

CONSULTATION ON SEARCH AND RESCUE PROVISION IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE SOUTH WEST PENINSULA



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This consultation considers the search and rescue requirements for the southern part of the South West Peninsula and how those needs can be met within the UK Search and Rescue Framework.
- 1.2 Her Majesty's Coastguard is responsible throughout the UK for the co-ordination of maritime search and rescue operations. That service is available 24-hours-a-day, 365 days a year. Coastguard Officers draw on a range of rescue assets to provide the most appropriate response to individual situations. These assets include helicopters, RNLI and independent lifeboats, other ships in the vicinity of an incident, and the volunteer Coastguard Rescue Service, members of which are specifically trained in search, mud and cliff rescue techniques. To meet the changing needs of our society and in particular the diverse needs of beach and marine leisure users the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) reviews Search and Rescue requirements on a regular basis.
- 1.3 The Coastguard has had boats at Hope Cove and Tamar as additional assets to support Coastguard operations in the southern part of the South West Peninsula. The boats have been regarded as 'additional facilities' and whilst they can be deployed to assist, they are not a 'first call' rescue craft. A review in June 2008 of the boats at Hope Cove and Tamar showed that they were not compliant with modern safety standards and as such represented an unacceptable safety risk to their volunteer crews and the public. The safety of volunteer Coastguard Rescue Officers is of paramount importance to the MCA and consequently the boat at Tamar was made non-operational and operational restrictions were placed on the boat at Hope Cove.
- 1.4 This consultation considers the nature of the maritime-related risks around the southern part of the South West Peninsula, the adequacy of the range of rescue resources available to deal with them if the additional MCA boats were no longer available, and if a public safety risk remains, how best that can be managed. This has been established using a Capability Review methodology used by other Category 1 responders.
- 1.5 Your views are requested on the conclusion of this review regarding Search and Rescue provision for the southern part of the South West Peninsula. How to respond to the consultation is set out in Annex C. This consultation commenced on 11 January 2010 and the deadline for response is 6 April 2010. Responses received before that date would be appreciated
- 1.6 A summary of responses, including the next steps the MCA will undertake will be published on the MCA's website following the conclusion of this consultation.

2. THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE SOUTH WEST PENINSULA

- 2.1 For the purposes of the capability review and this consultation the southern part of the South West Peninsula is defined as being from the River Dart Devon, to Looe Cornwall, encompassing the coast of the South Hams, Plymouth and Caradon District Council areas.
- 2.2 The locality starts on the west bank of the River Dart, including the cliffs and beaches westwards as far as Looe, Cornwall. To the east the area is primarily rural with a tourist population during the summer months. The city of Plymouth is incorporated in the locality and to the west the area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which attracts many visitors throughout the year. The South West Coastal Path is accessible along the entire coastline.

3. CAPABILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 A detailed Capability Review of the operating area for the southern part of the South West Peninsula has been undertaken by MCA managers who have local knowledge and Coastguard experience. The Review captures the risks of search and rescue in the southern part of the South West Peninsula area, establishing their likelihood and impact, assesses the availability of rescue assets to deal with them, and outlines the Search and Rescue requirements for the area. The risk ratings, likelihood and impact definitions are set in relation to those detailed in the Emergency Preparedness guidance (HM Government 2005). A full copy of the Capability Review for the South West Peninsula is included at Annex A.
- 3.2 The areas where maritime incidents are likely to happen within the southern part of the South West Peninsula that require SAR services fall into the broad categories of beach, cliff, coastal path and tidal river. Surfing, kite surfing and windsurfing take place on or around all the beaches throughout the area. There are a variety of wreck and non wreck dive sites and the area is popular with recreational divers. In the surrounding sea areas there is a high density of recreational craft, dive boats and commercial fishing vessels.
- 3.3 From 2004 to 2007 there were an average of 251 incidents per year within the southern part of the South West Peninsula area, 39% involving beach activity, 36% involving vessels near the coast, 3% involving cliff rescue, 6% missing person searches and 16% defined as other which includes animal rescue.

Cliffs and Coastal Paths

Some examples of why people might get into difficulty.

- 3.4 On cliffs and coastal paths there are a number of different types of incidents that can be encountered by people when out walking or partaking in other leisure activities. Casualties can happen when members of the public become injured when climbing or falling over the edge of cliffs. An unforeseen medical emergency can happen to a member of the public on a cliff or coastal path.
- 3.5 All of these situations are likely to require help from the search and rescue services.

What services need to be made available to help them?

- 3.6 To help people who get into trouble whilst walking on coastal paths or climbing cliffs it is necessary to be able to respond quickly, and from the shore. The Capability review (see Annex A) has established that adequate resources required for land search, air search, basic first aid, rope rescue and medical evacuation by helicopter are available.

- 3.7 For rope rescue, first aid and shore searches appropriate vehicles and trailers to transport this equipment and manpower to the scene of an incident are required. To support the need for air search and medical evacuation appropriate air assets need to be made available. To ensure the efficient alerting and co-ordination of all SAR assets appropriate communications equipment and procedures must be in place.

What Services Exist?

- 3.8 Rope rescue skills training has been provided for the eight available Coastguard Rescue Teams (CRTs). Each team is equipped with the minimum of a four wheel drive vehicle with trailer, search equipment and basic first aid equipment. These CRTs each have 12 members to ensure a minimum response of eight members when they are called to incidents. Each CRT has paging facilities and VHF radio so that they can be contacted and co-ordinated by the rescue centre at Brixham.
- 3.9 Searches and medical evacuation by helicopter are currently provided by the Royal Navy at Culdrose, the Royal Air Force at Chivenor and the Devon and Cornwall Air Operations Unit at Exeter. Medical evacuation by air is also provided by the Devon and Cornwall Air Ambulances.

Beaches and Tidal Rivers

Some examples of why people might get into difficulty

- 3.10 Whilst enjoying a day on the beach people may run into difficulties when swimming in the sea, when using a jetski, windsurfing or a chance encounter with marine life. Casualties may arise from members of the public being unaware of environmental conditions such as the changing tide and weather conditions. As a result people may also become lost or missing whilst partaking in boating and recreational activities along the tidal rivers and seas. In such unforeseen circumstances members of the public are likely to require search or rescue assistance.

What services need to be made available to help them?

- 3.11 To help people who get into trouble on a beach it is necessary to have a beach safety response service available. The Capability Review (see Annex A) has established that to ensure beach safety, the public must be able to assess the risk for themselves by way of safety signs, and be able to summon help by telephone. Normally Coastguard Rescue Teams would respond from the shore, calling in helicopters if necessary. On crowded or risky beaches sufficient numbers of lifeguards must be provided.
- 3.12 For members of the public who encounter problems at sea or on tidal rivers, appropriate inshore and all weather lifeboats need to be available supported as required by helicopters. To ensure the efficient alerting and co-ordination of all SAR assets appropriate communications are required to be in place.

What Services Exist?

Beach Response

- 3.13 On the busier beaches, Beach lifeguards are equipped with lifesaving and basic first aid equipment. Specifically at Hope Cove the RNLI provided a beach lifeguarding service in the summer of 2009 and intends to do so again for summer 2010, after which the RNLI will be discussing future provision with the landowner who has a statutory duty of care for beach safety. It is RNLI's recommendation that the Hope Cove beach service should be considered as part of the normal life guard provision in this area and routinely reviewed as part of the end of season reporting process and annual update of risk assessments

- 3.14 The services for searches and medical evacuation by air are currently provided by the RNAS Cudrose, RAF Chivenor and MCA Helicopter at Portland. Search by air is also provided by the Devon and Cornwall Air Operations Unit. Medical evacuation by air is also provided by the Devon and Cornwall Air Ambulance. To enable these air assets to be co-ordinated, HMCG contact ARCC Kinloss, Devon and Cornwall Police Control Room and Air Ambulance through Ambulance Control using VHF Channel 0 and direct telephone communications.

Sea Response

- 3.15 Inshore and All Weather Lifeboats, plus launching vehicles are provided at:

- Dartmouth RNLI (ILB)
- Salcombe RNLI (ALB & ILB)
- Plymouth RNLI (ILB)
- Looe RNLI (ILB)
- MoD Police Marine Unit at Plymouth

These lifeboats communicate via VHF Channel 0.

- 3.16 Both air searches and medical evacuation are provided by RNAS Cudrose, RAF Chivenor and the MCA Helicopter at Portland.

In the absence of an MCA boat is there a gap in the provision?

- 3.17 The Capability review has established that there are no additional capabilities or resources necessary to meet the required response for the South West Peninsula area.
- 3.18 The current deployment of CRTs meets the requirements outlined in the Capability Review. There are currently eight CRT's within the southern part of the South West Peninsula located at Dartmouth, Prawle, Hope Cove, Bigbury, Yealm, Plymouth, Tamar and Looe. These teams are trained and equipped for rope rescue and to provide basic first aid. They have appropriate communications by VHF radio and pager. Each of these teams is provided with a Coastguard 4x4 vehicle with trailer to enable the transportation of personnel and equipment to an incident. All of the CRT's are manned to the required level of 12 members to ensure a minimum response of eight personnel when called to an incident.
- 3.19 The current deployment of air assets meets the requirements established by the Capability Review. Currently both RNAS Cudrose (North Devon) and RAF Chivenor (Devon) respond to incidents within the South West Peninsula Area. At each location, one helicopter is available at 15 minutes readiness between 0800 and 2200 hours with another available at 60 minutes readiness between 0800 hours and evening civil twilight (ECT). Between 2200 and 0800 hours, one helicopter is held at 45 minutes readiness. All SAR helicopters are equipped for full day / night all weather operations over land and sea. The aircraft can operate by day and night in all expected weather conditions.
- 3.20 In respect of the areas where the MCA boats have been withdrawn RAF Chivenor and RNAS Cudrose are both within 22 minutes flying time to Tamar and are within 26 and 28 minutes flying time respectively to Hope Cove. The MCA Helicopter at Portland is within 30 minutes flying time to Tamar and within 25 minutes flying time to Hope Cove.
- 3.21 The Devon and Cornwall Police Air Operations Unit based in Exeter has one helicopter which operates from 0800 until 0300 each day which is within 21 minutes flying time to South Hams or Plymouth.

- 3.21 The Devon Air Ambulance Trust has two helicopters which fly 10 hours a day, seven days a week. The helicopters can reach 50% of Devon within five minutes and the rest of Devon within 15 minutes.
- 3.22 The Cornwall Air Ambulance Trust operates one helicopter from its base at Newquay Cornwall Airport. It can reach any part of Cornwall within 20 minutes.
- 3.23 The current deployment of Beach Lifeguards meets the requirements established by the Capability Review. The RNLI operate beach lifeguard teams on the beaches at:
- Hope Cove
 - Bantham
 - Burgh Island
 - Challaborough
 - Sedgewell Cove
 - Thurlestone
 - Blackpool Sands
 - Slapton
 - Freathy
 - Sharrow
 - Tregonhawke
 - Tregantle
- 3.24 The RNLI Lifeguards are provided with a “personal lifeguard kit” which consists of a VHF radio, binoculars, first aid kit, rescue tube, defibrillator and windbreak. The RNLI Lifeguards at Bantham Beach, Sedgewell Cove, Tregonhawke and Tregantle are equipped with an Arancia Inshore Life Boat.
- 3.25 The current deployment of lifeboats meets the requirement established by the Capability Review. Currently the RNLI boats at Dartmouth, Salcombe, Plymouth and Looe respond to incidents within the South West Peninsula area and can be launched in 10 minutes from the time they are notified of an incident. The area is well served with seven lifeboats available for a sea safety response and is able to meet the RNLI’s stated aim to:
- Achieve an average launch time of 10 minutes from notification to the RNLI;
 - Reach all notified casualties where a risk of life exists, in all weathers, out to a maximum of 100 nautical miles;
 - Reach at least 90% of all casualties within 10 nautical miles of Lifeboat Stations within 30 minutes of launch in all weathers;
- 3.26 The boat at Dartmouth the “Spirit of the Dart”, a D” class inshore lifeboat is available. It has a top speed of twenty five knots, a range of three hours (at maximum speed) and a crew of two/three.
- 3.27 At Salcombe the boats available are:
- The ‘B’ Class, ‘Joan Bate’, an Atlantic 85 with a top speed of 35 knots , a range of three hours (at maximum speed) and a crew of three/four.
 - The Tyne Class all-weather lifeboat (AWB), the ‘Baltic Exchange II’, with a range of 250 nautical miles and a top speed of 25 knots.
- 3.28 The boats available from Plymouth are:
- The ‘B’ Class, ‘Millennium Forrester’, an Atlantic 85 with a top speed of 35 knots, a range of three hours (at maximum speed) and a crew of three/four.

- The Severn Class all-weather lifeboat (AWB), the 'Sybil Mullen Glover', with a range of 250 nautical miles and a top speed of 25 knots.
- The Severn Class AWB carries a powered 'Y' Class tender that can be launched and recovered via a lightweight crane to enable rescues close to shore. Its propellers are protected so it can take the ground without damage.

3.29 The boats available from Looe are:

- The 'B' Class "Alan and Margaret", an Atlantic 85 with a top speed of 35 knots, with a range of three hours (at maximum speed) and a crew of three/four.
- The 'D' class "Regina Mary" with a top speed of 25 knots, a range of three hours at maximum speed and a crew of two/three.

3.30 All RNLI all-weather lifeboats are inherently self righting and undergo a rigorous trial before joining the fleet. Should an all-weather lifeboat be knocked over in extreme weather, it will automatically right itself within a few seconds. B and E class inshore lifeboats feature a manually operated, self-righting mechanism that inflates a large airbag with compressed air. The D class can be righted manually by its crew who are fully trained in manual capsize procedures. All inshore lifeboats are fitted with inversion-proofed engines that can be restarted following the capsizing of the vessel.

All-weather lifeboats are fitted with the latest in navigation, location and communication equipment - including electronic chart plotter, VHF radio with direction finder, radar and global positioning systems (GPS). Inshore lifeboats and hovercraft also have VHF radio and GPS, with the Atlantic 85 and E class carrying the additional radar.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The Capability Review has assessed the maritime risks within the southern part of the South West Peninsula, outlined capabilities and assets required to meet those risks and measured how the current SAR provision matches the SAR requirement if the MCA assets are not returned to service (in the case of the boat at Tamar) or permanently removed from service (in the case of the boat at Hope Cove).

4.2 It is the view of the MCA that the current SAR provision meets the requirements of the Capability Review and permanently withdrawing the boats at Hope Cove and Tamar will not diminish the provision of a search and rescue service to the southern part of the South West Peninsula. The Capability Review has established that the requirement for SAR assets to arrive at the scene of an incident ready to effect medical evacuation, cliff rescue, coastal rescue and land SAR can be met by the existing land, beach and sea safety response capabilities of the CRS, RNLI, RAF, RNAS, Devon and Cornwall Police Air Operations Unit, and Devon Air Ambulance and Cornwall Air Ambulance.

Annex A

MARITIME AND COASTGUARD AGENCY CAPABILITY REVIEW

Region:	Wales and Western
Area:	South West
Sector:	South West Devon plus the flank CRTs of Dartmouth, Tamar and Looe

Mission:

To initiate and co-ordinate civil maritime Search and Rescue on or near the coast of the UK.

Operational Area:

From the River Dart, Devon to Looe, Cornwall, encompassing the coast of the South Hams, Plymouth and Caradon District Council areas.

Environmental Category	Environmental sub category
Beach Cliff Coastal Path River	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secluded (supported by transport infrastructure with population less than 500)• Non Rural (Close proximity to population of more than 500)• Urban (Close proximity to population of more than 2500)
Casualty Risk	Future risks:
Persons stuck on cliff, cut of by tide, medical emergency, beach activity emergency and missing persons.	No change foreseen in next 12 months

1. Overview of Environmental Category

The locality starts on the west bank of the River Dart, encompasses the cliffs and beaches westwards as far as Looe, Cornwall. To the east the area is primarily rural with a tourist population during the summer months. The South West Coastal Path is accessible along the entire coastline. Included is the city of Plymouth and to the west the area is designated as an AONB and attracts visitors throughout the year. The South West Coastal Path is accessible along the entire coastline. High density of recreational vessels, dive boats and commercial fishing vessels.

2. Overview of Casualty Risk

Casualties arise from members of the public being unaware of environmental conditions, such as tide and weather conditions, becoming injured or suffering a medical emergency whilst near the beach, on the beach or Coastal Path. Whilst there are no specific areas identified for coastal activities, surfing, kite surfing and windsurfing take place on or around the beaches throughout the area. The area is popular with recreational divers and includes a variety of wreck and non wreck dive sites. High density of recreational vessels, dive boats and commercial fishing vessels.

3. Key historical evidence

2004 – 2007 average annual totals

251 incidents – 39% involving beach activity, 36% involving vessels near the coast, 3% involving cliff rescue, 6% missing person search and 16% other (inc animal)

4. Response required

To arrive at the scene of the incident within 30 minutes ready to effect Medical Evacuation, Cliff Rescue and Land SAR.

5. Capability necessary to deliver Response required.

a. Equipment	Coastguard Rescue Vehicle plus trailer for transport. First aid equipment Rope rescue equipment Search equipment.
b. Communications	Alerting - Paging facility Co-ordination communications - VHF marine band plus mobile phone
c. Manpower	Team of 12 to ensure minimum response of 8

Capability delivered by:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartmouth Coastguard Rescue Team
Search Equipment
Cliff Rescue Equipment
Coastguard Response Vehicle
Team compliment – 12 • Prawle Coastguard Rescue Team
Search Equipment
Cliff Rescue Equipment
Coastguard Response Vehicle
Team compliment - 12 • Hope Cove Coastguard Rescue Team
Search Equipment
Cliff Rescue Equipment
Coastguard Response Vehicle
Team compliment - 14 • Bigbury Coastguard Rescue Team
Search Equipment
Cliff Rescue Equipment
Coastguard Response Vehicle
Team compliment - 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yealm Coastguard Rescue Team
Search Equipment
Cliff Rescue Equipment
Coastguard Response Vehicle
Team compliment - 12 • Plymouth Coastguard Rescue Team
Search Equipment
Cliff Rescue Equipment
Coastguard Response Vehicle
Team compliment - 12 • Tamar Coastguard Rescue Team
Search Equipment
Cliff Rescue Equipment
Coastguard Response Vehicle
Team compliment - 16 • Looe Coastguard Rescue Team
Search Equipment
Cliff Rescue Equipment
Coastguard Response Vehicle
Team compliment - 12 |
|---|--|

6. Additional Capability required

Capability provided by:

Beach Safety Management (cont.)

Full Season – 1st May until 31st October
Main Season – 16th May – 20th October
Peak Season – 4th July – 6th September

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackpool Sands BLU
1000 – 1800
Peak Season – 2 lifeguards • Slapton BLU
1000 – 1800
Peak Season – 2 lifeguards
4WD x 1 • Hope Cove BLU
1000 – 1800
Peak Season – 2 lifeguards • Thurlestone BLU
1000 – 1800
Peak Season – 2 lifeguards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bantham BLU
1000 – 1800
Easter Season – 3 lifeguards
Full Season – 3 lifeguards
Main Season – 4 lifeguards
Peak Season – 4 lifeguards
Late Season – 3 lifeguards
IRB x 1
4WD x 1
ATV x 1 • Sedgewell Cove BLU
1000 – 1800
Full Season – 2 lifeguards
Main Season – 3 lifeguards
Peak Season – 3 lifeguards
IRB x 1
4WD x 1
ATV x 1 |
|--|---|

6. cont. Additional Capability required	Capability provided by:	
<p>Beach Safety Management (cont.)</p> <p><i>Full Season – 1st May until 31st October</i></p> <p><i>Main Season – 16th May – 20th October</i></p> <p><i>Peak Season – 4th July – 6th September</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burgh Island BLU 1000 – 1800 Main Season – 2 lifeguards Peak Season – 2 lifeguards • Challaborough BLU 1000 – 1800 Main Season – 2 lifeguards Peak Season – 2 lifeguards • Tregonhawke BLU 1000 – 1800 Full Season – 4 lifeguards Main Season – 4 lifeguards Peak Season – 4 lifeguards IRB x 1 ATV x 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freathy BLU 1000 – 1800 Peak Season – 2 lifeguards • Sharrow BLU 1000 – 1800 Full Season – 2 lifeguards Main Season – 2 lifeguards Peak Season – 2 lifeguards • Tregantle BLU 1000 – 1800 Main Season – 2 lifeguards Peak Season – 3 lifeguards IRB x 1 ATV x 1 • Additional signage on other beaches
<p>Sea Safety Response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartmouth RNLI ILB (established 2007) • Salcombe RNLI ALB & ILB • Plymouth RNLI ALB & ILB • Looe RNLI ILB x 2 • MOD Police Marine Unit 	
<p>Helicopter support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RNAS Culdrose • RAF Chivenor • MCA Helicopter at Portland • Devon & Cornwall Police Air Operations unit 	
<p>Medical Air Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon Air Ambulance • Cornwall Air Ambulance 	

Annex B

1. SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) PROVISION

1.1 At present, in the UK Search and Rescue is made up of a matrix of services :

HM Coastguard

- 1.2 Her Majesty's Coastguard (HMCG) is responsible for the initiation and co-ordination of civil maritime search and rescue within the United Kingdom Search and Rescue Region (UKSRR). This includes the mobilisation, organisation and tasking of available resources to respond to people in distress at sea or at risk of injury or death on the cliffs and shoreline of the UK.
- 1.3 As a SAR co-ordinator, HMCG is responsible for requesting and tasking it's own SAR assets and those made available by other emergency services, authorities and organisations. Close liaison is maintained with the Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre (ARCC) at RAF Kinloss, other emergency services and rescue organisations including neighbouring foreign SAR organisations.
- 1.4 HMCG is currently organised into nine SAR Areas where each area contains a pair of Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (MRCC). These MRCC pairs share common command, control and communications systems which enable either MRCC to assume control of the area and to provide mutual support during emergency response operations. Each area is divided into 3 or more sectors and each sector contains 2 or more Coastguard Rescue Teams (CRTs). These teams of volunteers specialise in cliff and mud rescue, coastal searching techniques and surveillance.
- 1.5 HMCG maintains a close liaison with neighbouring countries for SAR co operation purposes and in most cases, Memoranda of Understanding or agreements have been set up that detail the SAR arrangements between UK MRCCs and these foreign countries.

Coastguard Rescue Service

- 1.6 The Coastguard Rescue Service is made up of Coastguard Rescue Teams (CRTs) situated at strategic locations around the coast. The teams are equipped to deal with incidents appropriate to the risks associated with local coastal terrain and local shoreline conditions and the activities that are likely to take place in these locations. Each CRT has an initial response capability for investigation and surveillance of incidents and reports to a nominated MRCC. In some locations which don't have a CRT but there is an operational requirement, small teams known as Initial Response Teams (IRT) have been established to provide this first response.
- 1.7 All CRTs are fully trained to carry out searches and in addition, many have been trained for cliff and/or mud rescue. IRTs are usually equipped with portable radios for initial reporting purposes only. Members of both CRTs and IRTs are volunteers.

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)

- 1.8 The RNLI is a voluntary organisation incorporated by Royal Charter for the purpose of saving lives and promoting safety on water in the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland.
- 1.9 The RNLI's fleet of purpose-built lifeboats are located at 230 stations around the coast of the UK including a number of locations on inland waterways. 130 of these stations operate lifeboats that are longer than 10 metres in length known as all-weather lifeboats

(ALB). A further 100 stations operate the smaller inshore lifeboat (ILB) with over a quarter of stations having both an ALB and an ILB available for use. A large relief fleet of lifeboats is maintained in order that the boats, may be replaced at short notice without diminishing the cover available, in the event of damage or if a refit is required. The fleet of lifeboats have different capabilities and speeds, and range in size from 4.9m (16 foot) inflatable ILBs to 17m (56 foot) 'Severn' Class ALBs. ALBs are capable of reaching 50 nautical miles from the UK and the Republic of Ireland coasts (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) within two and a half hours. RNLI lifeboats are available 24 hours a day throughout the year, with the only exception being a few isolated 'D' Class Inshore Lifeboats, which are withdrawn between November and Easter.

- 1.10 The provision of lifeboats by RNLI is designed to meet the response and coverage criteria which have been agreed by the UKSAR committee. These criteria are as follows:
- From first contact, achieve an average launch time of 10 minutes;
 - Reach all notified casualties where a risk of life exists, in all weathers, out to a maximum of 100 nautical miles;
 - Reach at least 90% of all casualties from launch, in all weathers within 10 nautical miles of Lifeboat Stations and within 30 minutes.

Beach Lifeguards

- 1.11 Beach Lifeguards enhance the safety of some beaches. Except where they are privately owned, responsibility for beach safety rests with the relevant local authorities. In various parts of the UK, Beach Lifeguard Units (BLUs) are provided to minimise the risk of injury or drowning on and around some UK beaches. The BLUs may be volunteers operating under contract to Local Authorities or paid services that in some cases are privately run.
- 1.12 The lifeguards are trained by the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS UK), the Surf Life Saving Association (SLSA GB) or the RNLI. On beaches which have patrols the RNLI lifeguards are required to reach any casualty up to 300 metres from the shore (which is marked by flags) within 3.5 minutes.

Search and Rescue (SAR) Helicopters

- 1.13 Helicopters are key SAR assets that provide an effective and comprehensive Search and Rescue service with their rapid response, short transit times and use of height to search, detect and recover casualties. The current SAR helicopter service is delivered by a combination of the MCA, Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal Navy (RN) assets at geographically dispersed sites around the UK mainland. The MCA has four bases at Lee-on Solent, Portland, Sumburgh (Shetland) and Stornoway (Isle of Lewis), the RAF has six bases at Chivenor, Wattisham, Valley, Boulmer, Leconfield and Lossiemouth whilst the RN has two bases at Culdrose and Prestwick. With the exception of Portland which has day time operation only, all locations provide 24-hour a day, 365 days a year cover.
- 1.14 The MCA's SAR helicopter service is currently provided, under contract, by the Canadian Helicopter Corporation (CHC) providing 24-hour coverage at Sumburgh, Stornoway and Lee-on-Solent and 12 hour day-time coverage at Portland. All aircraft with the exception of Portland maintain a 15 minute readiness state from 0730 to 2100 (local time) and 45 minute readiness state outside these times. Both Sumburgh and Stornoway are equipped with the Sikorsky S92 helicopters (two at each location) and Lee-on-Solent and Portland use three AgustaWestland AW139 helicopters, configured entirely for Search and Rescue purposes.
- 1.15 Although the MoD provides SAR facilities to cover military operations, exercises and training within the UKSRR it is also MoD policy to give assistance whenever possible to other persons, aircraft or vessels in distress. Where the Search and Rescue coverage

provided by military assets meets the civil SAR requirement, MoD facilities will be made available for civil aeronautical, maritime and land-based SAR operations. Such facilities include Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal Navy (RN) SAR Helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft (MPA).

- 1.16 At each RAF / RN location, one helicopter is available at 15 minutes readiness between 0800 and 2200 hours with another available at 60 minutes readiness between 0800 hours and evening civil twilight. Between 2200 and 0800 hours, one helicopter is held at 45 minutes readiness. All SAR helicopters are equipped for full day and night all weather operations over land and sea. Although some limitations exist with regard to freezing conditions, the helicopters are to all intents and purposes, all weather capable and have a full night vision goggle (NVG) capability.
- 1.17 The military SAR airframe, the Sea King helicopter, will reach the end of its useful life within the next ten years and will be withdrawn from service.

INDEPENDENT LIFEBOATS

- 1.18 A number of independent rescue boat organisations operate around the UK's coastline and can be called upon if 'additional facilities' are required.

LIGHTHOUSE AND PILOTAGE AUTHORITIES

- 1.19 Trinity House, the Northern Lighthouse Board and the Commissioners of Irish Lights liaise closely with the MCA. These authorities are constantly aware of the whereabouts and availability of their service launches which are capable of responding to SAR incidents and communicating on all maritime distress frequencies. The launches are of particular value when recovering persons from the water or from pleasure craft. An operational Control Centre located at Trinity House Depot at Harwich, Essex, is continuously manned and co-ordinates the operational functions of the Trinity House Lighthouse Service. Northern Lighthouse Board and Commissioners of Irish Lights have similar arrangements at their Edinburgh and Dublin bases.
- 1.20 Competent Harbour Authorities have fast pilot launches available which are all fitted with VHF communications and are of particular value when responding to SAR incidents either within or just outside of harbour limits.

LAND BASED AND INLAND WATERS SAR

- 1.21 The responsibility for the co-ordination of land-based and inland waters search and rescue rests with the Police Service and comes from their duty to protect life and property. The Police Service, however, has delegated this co-ordination responsibility to the MCA for certain large stretches of rivers or bodies of water in the UK, none of which feature in the area under consultation. In areas where the coast meets the river the MCA will respond to incidents where there is a tidal aspect.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

The closing date for this consultation is 06/04/2010

Name _____

Organisation (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Please tick one box from the following list of options that best describes you:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Service
<input type="checkbox"/>	Representative Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade Union
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interest Group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Commercial Business
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Central Government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please describe, e.g. consultant or private individual)

Please acknowledge receipt of this reply to your consultation:

Return completed forms to:

Research and Planning Branch
The Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 3/20
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG