national standards for port marine safety and provides information about the statutory powers and duties of harbour authorities in the UK. While the responsibility for the safe management of ports and harbours and their associated facilities, berths and terminals rests with the relevant Port or Harbour Authority, the responsibility for Search and Rescue coordination within Port and Harbour waters belongs to HM Coastguard.
- 4.1.7 Incidents that involve acts of terrorism are coordinated by the Police, through the National Counter Terrorism Command (SO15). HM Coastguard will not assume coordination responsibility for any incident involving terrorist activity until the threat has been neutralised and the incident handed over to HM Coastguard by the Police.
- 4.1.8 Coordination of Search and Rescue at the boundaries of the UKSRR are subject to agreement with neighbouring SAR authorities as to which authority will take lead coordination. Normally this is agreed between Search Mission Coordinators (SMC) at the outset of the incident in line with agreed Memorandums of Understanding and international maritime conventions.
- 4.1.9 Assistance from neighbouring maritime SAR authorities may be requested for incidents within the UKSRR where the resources and capabilities of rescue assets controlled by the neighbouring SAR authority would materially assist in rescuing survivors or mitigating the potential effects of the incident on the safety to life or the environment.

4.2 UK Operational Zones:

- 4.2.1 HM Coastguard operate a National Network of coordination centres linked to a resilient, multiply-redundant ICT infrastructure. The National Network gives the ability for an operator at any single operations centre to coordinate missions located anywhere in the UKSRR.
- 4.2.2 The UKSRR is divided into 36 Zones. Each Zone has in the course of one year approximately the same SAR mission incident hours within its geographical limits. Figure 1 shows the delineation of Zones in the UKSRR.

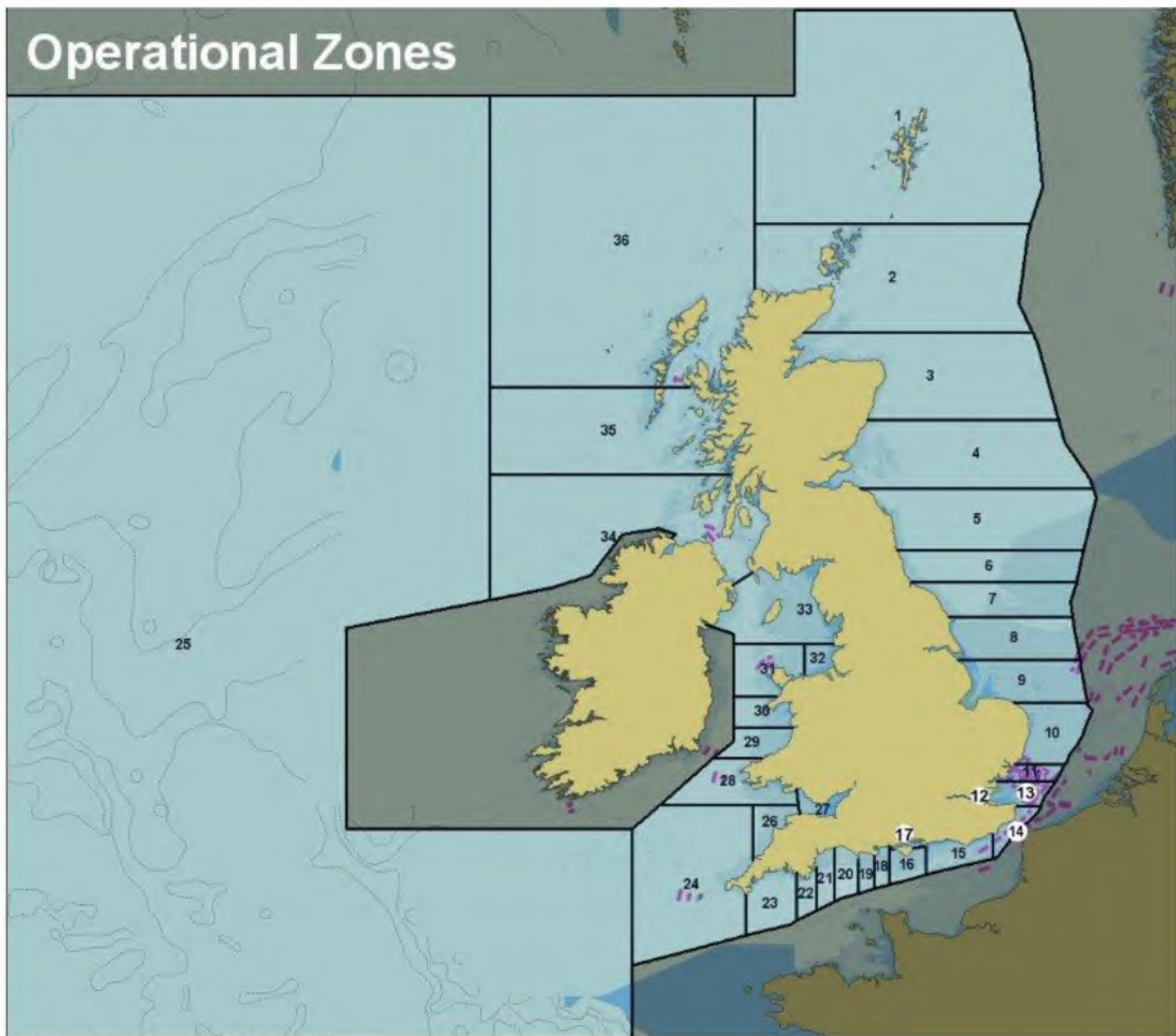


Figure 1 – the UKSRR Zones

4.3 Network Management:

- 4.3.1 The National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) at Fareham and 9 Coastguard Operations Centres (CGOCs) sited at strategic locations around the UK form the National Network. A single-manned operations desk is co-located with the Port of London Authority for coordination of SAR on the tidal Thames. They all operate a 24/7, 365 service.
- 4.3.2 The NMOC co-ordinates the distribution of workload and functions, with allocation of Areas of Responsibility (AoRs) decided for each coordination centre based on forecast risk, available staffing at each station, and planned events, training or exercise activity.
- 4.3.3 The NMOC is the only centre in the network that is staffed 24 hours a day by Maritime Operations Controllers, who provide tactical command of the entire network at night. At CGOCs, Maritime Operations Controllers operate daytime only, with up to two additional Controllers available. Figure 2 shows the Command and Control arrangements in HM Coastguard.

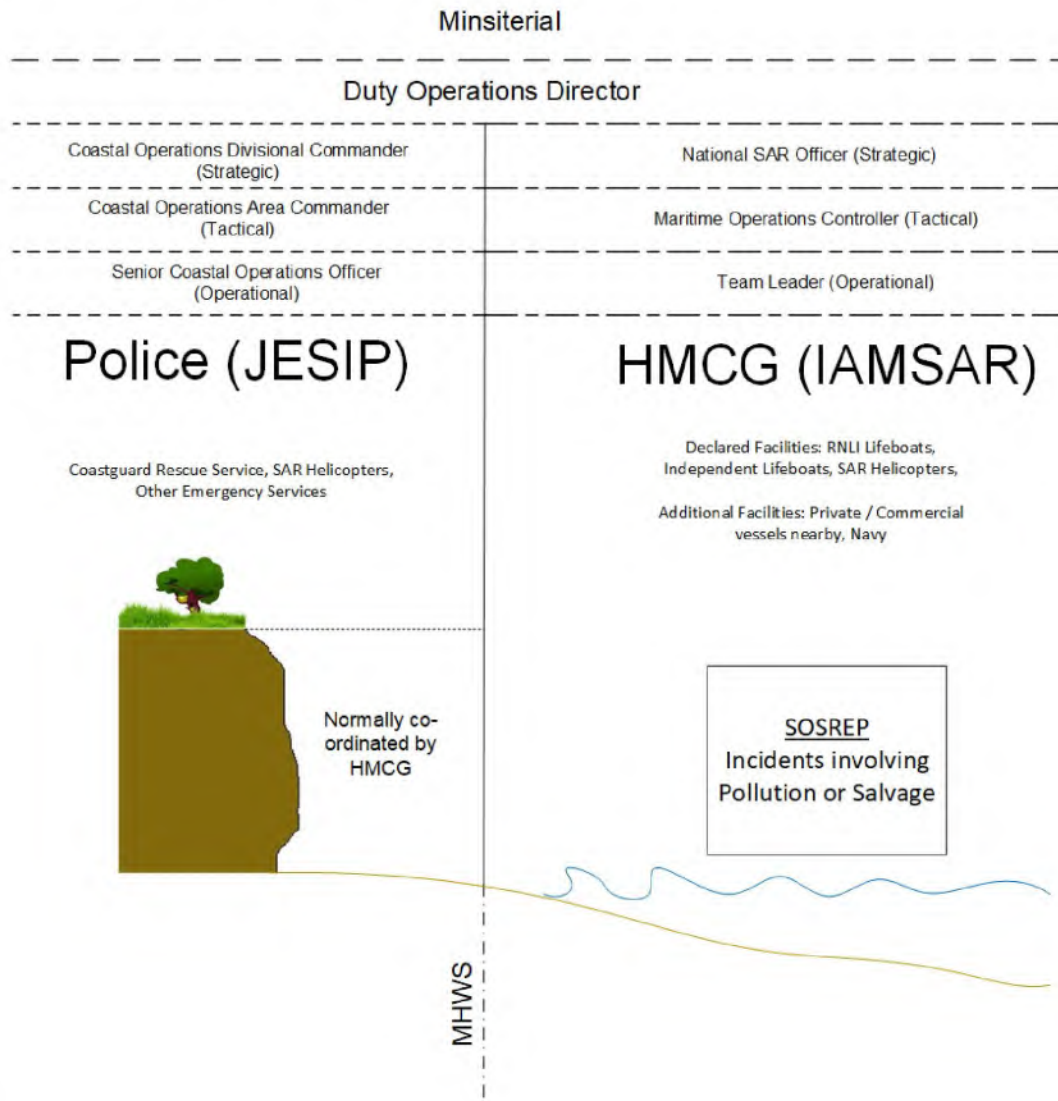


Figure 2 – Coastguard Command and Control

4.4 National Contingency Plan:

- 4.4.1 The [National Contingency Plan](#) (NCP) sets out how the UK will respond to instances of marine pollution.
- 4.4.2 The arrangements that are put in place for Major Incidents that occur under the 'Search and Rescue' and 'Accident and Disaster Response' Functions are equally applicable to the support of an incident that falls under the 'Counter Pollution and Salvage' Function and therefore the NCP.

4.5 Declaration and Reporting Lines:

- 4.5.1 The following officers may declare a major incident for the MCA²:
- Duty Operations Director
 - National SAR Officer
 - Maritime Operations Controller
 - Coastal Operations Divisional Commander
 - Coastal Operations Area Commander
 - Aeronautical Operations Commander
 - Aeronautical Operations Controller
 - Duty Counter Pollution and Salvage Officer
- 4.5.2 For a maritime Major Incident where HM Coastguard is the coordinating authority, strategic coordination will normally be led from the NMOC at Fareham. Cascade of alerting will be initiated by HM Coastguard, with support requested from Police authorities and Resilience Forums in cascading the alert as required. Liaison officers from other emergency services and Cat 1 responders may be requested to attend the NMOC, or a suitable Coastguard Coordination Centre, to provide a link to other emergency responders or authorities close to, or likely to be affected by, the emergency.
- 4.5.3 Where the Major Incident will involve a multi-agency response on land managed through the standing up of a Strategic and / or Tactical Coordination Group, the usual mechanisms for cascade alerting within Resilience Forums will be employed. This cascade alerting is normally undertaken by the Police using an LRF's cascade plan or, for Scotland, an LRP's or RRP's individual cascade plan. Similar arrangements exist in Northern Ireland. HM Coastguard will in any case contact Police, Ambulance, Fire, and Port and Harbour Authorities directly to alert them to a Major Incident at sea irrespective of any Resilience Forum cascade plan.
- 4.5.4 Alerting and Informing of other authorities with an interest or responsibility for the incident will be performed by HM Coastguard in the normal way, in line with standard incident type protocols. This includes organisations such as the Royal Navy, Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB), the General Lighthouse Authorities, UK Hydrographer etc.

² 'Declaring a Major Incident' in this context means alerting senior staff and / or other agencies. It does not preclude operations staff from reporting a Major Incident or potential Major Incident to supervising officers or duty officers.

4.6 Media Management:

- 4.6.1 A major incident occurring at sea outside of the port or harbour limits will have a MCA media lead until, and unless, it is agreed that another authority is better suited to take over.
- 4.6.2 A major incident occurring within a port or harbour limit will usually have a media lead from the port or harbour authority, unless otherwise agreed between the responding parties.
- 4.6.3 In the first instance, the duty press officer will be paged by HM Coastguard (if out of hours i.e. between 5pm – 9am overnight or weekends after 5pm on Friday) or the office called. A media statement will be drafted and approved for either proactive or reactive use.
- 4.6.4 The duty press officer will alert the Head of Communications or Senior Press Officer to discuss next steps. The Head of Communications and Senior Press Officer will decide the level of escalation of press office support, based on the scale of the incident and following discussions with the National SAR Officer.
- 4.6.5 For any major maritime incident where the MCA continues to be the media lead, all press releases about that incident will be issued from the Agency's Press Office.
- 4.6.6 Where public safety or other key messages need to be sent out by partner organisations during a Maritime Incident, these should first be cleared with the MCA's Communications Team to make sure they conform to the overall agreed Strategic Command lines being put out by the Coastguard Strategic Group at the NMOC.

4.7 Strategic and Tactical Arrangements – Incidents at Sea:

- 4.7.1 A Major Incident occurring at sea outside of Port or Harbour Authority limits (and seaward of the MHWS mark) will be coordinated by HM Coastguard. At the outset of a Major Incident, a Maritime Operations Controller will assume a Silver Command role of the incident³, supporting the SMC and their team in the delivery of SAR coordination and communication missions. The National SAR Officer will assume a Gold Command role from the NMOC at Fareham.
- 4.7.2 Where the Major Incident occurs within Port or Harbour Authority limits, HM Coastguard will coordinate Search and Rescue operations. It would normally be the Port or Harbour Authority who would lead the response aimed at mitigating further loss or damage to property, environment and operating efficiency of the Port.
- 4.7.3 If the nature of the Major Incident is such that it requires support of national resources to tackle pollution and / or risk of damage to property or the environment, then the arrangements as set out in the [National Contingency Plan](#) apply. The NCP may be run alongside any response arrangements put in place to deal with the SAR phase of a maritime emergency.
- 4.7.4 The National Maritime Operations Centre at Fareham will normally be the location where a Coastguard Strategic Group (CSG) will form to manage a major maritime emergency anywhere in the UKSRR. The Strategic Command Room at the NMOC will be used to host the CSG. Figure 3 shows the likely structure of a Coastguard Strategic Group.

³ The Duty Controller may temporarily assume Strategic Command responsibilities until relieved by the National SAR Officer on their arrival at the NMOC.

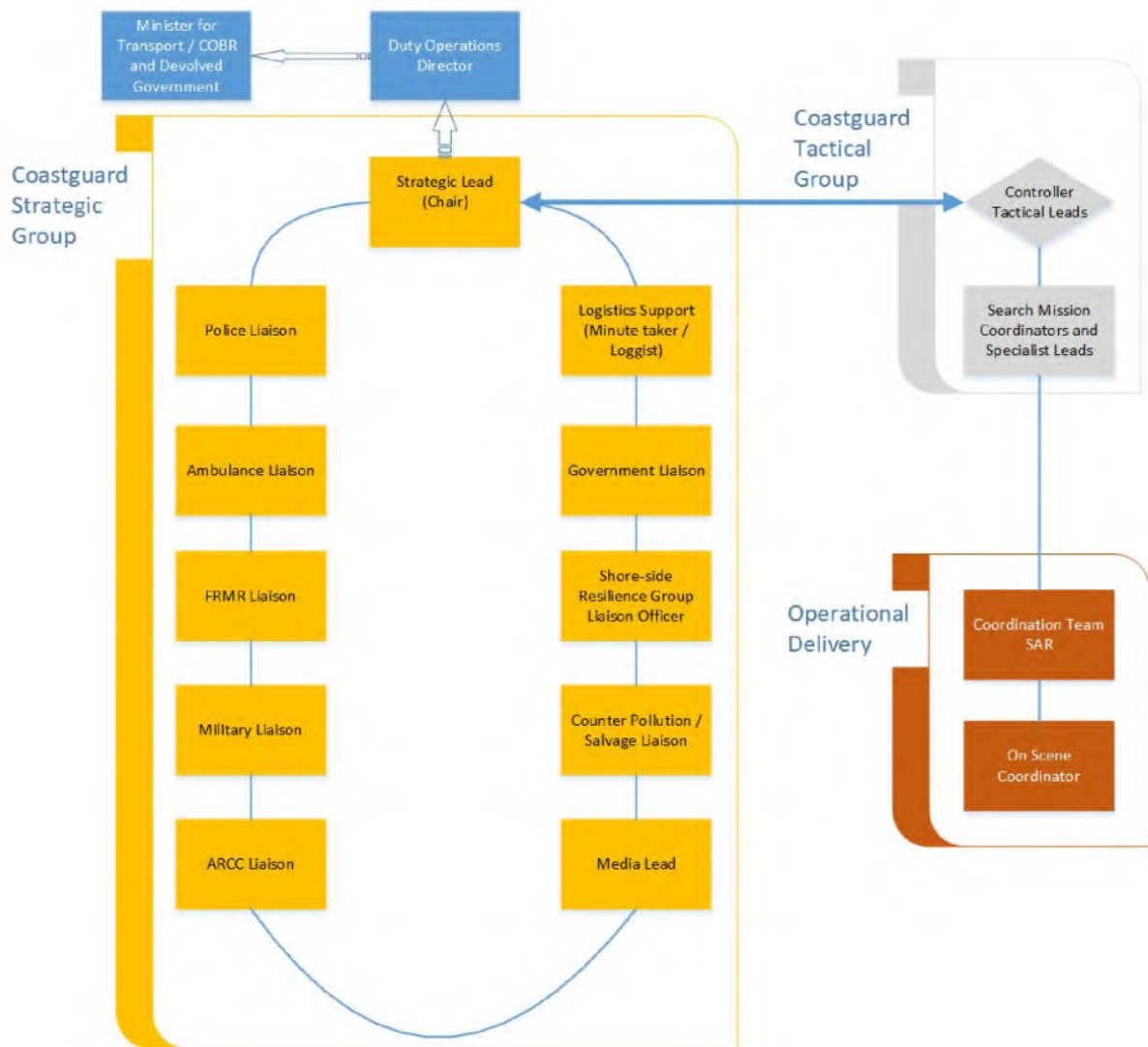


Figure 3 – An example of CSG Membership

4.7.5 Membership of the Coastguard Strategic Group will depend on circumstances but is likely to require representation from organisations that are either involved in or will require information about the maritime response to assist planning for the shore-side response. Typically core members will be:

- Category 1 responders, as defined by Civil Contingencies Act (2004).

Other agencies may be invited to participate, in particular:

- Those 'as required by the incident' e.g. Military liaison, DEFRA, Industry, vessel operators, etc.
- Category 2 responders as necessary e.g. Utilities, Transport companies

MHCLG-RED will endeavour to send a representative as necessary to provide the link between the Coastguard Strategic Group and Sub-National / Central Government.

Core members should be:

- **National SAR Officer (Strategic Command)** The National SAR Officer will chair the group, unless this role is taken by the Duty Operations Director or other suitable Coastguard officer
- **Logistics Support** This will comprise of a trained loggist and logistical support, managing the decision log, providing situation updates, information sharing and clarification to CSG members
- **Government Liaison** Where the response is likely to involve more than one CCA resilience group, a government liaison officer will be requested to provide input to those groups. MHCLG-RED, or the devolved administration equivalent, along with HMCG will jointly prioritise resource in response to the incident(s)
- **Shore-side Resilience Group Liaison Officer** This would normally be a Coastal Operations officer who will provide a link to the coastguard operations response undertaken on the landing point or shore-line
- **Counter Pollution / Salvage Advice Liaison** This function would be provided by a MCA CPSO and / or Surveyor, and provide the CSG with advice on matters relating to casualty vessel stability and counter pollution that may affect or hinder rescue operations
- **Media Lead** This is the MCA media duty officer who will provide coordination of press related activity
- **ARCC Liaison** This will comprise an air operations officer who will provide input relating to the deployment of SAR helicopters and foreign / military air support
- **Military Liaison (Joint Services)** If required, a military liaison will be requested to provide a link between the CSG and any military response involving surface vessels, aircraft or land-based personnel
- **Police, Ambulance, FRMR, Local and Health Authority Liaison Officers** These liaison officers may be required to provide a link to their own organisations as part of the overall response. This may relate to interventions taking place at sea, or for assessing the shore-side requirements for casualty reception and care, and for alongside fire-fighting.

4.7.7 Some of the above liaison officers may be remote from the NMOC and may therefore utilise conference call or Microsoft Teams to facilitate meetings. In this case, relevant details will be supplied by HM Coastguard. It may be practical for remotely located liaison officers to attend their nearest CGOC, where video conferencing facilities (Microsoft Teams) can be utilised for meeting and briefing purposes. HM Coastguard will identify if this is an option for remote liaison officers.

4.7.8 Liaison officers will be requested either directly via their national coordinating contact points (e.g. NMIC, Northwood, MHCLG-RED etc.) or through local Police Force leads for the particular Resilience Forum or Partnership affected by the incident.

4.7.9 The CSG will be held as soon as practically possible after declaration of a Major Incident and reconvened at regular intervals as determined by the Chair.

4.7.10 Resilience Forums or Partnerships may have local plans that set out how authorities will respond to a maritime Major Incident impacting the coastline or within Port or Harbour Authority limits. In this case, the MCA, through its Counter Pollution and

Salvage personnel or HM Coastguard Operations, will engage with the shore-side Strategic Group(s) in line with the NCP, or as described in Section 4.8.

- 4.7.11 The National SAR Officer will assume Strategic Command on declaration of a Major Incident. Normally located at the NMOC in Fareham, they are responsible for ensuring that sufficient resource has been allocated to the incident from within the National Network and sets the strategic aim(s) to which the Controller and SMC will work.
- 4.7.12 Tactical command is held at Maritime Operations Controller level. When a Major Incident is declared, the Maritime Operations Controller responsible for the Zone in which the incident is located will take tactical command. The Controller will work closely with the Search Mission Coordinator(s) to deliver an effective SAR response and will be the primary link to the chair of the CSG at the NMOC.
- 4.7.13 The Tactical Controller may co-opt other SMCs and mission specialists to form Coastguard Tactical Groups to deliver specific aspects of the mission, such as;
- Devising a communications plan
 - Identifying additional rescue resources on behalf of the SMC
 - Planning vessel transit routes in and out of the incident location
 - Assessing the impact of forecast weather or tides on search tactics, and
 - Preparing the casualty tote (accounting) record.

More detail is held in the Mass Rescue Operations Framework.

- 4.7.14 The Search Mission Coordinator is responsible along with their team, for the delivery of Search and Rescue efforts with respect to the incident scene.
- 4.7.15 The Duty Operations Director (DOD) provides support to the National SAR Officer in way of resources and provides assurance that appropriate actions are being taken, that Coastguard Operations are sufficiently resourced and supported, and is the link between the MCA and ministerial oversight. The DOD may chair the CSG if it is considered appropriate.
- 4.7.16 A Logistics Support Team will maintain the information boards (ViSION incident log feed, AIS feed or mapping as required) in the Strategic Planning Room and will create and manage the incident response page on Resilience Direct, gather and collate incoming information and share minutes and situation reports with other responding agencies / authorities via Resilience Direct. The Logistics Support Team will also include the CSG Decision Loggist and Minute-taker.
- 4.7.17 **WiFi Access:** for non-government representatives who do not have access to WIFI through GovWifi, WiFi has been established for use during Major Incident response only. Details of the Wifi name and password will be provided on arrival at the NMOC.

4.8 Strategic and Tactical Arrangements – Incidents on the Coast:

- 4.8.1 This section explains how HM Coastguard will engage with Tactical and Strategic Coordinating groups in response to a Major Incident on land. Details on the arrangements, membership, and operating structure of the various Resilience Forums and Partnerships in the UK can be found on the GOV.UK website [here](#).
- 4.8.2 Engagement with the various Tactical or Strategic groups and other responding agencies will be undertaken in line with [JESIP](#).
- 4.8.3 A Major Incident that develops on land (landward of the MHWS mark) is normally coordinated by the Police. Specifically, the area from the MHWS mark landward that is contained within the declared Major Incident area will be coordinated by the Police (unless another, more suitable authority has been identified), irrespective of the arrangements or normal operating practices concerning primacy of incidents on the cliffs, shoreline or littoral area as set out in the [Strategic Overview of Search and Rescue in the UK and Northern Ireland](#). This ensures that coordination of effort, deployment and tasking of combined resources, and clarity of the operational picture within the Major Incident area is retained under one Lead.
- 4.8.4 The National SAR Officer will retain Strategic Control of all Coastguard resources in the UKSRR from a national perspective. As the National SAR Officer is responsible and accountable for ensuring that HM Coastguard are ready to respond to any incident in the UKSRR and environs as stated in the 1925 Coastguard Act, and have access to the national picture, they will have understanding of the current and forecast risk that may result in the deployment of Coastguard resources.
- 4.8.5 A Coastal Operations Divisional Commander will normally represent at SCG (or its equivalent) for HM Coastguard. As Strategic level representative they will have authority to commit resources and will be supported by Coastal Operations Technical and Resource Advisors from Headquarters and by the Resilience Team. The Divisional Commanders will need to consider the following before attendance at multi-agency strategic meetings:
- Likely requirement for Coastguard technical capabilities; air assets, 4x4 vehicles, flood response team, CRTs and associated equipment
 - Agree which resources within the Division are available to the Divisional Commander for deployment
 - Identify what extra resources might be required from outside the affected area or coastal Division
- 4.8.6 HM Coastguard may have to service the requirements of numerous SCGs (e.g. a tidal surge event) that may impact upon a large geographical area. Should the Coastal Divisional Commander be unable to service all SCG commitments, a Coastal Officer, suitably qualified and experienced to represent HM Coastguard at the Strategic level, will, where possible, attend an SCG physically or by other remote call facility. For such incidents, the Coastal Officer will maintain close liaison with the Duty Controller to ensure clarity of mission and resource tasking.
- 4.8.7 A Coastal Operations Area Commander or Senior Coastal Operations Officer from the local area will represent HM Coastguard at a TCG if required. Should a forward control point be declared then, another Coastal Officer will attend and take the role of HM Coastguard Incident Commander. An Officer-In-Charge (OIC) will lead the Coastguard Rescue Team's operational response working to the Incident Commander's plan.

- 4.8.8 Any of the command grade officers (i.e. full time staff) may form part of a Multi-Agency Information Cell (MAIC) when circumstances require such an arrangement to be formed. Further information on the MAIC is available on the [JESIP](#) website.

4.9 Major Incidents within the UKSRR - Aviation:

- 4.9.1 The Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre will respond to strategic requests for SAR helicopter support for a Major Incident at sea or inland within the UKSRR in line with its own processes and procedures. Although the ARCC is located at the NMOC in Fareham, and is a function undertaken by HM Coastguard, requests for air support from the ARCC are assessed against set criteria and no single service, agency or authority is given priority to tasking.

- 4.9.2 During a major incident, the ARCC may be involved in a Combined Tactical Air Cell (CTAC). Details of this are contained in the ARCC's own Major Incident Plan.

4.10 Operation WAYPOINT:

- 4.10.1 Operation WAYPOINT is designed to provide early warning and information relating to a potential Mass Casualty incident in UK waters that is likely to involve large numbers of displaced, injured and / or deceased persons of various nationalities being landed at a port or other Landing Point (as circumstances permit) on the coast of the UK or Northern Ireland.
- 4.10.2 Operation WAYPOINT is designed to link into a Resilience Group's Community Risk Register and provides key information required by shore-side Tactical or Strategic Groups in the early stages of an incident as to the likely scale of preparation and response needed to meet the requirements of a maritime major incident that moves shore-side. Operation WAYPOINT also incorporates a decision tool for selection of casualty landing sites for use in a maritime emergency involving Mass Rescue Operations.
- 4.10.3 It is recommended that Resilience Groups that are planning for maritime emergencies within their area include in their local plans a means of dealing with significant numbers of persons being landed ashore from such an incident. A document, titled 'Maritime Mass Rescue Operations – Landing Point Guidance' is provided to assist resilience planning groups in identifying and planning for MRO events arising from a maritime emergency. This guidance can be found in the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's planning pages on Resilience Direct.
- 4.10.4 A template for assessment of Landing Points for use in a maritime Mass Rescue Operation is provided for the use of Resilience Group planning purposes. Guidance on how this template can be utilised is available from HM Coastguard's Resilience Lead by contacting resilience@mcga.gov.uk

5. Training and Exercising

- 5.1 The MCA regularly tests its capabilities by participating and leading exercises in relation to maritime incidents. This involves practicing international and national response arrangements and the National Contingency Plan.
- 5.2 In line with requirements as set out in the Civil Contingency Act 2004, HM Coastguard will undertake training and exercising with LRF / RRP groups with the following aims:
- Increasing understanding of HM Coastguard's capabilities with LRF / RRP partners
 - Embedding JESIP in multi-agency response
 - Providing assurance that Plans and Procedures are effective and inform revisions
 - Improve capability and joint working practices with other emergency response authorities
- 5.3 HM Coastguard will plan, lead and deliver exercises to the Civil Resilience community that facilitate the practice of arrangements for dealing with maritime emergencies that may require the implementation of an LRF / RRP response.

6. Business Continuity Arrangements

- 6.1 A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is in place for HM Coastguard that considers the likely systems and people failures that might affect the Network, and which puts in place mitigation and recovery actions. The BCP complies with the requirement of the CCA 2004 to have in place plans that ensure the MCA can continue to exercise its functions in the event of an emergency so far as is reasonably practicable. The Coastguard BCP is one of a number of BCP plans that ensure continuity of business across the whole of the MCA's functions. BCP arrangements are tested regularly through table-top and live exercises.

ANNEX 1 – Agency Responsibilities

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

1. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is an executive agency of the Department for Transport (DfT). The Agency is centrally funded by the DfT and has a remit that covers Maritime Legislation and Response in relation to the Coastguard functions for the entire United Kingdom Search and Rescue Region (UKSRR) and, for counter pollution, the United Kingdom Exclusive Economic Zone (UKEEZ).
2. The Agency is responsible for:
 - The safety of persons in distress at sea and on the shoreline
 - The safety of all seafarers on UK flagged vessels
 - Ensuring all equipment and Safety Management Systems on UK vessels are fit for purpose
 - Ensuring all seafarers on UK vessels have correct documentation
 - The environmental safety of the UK coast and its waters
3. In the UK, some coastguard functions are wholly or partly delivered by other Agencies. These functions, and their primary lead agencies, are given below:

Functions led by the MCA:

- Maritime Search and Rescue
- Maritime Safety
- Counter Pollution at sea
- Vessel Traffic Monitoring
- Accident and Disaster Response at sea and on the shoreline.

Functions led by another Agency, but which have MCA support:

- Maritime Security (Department for Transport)
- Customs and Border Control (Border Force)
- Law Enforcement (Police)
- Fisheries Control (Marine Management Organisation)

4. The map shown in **Figure A1** describes the UKSRR (Maritime and Aeronautical) in context with the location of the UK Maritime Coordination Centres and foreign SAR authority borders

UK Region for Maritime, Aeronautical and Land Search and Rescue

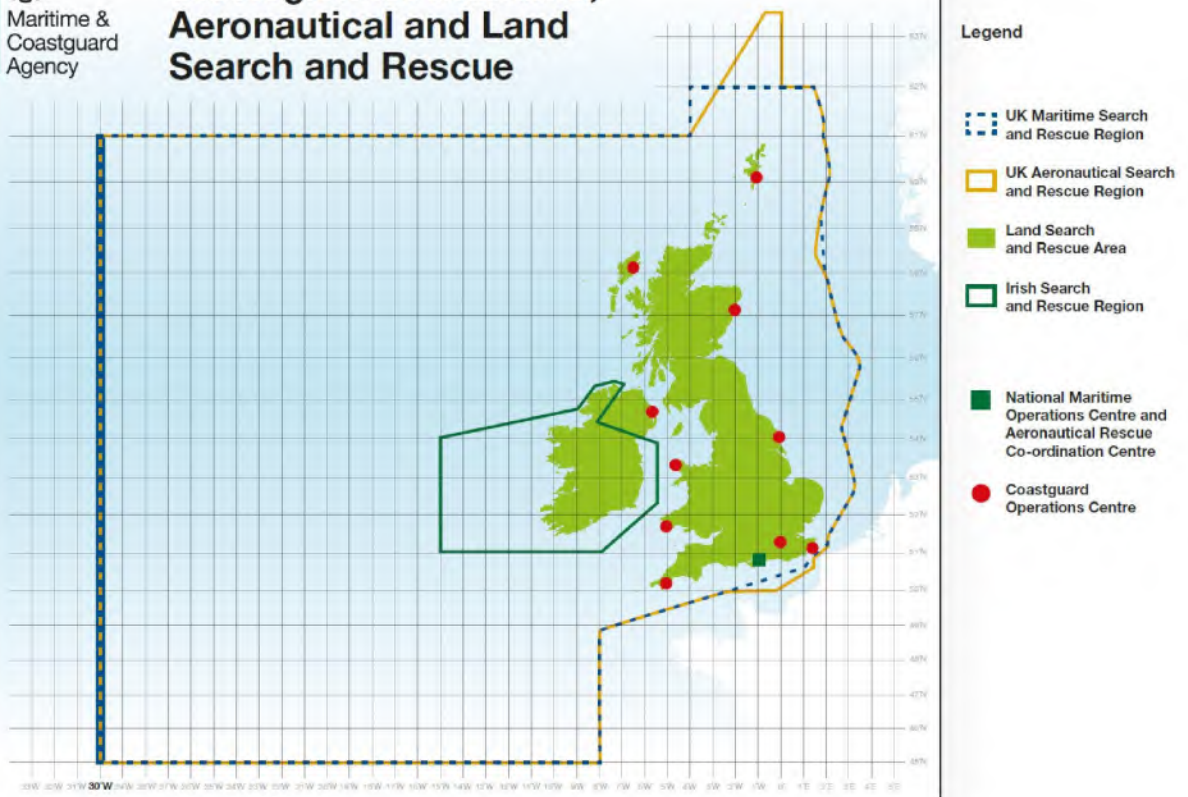


Figure A1 – the UKSRR

5. The United Kingdom Exclusive Economic Zone, for which the MCA has responsibility for maritime counter pollution response, is shown in **Figure A2**.

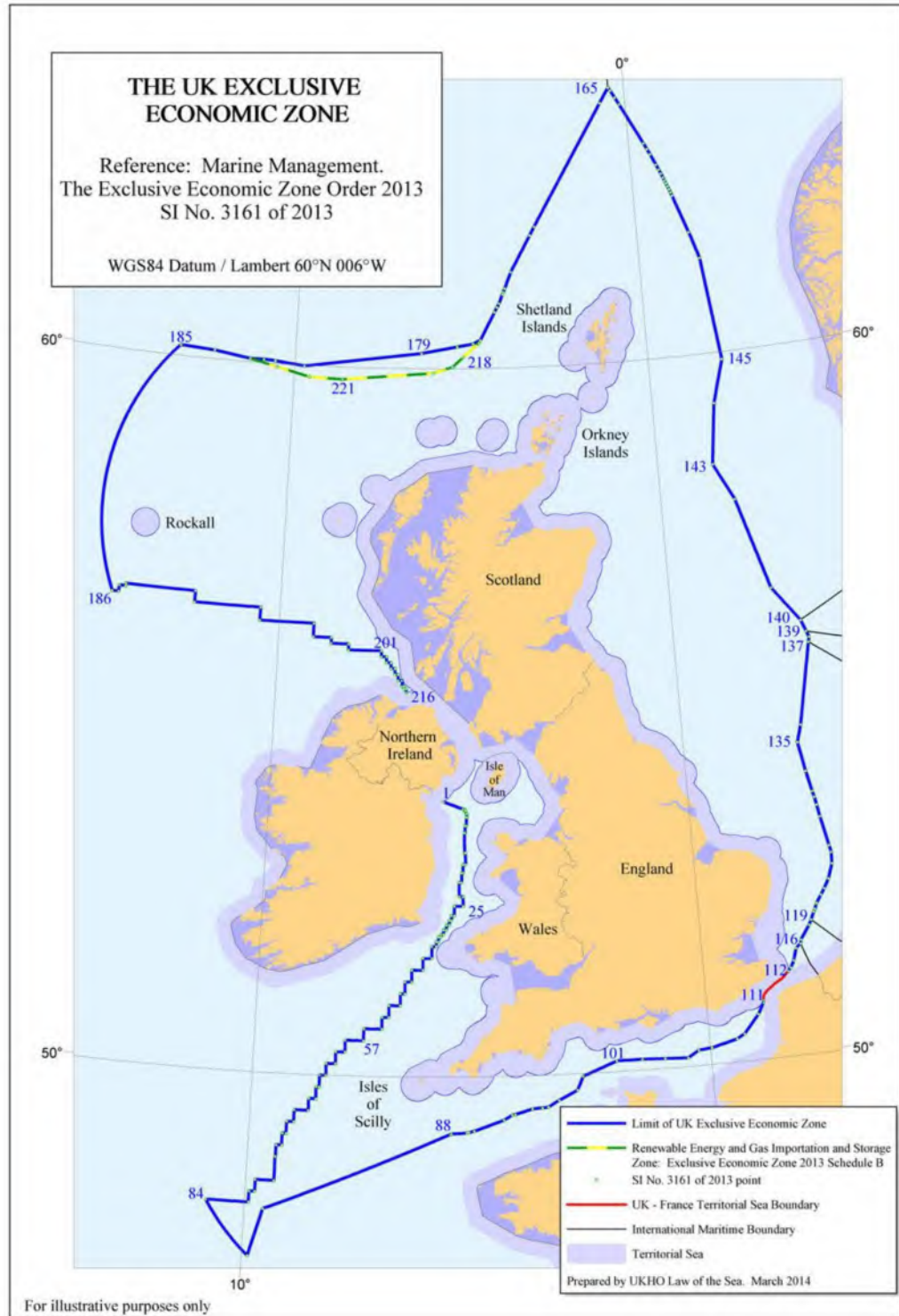


Figure A2 – the UKEEZ

HM Coastguard

Maritime Operations:

6. Within the UK Government, the Department for Transport has overall responsibility for the establishment, operation and maintenance of an adequate and effective civil maritime and civil aeronautical search and rescue service. For maritime SAR, the Coastguard Act 1925 has placed a statutory duty upon HM Coastguard to carry out those duties and any other duties as determined by the Secretary of State for Transport. The most important of those 'determinations' was laid down before Parliament in 1992 and stated that:

"HM Coastguard is responsible for the initiation and coordination of civil maritime search and rescue within the UK search and rescue region. This includes the mobilisation, organisation and tasking of adequate resources to respond to persons either in distress at sea, or to persons at risk of injury or death on the cliffs or shoreline of the UK."
7. The UK organisation for civil maritime and civil aviation search and rescue is derived from the UK Government's adherence to the Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) (1974), the Maritime Search and Rescue Convention (1979) and the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago 1944) (Annex 12).
8. The responsibility for the co-ordination of land-based and inland waters SAR rests with the Police Service and is derived from their duty to protect life and property. The Police Service has delegated this co-ordination responsibility to the DfT's Maritime and Coastguard Agency for the following inland waters – Lochs Ness, Oich and Lochy, Loughs Neagh and Erne, Upper River Clyde, Windermere, Coniston Water, Ullswater and Derwent Water, River Severn to Gloucester, Norfolk and Suffolk Broads and River Thames to Teddington.
9. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency has a number of agreements internationally to support foreign governments and departments on issues such as Search and Rescue, Counter Pollution and Salvage.
10. HM Coastguard has a network of Coastguard Operations Centres (CGOCs) strategically located around the UK. The National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) based in Fareham is the central command centre for the network of Operations Centres.
11. Coastguard Operations Centres in the UK are linked through HM Coastguard's National Network, which provides operational resilience and allows mutual support between teams and distribution of tasks through its Concept of Operations and Mission Conduct process. The UKSRR is divided into 36 Zones (with other Zones used to denote specific functions or areas outside the UKSRR), which form the basis of Areas of Responsibility (Zone groups) for specific teams within the Network, and a means of managing and facilitating communication and coordination by the Network. **Figure A3** shows the division of the UKSRR into Zones.
12. Information on what capabilities are delivered by Coastguard Operations can be found in the 'HM Coastguard Maritime Response Capability' document available on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency file store on Resilience Direct.

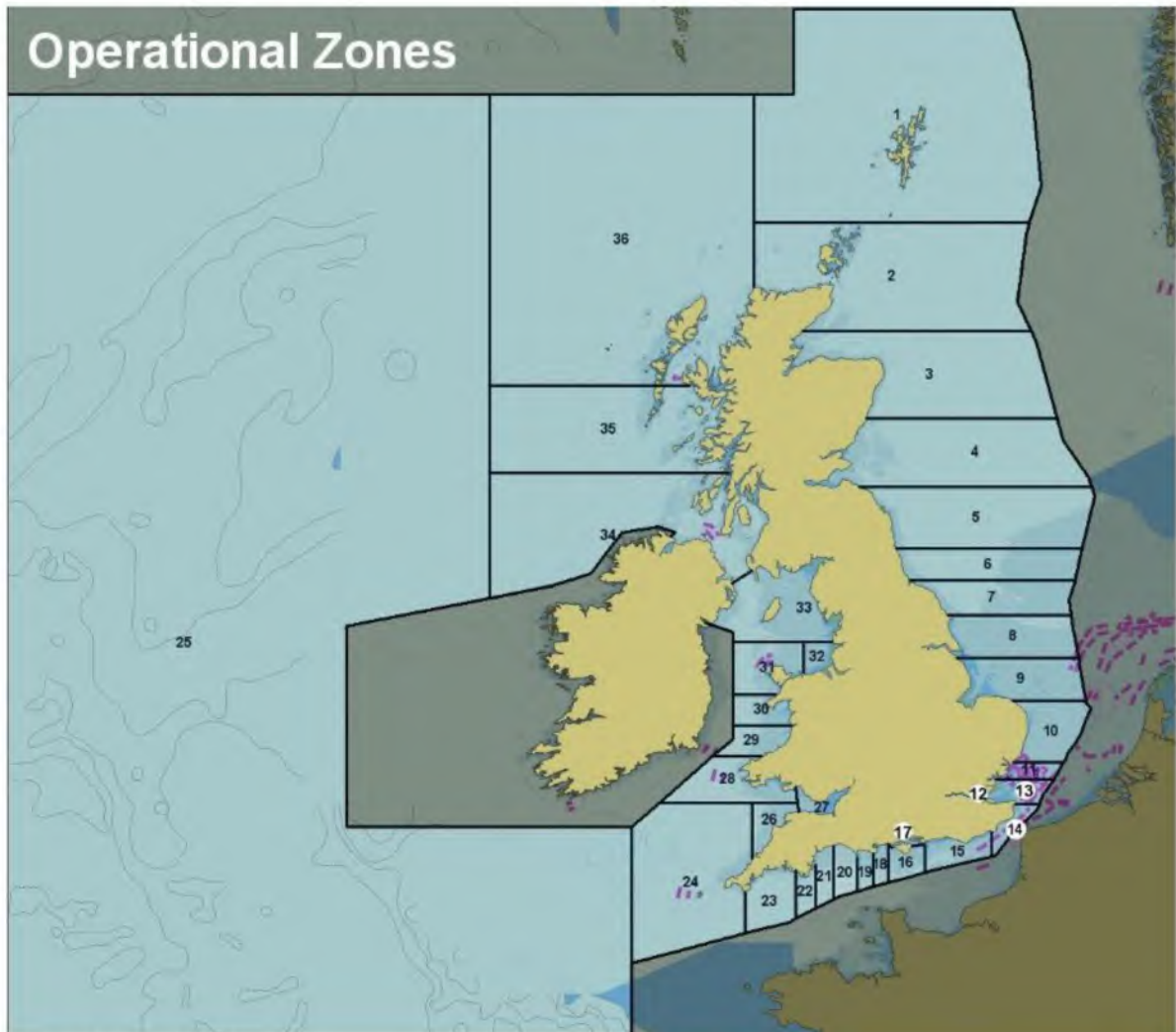


Figure A3 – UKSRR Zones

Coastal Operations:

13. To fulfil its responsibility under the 1925 Act, HMCG provides a number of Coastguard Rescue Teams for Coastal SAR. These teams operate within the littoral area of the Coastline and certain designated inland waterways.
14. HM Coastguard operates in the region of 345 Coastguard Rescue Teams (CRT) around the United Kingdom. These Teams are comprised of up to 12 Coastguard Rescue Officers (CRO), which are trained voluntary members of the Coastguard Rescue Service (CRS). The CRTs are trained in a number of technical rescue disciplines including missing person search, water rescue, rope rescue and mud rescue.
15. Information on what capabilities are delivered by Coastal Operations can be found in the 'HM Coastguard Maritime Response Capability' document available on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency file store on Resilience Direct.

16. The Coastguard Rescue Service is managed by full-time Coastal Officers, with the UK coastline and Estuarial waters administratively divided into Divisions and Areas. **Figure A4** shows the Coastal administrative boundaries.



Figure A4 – Coastal Administrative Boundaries

Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre:

17. The Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) operates within the National Maritime Operations Centre at Fareham. The Function is delivered by HM Coastguard, but the service the ARCC provides is independent from maritime or coastal operations as it considers all requests for SAR helicopter support on a case by case basis. Within the UK, it is the four statutory emergency services and other category 1 responders under the CCA that can request support from the ARCC.
18. Information on what capabilities are delivered by the ARCC can be found in the 'HM Coastguard Maritime Response Capability' document available on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency file store on Resilience Direct.
19. For the sake of clarity, the following activities are specifically out of scope:
 - Tasking of assets that are not assigned to the ARCC by agreement
 - Missions that do not fit the criteria of a SAR operations flight
 - Providing a licensed flight information service or any service that could be interpreted as requiring licensing by the Civil Aviation Authority

Counter Pollution and SOSREP:

20. The Counter Pollution Branch is responsible for dealing with pollution at sea and assists local authorities with shoreline clean-up.
21. After saving human life, the key purpose of responding to a maritime incident is to protect human health, and the marine and terrestrial environment. A range of national and local agencies and authorities, some of which have more specific statutory duties than others, undertake the response to incidents that threaten to pollute the seas around the UK.
22. The Lead Government Departments (LGD) for counter pollution preparedness, regulation and response are Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Previously DECC) for offshore installations and Department for Transport (DfT) for shipping. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency, as an executive agency of DfT, is designated as the United Kingdom Competent Authority for counter pollution response, and is the custodian of the [National Contingency Plan](#). The NCP is designed as an overview supported by a sign posted library of information and is underpinned by other multi-agency plans.
23. Co-located with the MCA is the Secretary of State's Representative for Maritime Salvage and Intervention (SOSREP). For any maritime incident relating to safety or pollution within UK Waters, SOSREP may exercise the Maritime Intervention Powers and issue Safety Directions in accordance with Schedule 3A of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 (as amended by the Marine Safety Act 2003). For pollution related maritime incidents, SOSREP may use the Intervention Powers within the UK EEZ in relation to shipping in accordance with Schedule 3A of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. For pollution incidents from offshore oil and gas

activities, SOSREP is enabled to exercise the same powers within the UK Continental Shelf (UKCZ) in accordance with the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 (as amended by the The Offshore Installations (Emergency Pollution Control) Regulations 2002).

UKSAR Strategic Overview:

24. The responsibilities and capabilities of other Government Agencies and Departments, as well as the full scope of responsibility for all emergency services and responders, is provided in the [Strategic Overview of Search and Rescue in the UK and Northern Ireland](#) document.

ANNEX 2 – Command Responsibilities

Operational Command (Bronze)

Maritime:

1. Operational Command in delivery of search missions within the marine environment is held with the Senior Maritime Operations Officer acting in their capacity as Search Mission Coordinator (SMC) for a particular incident. The definition of a SMC under Vol 1 of IAMSAR is 'The SMC is the person in charge of a SAR Operation until a rescue has been effected or until it has become apparent that further efforts would be of no avail'.
2. In delivery of their duties, the SMC may call upon any declared or additional facility (i.e. rescue assets which operate to a declared standard, and any asset that may be available at the time) to effect a rescue, and has the authority to accept or reject any suggestions made during the operation. An SMC will also plan (or agree) searches based on IAMSAR methodology for targets in the water.
3. In normal circumstances (i.e. non-major incident work), the SMC will also coordinate the search and rescue effort on the cliffs or littoral area where a person is in difficulty or distress. Should a Coastal Officer be required to attend they may adopt the Incident Commander role taking on scene command of the incident.



Senior Maritime Operations Officer

Coastal:

4. Operational Command in delivery of SAR missions undertaken by the Coastguard Rescue Service (CRS) is held at two levels. Each volunteer Coastguard Rescue team (CRT) has at least one qualified Officer In Charge (OIC), who will control the delivery of their teams effort in relation to the given Mission.



Station Officer



Deputy SO



Volunteer CRO



OIC Tabard

5. A Senior Coastal Operation Officer (SCOO) is a full-time coastguard officer trained to a high technical standard and is responsible for the training and management of a number of CRTs. Where a SCOO attends an incident, they may choose to assume the role of OIC. Where an incident involves a multi-agency response, the SCOO may assume the role of Incident Commander, and coordinate effort between the responding agencies at the scene of the incident.



Senior Coastal Operations Officer (Coastal) / Team Leader (Maritime)



Incident Commander Tabard

Tactical Command (Silver)

Maritime:

6. A Maritime Operations Controller is a Tactical level officer who oversees a number of teams within the National Network. The Controller's role is to provide oversight of the delivery of SAR missions, provide direction and support to the Team Leader, and identify and mitigate any pressures on their given Area of Responsibility (Zone groupings) by adjusting the focus of effort of their teams.
7. Depending on the forecast Risk (based on season, time of day, forecast events etc.) a Maritime Operations Controller may have tactical responsibility for as much as half the UKSRR. In the event of a Major Incident occurring, a Maritime Operations Controller will assume overall tactical command, with their Area of Responsibility being adjusted to allow them to focus on that incident.

Coastal:

8. A Coastal Operations Area Commander (COAC) is a Tactical level officer who is responsible for the management of a number of SCOOs within their Area, and for delivering engagement and liaison between HMCG and other emergency services. A COAC may attend an incident where they would normally assume the role of Incident Commander.



Maritime Operations Controller and Coastal Operations Area Commander

Strategic Level (Gold)

Maritime:

9. The National SAR Officer has overall Strategic Command of the National Network for the entire UKSRR. They are responsible for ensuring the delivery of SAR and other Functions for their period of duty and have ultimate authority over deployment of the Network in delivery of its missions. During Major Incidents, the National SAR Officer provides Strategic direction to the Controllers and decides the priority of effort dependant on current and forecast risks.

Coastal:

10. A Coastal Divisional Operations Commander (CODC) is responsible for managing a number of coastal Areas and their associated COACs, and for coordinating engagement and liaison between HM Coastguard and other emergency services, Resilience Groups, or Partnerships within their Division.



National SAR Officer and Divisional Commander

Duty Operations Director (DOD)

11. The Duty Operations Director (DOD) at the MCA is a senior staff member (either Head of Function or Director level) who provides the bridge between Operations and Ministerial level engagement. Their function is to provide assurance that appropriate actions have been taken, and that sufficient resource is made available from other departments or agencies where required.
12. During Major Incidents, the DOD provides the link into COBR (when necessary) and will brief ministers on ongoing incidents in support of the National SAR Officer.

Duty Counter Pollution and Salvage Officer (DCPSO)

13. The Duty Counter Pollution and Salvage Officer (DCPSO) is the duty officer within the MCA's Counter Pollution Branch who has responsibility for ensuring that suitable actions are taken with regards to incidents involving vessels and other sources of marine pollution that may threaten or actively impact on property, health or the marine environment. This includes material lost overboard in the form of cargo (dry, chemical or liquid) as a result of wreck or severe weather and provide advice and support to SOSREP for the removal of wreck, flotsam or jetsam from the seabed, sea surface, or shoreline within the United Kingdom Exclusive Economic Zone (UKEEZ).

Secretary of States Representative (SOSREP)

14. The SOSREP is located within the MCA, but independent during incident response, and has legal powers to intervene on behalf of the Secretary of State in shipping incidents relating to safety and/or pollution. This includes powers to issue Directions to vessels, ports, or any person in charge of coastal land or premises. The SOSREP role came into being as a result of incidents such as the Braer and Sea Empress. The role has delegated decision-making powers and has the authority over matters that require a timely intervention to minimise the risk to the environment and health.
15. Following an accident with a risk to safety within UK waters, SOSREP may issue Directions to take any action of any kind whatsoever for the purposes of preventing and/or reducing the risk to safety. These Intervention Powers are derived from Schedule 3A of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 (as amended by the Marine Safety Act 2003). SOSREP may also issue Directions to remove the risk of pollution in UK Waters and the UKEEZ. SOSREP may also exercise the Power to Establish a Temporary Exclusion Zone (TEZ) for the purpose of preventing significant damage to persons or property, or pollution or reducing such risk. The Merchant Shipping Act 1995 S. 100A (as amended by the Merchant Shipping and Maritime Security Act 1997) refers.

ANNEX 3 – Communications

Global Maritime Distress and Safety System

1. The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) is an internationally agreed system including safety procedures, carriage requirements of equipment and communication protocols to facilitate rescue of distressed vessels and aircraft.
2. The concept was developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 1973 and came into force in 1999, requiring full compliance of all vessels covered by the [International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea \(SOLAS\)](#). UK vessels are governed by legislation contained in the [Merchant Shipping \(Radio Installations\) Regulations 1998](#). Since 2005, all vessels which are voluntarily fitted with VHF equipment are encouraged to fit VHF Digital Selective Calling (DSC).
3. DSC is an automatic calling system making the initial contact between two stations, group of stations or stations in a selected area. A call comprises of a short message directly transmitted to the receiving station(s) on dedicated radio frequencies. The received information indicates the purpose of the call and may direct the operator to a different channel for subsequent communications. In a distress situation, the message includes the position and nature of distress and causes a continuous alarm that has to be acknowledged by the operator.
4. [Inmarsat](#) is a commercial enterprise and currently the only provider of GMDSS maritime communications services by satellite. Inmarsat offers a range of general communication and network solutions with a geographical coverage between 76° North and 76° South.
5. Maritime Safety Information (MSI) includes navigational and meteorological warnings, forecasts and other urgent safety related messages of importance to all vessels at sea and may also include electronic chart correction data. Broadcasts are made by MF telex (known as NAVTEX) for local MSI and by Inmarsat-C or HF telex for long range MSI (e.g. NAVAREA warnings).
6. Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) alerting via satellite is carried out through the COSPAS/SARSAT network providing full global coverage through satellites in polar and geostationary orbit. More information can be found in [GMDSS COSPAS/SARSAT](#).
7. Search and rescue locating devices are portable transmitters primarily intended to be deployed on survival craft and working by transmitting a radar signal (Radar Search and Rescue Transponders) or messages using the Automatic Identification System (AIS Search and Rescue Transmitter). More information can be found on the International Maritime Organisation website [here](#).

Remote Radio Site Estate and Capability

8. HM Coastguard has a maritime VHF and MF analogue radio estate at key locations along the entirety of the United Kingdom coastline. This estate is comprised of 164 remote radio sites providing VHF range up to 30 nautical miles offshore (Area A1 under GMDSS), and up to 250 nautical miles MF range (Area A2).

9. The radios are linked to the Network data centres by combined diversely routed hard-wire and VOIP connections which provide a high degree of resilience. The Network allows for any aerial to be accessed by any operator at any coordination station within the network.
10. VHF works by line-of-sight and is independent of the mobile network infrastructure. When combined with CRT mobile VHF radios, the VHF network has proven highly resilient in areas affected by flood, where the power supply infrastructure is unreliable.
11. VHF aerials can be connected to phones via a connect call facility at the coordination centres if required (for example, Radio Medical Advice calls).
12. VHF radio communications are not secure and cannot be used for transmission of sensitive or personal data.

Telephony

13. HM Coastguard utilises a VOIP telephony system that ensures that calls are received at the team responsible for delivery of SAR and other duties, wherever they happen to be located within the Network.
14. For Major Incidents, special 'events' numbers can be assigned which ensures that key communications between TCG, SCG or other groups formed in response to an incident can access the coordination teams, or Tactical / Strategic commanders within Maritime Operations more easily.
15. The telephony solution also allows for connect calls to be made between various communications platforms (VHF, Sat comms) and conference call functions with a replay facility.

Airwave

16. Through its Integrated Coastguard Communications System (ICCS) HM Coastguard has the capability throughout the National Network to access 14 Airwave Talkgroups at any one time (an unlimited number of ICCS users can monitor each assigned Talkgroup) – these are assigned by the relevant authority through their Shared Hailing Groups.
17. HM Coastguard has access to the following UK Emergency Services Fleet Map Talk Groups:
 - M SAR HG
 - M SAR 1 – 4
 - HMCG OPS 1 – 5

For All police forces:

 - SHG
 - IC1
 - ES1,2,3

Ambulance:

- SHG

Fire:

- SHG

And for Scotland:

- PSCOT SHG 1 – 3
- PSCOT IC 1 – 3
- PSCOT ES 1 – 12
- XSCOT IAT 1 - 3

17. Carriage of Airwave through the Coastguard Rescue Service is limited to 1 hand held Airwave set per Coastal Area, and so primary airwave communications from HM Coastguard will come from one of the 9 Coastguard Operations Centres, the National Maritime Operations Centre Fareham or London Coastguard.
18. As with Telephony, for Major Incidents, separate Talkgroups can be allocated in the form of Incident Command Talkgroups – reserved for Silver Command, or Emergency Services Talkgroups for Bronze Command level.
19. HM Coastguard possesses its own Maritime Search & Rescue Talkgroups available to other emergency services, accessible by contacting HM Coastguard first through the Maritime Search and Rescue Hailing Group monitored in Zone 12 (London Coastguard).
20. HM Coastguard is limited with its Point to Point calling capability in that a Point to Point call can be made FROM the CGOC to a specific user but not from a specific user TO the CGOC – this is due to all Airwave being routed through London Coastguard.

Satellite Communications

21. HM Coastguard can utilise satellite communications through the INMARSAT system and via satellite telephony providers to assist with the delivery of routine operations when responding to major incidents. Satellite communications are often used when vessels are out of range of radio communications.
22. Enhanced Group Call (EGC) forms part of the INMARSAT system and allows HM Coastguard to broadcast Distress, Urgency and Alert messages to vessels with INMARSAT terminals on board, within a certain geographical area or selected groups of vessels. These broadcasts sound an audible alarm on receipt which have to be reset manually. HM Coastguard can also send routine messages to vessels fitted with INMARSAT terminals, and speak directly to vessels with satellite telephony on board.
23. HM Coastguard represents the Secretary of State for Transport as the competent authority to receive and respond to ship to shore covert security alerts. The Ship Security and Alert System (SSAS) is a discrete communication link from the ship to HM Coastguard and the shipping company when a master of a vessel deems it necessary, for example due to piracy, hijacking or any incident threatening the ship's security.

