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Remote SMC

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This page provides further information on the Remote SMC procedure, including rostering, RAGS and incident log narratives

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Requirement for a Remote SMC

- The SMC is officially assigned temporarily to coordinate response to an actual or apparent distress situation
- SAR operations are normally carried out under the direction and supervision of an SMC
- The SMC role could be delegated to another suitably qualified member of the watch team

SMC Rostering

Each MRCC within the National Network should have at least one SMC rostered on duty at all times. It is the responsibility of the Team Leader and Maritime Tactical Commanders to manage leave and courses effectively

When it is not possible to roster an SMC on duty, a suitably qualified Tactical Commander or Team Leader should be rostered on the shift to cover. If an SMC cannot be achieved, then a RSMC will be required.

Assigning Remote SMC Duties (RSMC)

Arrangements for RSMC cover should be actioned, as required, by the Tactical Commander from the current or previous shift. The Tactical Commander will lead the 0900 and 2100 network briefings, and confirm the support.

The Tactical Commander will identify the appropriate person for RSMC support from the start of the shift. Prior notification of these occurrences should be managed and identified locally.

The RSMC can be a Tactical Commander, Team Leader or SMOO, depending on requirement, workload and activity levels. The RSMC support arrangements must be recorded in the relevant network incident

A further level of support is provided by the Tactical Commander, who is responsible for the quality of coastguard operations within the UK Areas of

Interest or defined sub areas. They are accountable for leading, managing and providing tactical management support

RAGS Acronym

In order to support incident management and account for decisions, the 'RAGS' acronym has been developed. It is used for distress incidents:

- Which have been brought to the Tactical Commander's attention
- When the Tactical Commander sees fit
- Where the SMOO has concerns/seeking advice
- For a qualifying incident.

Controllers are to deliver clear and unambiguous direction recorded as a ViSION narrative entry using the RAGS acronym:

R: Review Mission	Review the information gathered and mission control 'thought process' as recorded in the Mission Statement or QMP
A: Assess Response	Consider chosen emergency phase and initial actions taken, Where appropriate liaise with (S)MC with response.
G: Guidance	Where appropriate provide additional operational priorities
S: SMC Declared and Support Required	Ensure the (S)MC assuming co-ordination is identified in the Tactical Commander Message and confirm whether any support is required from the network to assist.

An agreement between the Tactical Commander and the RSMC should be recorded into the daily network incident, with the number of zones agreed

Delivery of Remote SMC

The following IT and communications systems support can an RSMC:

- Integrated Coastguard Communications System (DS3000)
- VISION Incident Management System
- C-Scope
- Surface Hubs

- Talk boxes
- Zones profiles for situational awareness

□ In delivery of RSMC duties, the following requirements are to be put in place:

Zones

Where possible, the RSMC should add the appropriate zones to all communication systems. If this is not possible, a second desk should be loaded, using one of the generic logins provided to stations, near to the SMC's current desk. Other officers may need to move desks

Distress, Uncertainty and Alert Incidents

The RSMC should monitor and oversee the Distress, Uncertainty and Alert incidents. They should also review the zone profile for those delegated zones in order to establish a degree of situational awareness

Surface Hub

A Surface Hub should be used between the two MRCCs, when required

Additional Support

If a RSMC requires additional support, this should be monitored closely by the Tactical Commander. The RSMC can contact the Tactical Commander immediately and pass a brief on requirements to the Tactical Commander when they do not establish contact first.

The Tactical Commander should continually assess the situation and, if required, add additional support or zone flex to assist.

At locations where this is not a designated SMC, inform an RSMC of:

- Any Distress incidents
- Any Alert incidents
- Any Uncertainty incidents

If required, the RSMC will assume the SMC role with the Coastguard Officer providing support. Remote incident zones can be flexed into their local station to provide support and the default zones being allocated elsewhere in the event of an incident.

Incident Logs and Narrative

It is imperative that entries into the incident log are timely, and clearly record the actions taken or information received. Forms (such as Mission Conduct or SAR Briefings) should be used and kept up-to-date to ensure the RSMC has sufficient information to make informed decisions.

At the start of the incident a SMC comment should be recorded stating who the CG Officer and RSMC is. Both the CG Officer and/or the RSMC should make clear entries. RSMC should ensure comments are marked as SMC comment and the CG Officer should mark comments as a routine entry or MC comment, in the incident narrative. The comments can be differentiated by the individual name aligned to the comment.

If there is a lack of clarity, or if there are any concerns regarding the progress or conduct of a SAR mission, then this should be confirmed verbally between the ASMC/ RSMC and the outcomes of these discussions should be entered into the narrative.

TalkBox

The Tactical Commander will assign a TalkBox to the teams for inter-team communications. The assigned TalkBox must be shown as 'In Use' on ViSION, and updated to reflect its use:

Example
"MRCC Stornoway providing RSMC support to MRCC Aberdeen"

The Duty Controller providing support for the zones (if not the RSMC) should also have the TalkBox monitored on their ICCS to help maintain incident awareness.

VHF Ch16 distress-watch officers should not monitor the TalkBox as they may be distracted or prevented from hearing a distress call.

FINTAN and Other Mapping Tools

The RSMC should make use of ViSION, FINTAN and, where appropriate, other sources of mapping such as Google, Bing and OSNI's 'Spatial NI'. From this, they can obtain a sufficient understanding of the tactical picture and operational challenge for a particular incident. Use of other online

mapping tools is encouraged to ensure situational understanding is sufficient.

Team Briefings

When acting as RSMC, team briefings are more important, and should be held more often as the SMC is not physically in the same room and cannot overhear the conversations between team members and radio traffic.

Briefings must be led by the Mission Coordinator at the Remote Centre, overseen (remotely) by the RSMC. This can be achieved using either:

- The Surface Hub logged into Skype so that the SMC can see and hear people
- TalkBox
- Telephone conference call

It is important that team members, and the SMC, clearly state what they think they know is happening or planned to happen. The SMC must ask questions to ensure that they understand what is happening or has happened.

When acting as Remote SMC, it is possible that they will not be aware of all that is going on so it is vital to ask directed questions to ensure that all information is explored and known to the SMC.

The MC must ensure that notes are taken of any outputs of the team briefing and entered into the incident narrative. It is also important that decisions, as well as the reasoning for decisions and actions to be taken, are logged in the incident narrative.

Training

Following successful completion of the SMC course, SMOOs will further develop their skills with a period of consolidation. During this time Remote SMC training must be conducted under the guidance of the Team Leaders and Tactical Commanders

The Training will focus on managing remote teams and the systems which HMCG employs to overcome these challenges, this includes:

- Surface Hubs
- DS 3000 TalkBoxes

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