

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**between**  
**DUBLIN FIRE BRIGADE and THE IRISH COAST GUARD**  
**for the**  
**COORDINATION OF SAR on the RIVER LIFFEY.**

**1. Status**

The purpose of this MoU is to establish and agree the terms of an operational understanding between Dublin Fire Brigade (DFB) and the Irish Coast Guard (IRCG) in relation to the coordination of search and rescue (SAR) on the River Liffey in the general navigable area between Island Bridge and the Dublin Port Buoys No. 7 and 8. DFB may also support IRCG on request, beyond Buoys No. 7 and 8, in the inner Dublin Bay area.

**2. Marine Responsibilities**

- a) **Fire Brigade.** The current structure of the Fire Service in Ireland is based upon the legislation of the Fire Services Act of 1981 & 2003. The Fire Services Act has facilitated an expansion of the range of operational services provided by Fire authorities. Fire authorities are statutorily required by Section 10 of the Act. In addition to their statutory duties under Section 10, fire authorities are enabled by Section 25 to engage in a range of operational responses.

*“A fire authority may carry out or assist in any operation of an emergency nature, whether or not a risk of fire is involved, and a fire authority may accordingly make such provision for the rescue or safeguarding of persons and protection of property as it considers necessary”*

- b) **Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport.** The Department of Transport Tourism & Sport (DTTAS) through the Irish Coast Guard (IRCG) has the responsibility for exercising Government’s responsibility for Marine Search and Rescue (SAR) in the Irish Search and Rescue Region (SRR)<sup>1</sup> including Irish territorial waters, harbours and coastline.

**3. Role of DFB**

Dublin City Council operates Dublin Fire Brigade as a full time Fire, Ambulance and Emergency Rescue Service for the four Dublin Local Authorities of Dublin: Dublin City, Fingal, South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Councils. To facilitate the provision of this service DFB employs over 1,000 personnel working in 6 districts with 12 full-time stations, 2 retained (part-time) stations, a Training Centre, an East Regional

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<sup>1</sup> The Irish Coast Guard as the 4th PES is responsible for the initiation, control, coordination and response to maritime emergencies (Search & Rescue, Pollution, Salvage, and Casualty) in the Irish territorial waters, harbours and coastline, which include the Irish International Search and Rescue Region and the Pollution Responsibility Zone – [www.mem.ie](http://www.mem.ie)

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Control Centre. All whole-time stations are staffed around the clock seven days per week by officers and fire-fighters. Dublin Fire Brigade provides a range of specialist skills and vehicles. Part of this response has seen the evolution of a Swift Water Rescue (SRT) and rescue boat capability for rapid response river, inland water way search and rescue and flood response.

4. **Role of IRCG.** IRCG, a Division of DTTAS, is the designated body with responsibility for the initiation and co-ordination of maritime emergency management, including, Search and Rescue (SAR), oil, hazardous and noxious substance and pollution incidents within the Irish Maritime Search and Rescue Region and Irish Exclusive Economic Zone<sup>2</sup>. 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 Ireland.

5. **Definitions**

- a. **Major Emergency<sup>3</sup>;** A Major Emergency is any event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the principal emergency services in the area in which the event occurs, and requires the activation of specific additional procedures and the mobilisation of additional resources to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response.
- b. **Coastal Incident;** A coastal incident is an incident which develops on the “seaward” side of the coastline below the level of mean high waters spring tides (MHWS) which requires the activation of Marine Search and Rescue measures for vessels/craft or persons in need of assistance in the Irish Search and Rescue Region.
- c. **Inland Waterways;** Inland waterways are defined as fresh water navigational rivers, lakes and canals, excluding ports and harbours with access to the sea.
- d. **East Regional Control Centre (ERCC);** The ERCC is managed by Dublin Fire Brigade, and manages calls for all fire and rescue operations for the four (4) Dublin Local Authorities as well as fire calls for twelve (12) other counties. The Centre also receives and processes Ambulance calls for most of the Dublin Region. The East Regional Control Centre processes in excess of 130,000 Fire, Accident and Emergency Ambulance calls annually.
- e. **NMOC Dublin;** National Maritime Operations Centre (incorporates Marine Rescue Coordination Centre - Dublin) operated and managed by IRCG.

<sup>2</sup> Incorporating Pollution Response Zone

<sup>3</sup> Framework for Emergency Management

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- f. **On Scene Coordinator;** A person designated by IRCG to coordinate search and rescue operations within a specified area<sup>4</sup>.
- g. **On Site Coordinator;** The person designated by relevant PRA to chair the “On-Site Co-ordinating Group”, as outlined in the Framework for Emergency Management.
- h. **Declared Resources:** SAR resources which are designated as being available to IRCG according to a specific standard or set of criteria.

## 6. Service Description

*The following services and functions are encompassed in the Agreement:*

- a. **The services DFB will provide under this MoU.**
  - i. DFB will liaise with the IRCG in order to help develop and review standard working and coordination arrangements.
  - ii. The DFB, in declaring its SAR facilities, is responsible for:
    - Declaring the standard of capability for the SAR resource;
    - Declaring the availability of each of its SAR resources;
    - Maintaining each of its facilities to the declared standard and availability;
    - Informing the IRCG when there is any change in the declared standard or availability for each facility;
  - iii. At all times the management, safety and control of DFB resources remain under the control of DFB and involvement will be at the discretion of the Chief Fire Officer.
  - iv. The decision by DFB to go beyond the stated operational limits as outlined in this MoU will be based on an on-scene risk assessment conducted at that time.
- b. **The services IRCG will provide under this MoU.**
  - i. IRCG will liaise with DFB in order to help develop and review standard working and coordination arrangements.
  - ii. The NMOC is responsible for promoting efficient organisation of search and rescue services and for coordinating the conduct of search and rescue operations within the area designated in the MOU, to include;
    - Obtaining and evaluating all relevant information from appropriate sources;
    - Initiating distress and urgency broadcasts as necessary;
    - Alerting and tasking appropriate marine SAR resources;

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<sup>4</sup> IAMSAR Manual

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- Alerting emergency services as required;
- Determining search areas, formulating search plans and tasking resources effectively;
- Appointing an OSC, where appropriate, to exercise co-ordination at the scene of SAR operations;
- Co-ordinating the action of all SAR units involved;
- Mobilising units to assist with the search for survivors

## **7. Resources and Operational Control**

- a. DFB have a declared capacity to provide a Search and Rescue capability in the Greater Dublin area, which includes a designated area of the River Liffey. DFB will continue to provide a continuous and immediate response capability as enabled by Section 25 of the 1981 & 2003 Fire Service Act.
- b. While responding to distress, a DFB Boat remains under operational control of DFB.
- c. DFB afloat resources, including crewing and medical standards are set out in Appendix 2 to this document.
- d. IRCG has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to marine emergencies. Existing arrangements enable NMOC to transfer relevant 999/112 calls to DFB control.
- e. DFB shall inform IRCG of any changes to operational status, availability or launches for training of rescue craft.
- f. The Irish Coast Guard has a nationwide 24/7 helicopter service with advanced search equipment.
- g. An IRCG boat unit is located in Howth and a shoreline search team is located in Dun Laoire. RNLI resources located in Dun Laoire and Howth are available for tasking by NMOC Dublin.

## **8. Management of Marine Incidents**

- a. When ERCC is made aware of any marine distress, or has initiated a response to a marine incident, DFB shall immediately notify NMOC Dublin.
- b. When NMOC Dublin is made aware of an incident on the River Liffey that may warrant a response, NMOC Dublin shall immediately notify the ERCC and, where considered appropriate, request an immediate response which may include DFB rescue boat.
- c. The decision to undertake any task requested of DFB by NMOC Dublin rests with DFB.
- d. NMOC Dublin shall notify DFB Control of any additional response resources tasked to the incident, including rescue boats, helicopters or other craft.
- e. When engaged in a response DFB rescue boat shall communicate with NMOC Dublin, IRCG Helos or any lifeboat via VHF channel 16 or a designated working marine VHF channel.

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- i. In exceptional circumstances DFB incident commanders may request to communicate directly with IRCG Helo via the NMOC.
- f. NMOC Dublin will be responsible for informing Dublin port control of any SAR operations initiated on the River Liffey.
- g. Communications arrangements and contact details are set out in Appendix (1) to this document.
- h. In the event of a Marine / Land based major emergency being declared which requires joint working at scene;
  - i. an IRCG Liaison Officer will be appointed to the local coordination centre and,
  - ii. a DFB liaison Officer will be appointed to NMOC and,
  - iii. an On Scene Coordinator will be appointed by NMOC.
  - iv. an On-Site Coordinator will be selected as per Framework<sup>5</sup>

## 9. Exercise and Training

- a. NMOC and DFB Control will arrange for staff exchanges to facilitate an understanding of working routines in the respective centres.ie. DFB control and NMOC.
- b. NMOC and DFB will conduct at least one annual exercise.
- c. NMOC will organise joint exercises with RNLI, and Dublin area Coast Guard units and helicopters.
- d. IRCG and DFB will continue to engage in local training and exercise initiatives.
- e. Communication arrangements with NMOC will be exercised during routine DFB boat training

## 10. Indemnity & Insurance.

- a. The IRCG has no liability with regard to DFB Marine Emergency Response Teams. In all cases indemnity and liability for the DFB equipment and personnel and any associated actions rest with the DFB.
- b. The DFB has no liability with regard to IRCG response assets. In all cases indemnity and liability for the Irish Coast Guard equipment and personnel rest with the Irish Coast Guard.
- c. DFB will declare their craft as “in all respects fit for service” annually to the IRCG following its internal annual operational readiness audit, which may be recorded in the MoU meeting minutes.

<sup>5</sup> The Framework for Major Emergency Management was developed in 2005 and was adopted by Government decision in 2006.

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**11. Standards**

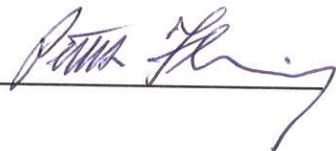
- a. This MoU does not cover craft (and associated power and rescue equipment) construction, certification, maintenance, insurance or servicing which remain a matter for DFB. DFB agree that all craft, will at a minimum, meet the DTTAS Code of Practice for Recreational Craft.
- b. This MoU does not cover DFB crew training and standards which remain a matter for DFB.

**12. Duration of Agreement** The Agreement will come into effect on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 and shall be reviewed and amended from time to time subject to the agreement of the parties.

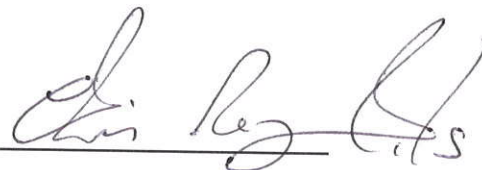
**13. Endorsement** Consultation has taken place and agreement has been reached between the DFB and the Irish Coast Guard.

**14.** The Harbour Master Dublin Port has been consulted and has endorsed this MOU.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



**Date:** 23 February 2016

**P Fleming**  
Chief Fire Officer  
Dublin Fire Brigade

**Date:** 23 February 2016

**C Reynolds**  
Director  
Irish Coast Guard

Copy: Harbour Master Dublin Port

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## Appendix 1

To Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Dublin Fire Brigade and The Irish Coast Guard

### ***IRCG Contact Details***

#### Operations

NMOC <sup>6</sup> Irish Coast Guard (24 hour SPOC)	Tel	00353 1 6620922 / 7751602
	Fax	00353 1 6620795
	E-mail	<a href="mailto:DublinNMOC@dtas.ie">DublinNMOC@dtas.ie</a>
		112; ask for Coast Guard (Dublin)
Division Controller <sup>7</sup>	Tel	01-6783436 / 087-2802907 / 087 1770593

#### Administration & Other.

Coast Guard Admin Non-Emergency	Tel	00353 1 6783454
	Fax	00353 1 6783459
	Mobile	00353 87 1770593
	E-mail	<a href="mailto:admin@irishcoastguard.ie">admin@irishcoastguard.ie</a>

### ***DFB Contact Details***

#### Operations

ERCC Emergency No	Tel	112, ask for Dublin Fire Brigade
Mobilisation Officer	Tel	00353 1 6734134

#### Administration & Other

DFB Headquarters (Non-Emergency)	Tel	00353 1 6734000
	Fax	00353 1 6734085
	E-mail	

<sup>6</sup> National Maritime Operations Centre incorporating Dublin Marine Rescue Coordination Centre.

<sup>7</sup> i.e. Manager of NMOC

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### *Operational Communications Arrangements*

	<b>NMOC</b>	<b>DFB Boat</b>
Call signs	<i>Dublin Coast Guard Radio</i>	<i>DFB Rescue One</i>
		<i>DFB Rescue Two</i>
VHF Channels	VHF & Working channel as designated by NMOC – Channels 16, 67 or as otherwise specified.	
NMOC/ERCC	Land Lines	
Tetra	Not specified.	

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**Appendix 2,**  
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***Data Sheet***

**Dublin Fire Brigade; Rescue Craft: SAR – Rescue 1 - Rigid Inflatable Boat**



**Principal role:** Search and Rescue and transport

**Expected Launch time:** 8-10 Minutes from first emergency Call

**Area of Operation:** From, Heuston Station To Outer Dublin Bar Buoy (Buoys 3 & 4).

**Craft description**

- **Length:** 6.1m
- **Width;** 2.60m
- **Draft:** 0.80m
- **Displacement:** 1400kg (without Crew)
- **Max speed:** 24 kts
- **Endurance:** Twin 80 litre tanks, 45 nm

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- **Hull material:** GRP
- **Engine:** Twin Yamaha 70 HP. (with prop guards)
- **Crew:** min 3
- **Medical:** Crew all qualified Paramedics
- **Maximum Capacity** max 8
- **Other information:**

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