

This page covers the *trial* triage procedures used by RNLI, in the **South East coast region only**, when the number of persons requiring rescue from the water exceeds the capability of the SRUs on-scene.

The SRU Commander will assess whether the multiple person in the water triage tool is being used and inform the coordinating RCC. The SMC at the coordinating SMC must use this SOP on notification from the SRU.

▣ This procedure must only be used as the initial response, and once the on-scene capability is increased, conventional SAR practices resumed.

If the designated SMC deems it necessary to deviate from these procedures, an entry must be made into the incident narrative providing a rationale for the deviation and the alternative action taken.

This SOP applies to:

- MRCC/MRSC personnel
- JRCC-AR personnel
- Network Commanders
- Strategic Commanders

Related Links

[MPIW Check card](#)

[MPIW Flow chart](#)

[Persons in the Water SOP](#)

[MRO Risk Assessment](#)

Initial Actions

If the Commander of a SRU believes that the numbers of persons in the water is beyond the immediate capability of the SRUs on scene, then the Coastguard will be informed that this is considered a 'multiple persons in the water incident' and on scene triage will be commenced.

▣ The Network Commander must be immediately informed.

▣ The SMC and Network Commander must agree that these protocols are applicable and can continue to be used. The decision must be recorded in the ViSION incident and communicated to the SRU.

▣ The SMC must task further SRUs to increase the on-scene rescue capability, and request assistance from neighbouring States' SRUs. This may also include the rapid deployment of an ILB (Atlantic 85) in appropriate conditions.

▣ Broadcast action must be conducted to elicit a response from vessels of opportunity in the area via VHF, MF, Navtex, EGC or other appropriate means.

▣ Develop a communications plan – Is a (M)ETHANE message on ESICTRL appropriate?

Information Gathering

How many people are in the water?

Has the SRU deployed floatation devices for survivors?

Has the datum been marked by the SRU? If so, by what means?

On scene weather and visibility

On scene water temperature

Actions

- If the number of persons rescued is close to the maximum permitted number of persons on board, consider:
- The disembarkation of survivors to another SRU or responding vessel (“cross-decking”)
- The departure of the SRU to a suitable landing point for disembarkation
- The use of SAR helicopters to remove those in need of further medical care
- The SRU becoming a stationary place of temporary safety for survivors, i.e. the SRU exceeding their normal survivor capacity providing they remain stationary and maintain stability.

RNLI Lifeboat Maximum Number of Survivors:

- Task the CRS to assist at a suitable landing point and/or HLS.
 - Inform the Police and Ambulance Service and any other appropriate authority requesting attendance at the designated landing point.
- ▣ Once the on-scene capability matches or exceeds the number of persons in the water, the use of the triage tool must be stopped, and conventional SAR procedures applied.

Once a person is out of the water, traditional casualty care triage applies. The SMC must plan for, and act based on the needs of survivors.

Considerations

- Is this a Mass Rescue Operation?
- Will SRUs have to depart to maintain their own stability and/or safety?
- Do SRUs need to be re-tasked for ongoing search efforts?
- Only RNLI lifeboats and HMCG SAR helicopters will use the tool – if independent facility is attending, assign a SRU who can coordinate the on-scene rescue efforts

Contact

- Duty Network Commander – must be informed and approve the continued use of the triage tool

- Duty Strategic Commander – must be informed by Network Commander due to severity of the incident
- Duty Operations Director- must be informed by Network Commander or Strategic Commander due to severity of the incident
- Aeronautical Commander
- Divisional Commander
- Police
- Ambulance
- Local Resilience Forum
- RNLI HQ

Once printed this document is not considered the latest version by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Copyright Maritime and Coastguard Agency