Marine Incidents

Document number (AP004/PS006)

Next Review Due 31/03/2029

1. Purpose

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (HIWFRA) is committed to ensuring that Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have an efficient and effective fire and rescue service which makes life safer for everyone.

This is HIWFRA's Position Statement for Marine Incidents and forms part of the HIWFRA's Response Policy.

2. Authority's Position

There are significant risks that exist within the Solent and Isle of Wight area, and our communities and marine professionals will expect HIWFRA to have the expertise and capability to respond to those risks.

HIWFRA have a statutory duty to attend only some types of fire incidents involving marine vessels.

Marine incidents fall into two areas:

- Fires in vessels moored alongside
- Fires in vessels at sea

<u>Fires in vessels moored alongside</u>

Fires in vessels moored alongside are part of HIWFRA's statutory duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Section 11. HIWFRA must make provision for extinguishing fires, protecting life and property in its area. This requirement includes vessels and structures that are secured to the shore.

This means that Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) has a duty to respond to incidents on vessels moored at or alongside Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight ports and the many marinas on the south coast of Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight.

Fires in vessels at sea

It is not part of HIWFRA's statutory duty to respond to incidents below the mean low water mark, such as any vessel deemed afloat and not moored alongside, but HIWFRA has the powers to do so within the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Section 11.

HIWFRA may take action it considers appropriate in a situation that causes or is likely to cause individuals to die, be injured or become ill, or where there is harm to the environment. This power to act may be exercised outside of the authority's area (Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Section 11). This power may be exercised at sea (Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Section 20).

We will maintain the capability for response to fires in marine vessels at sea.

We will provide the capability for response to incidents within the Solent and Isle of Wight area and respond to risks to life.

HIWFRS have a Maritime Response Team (MRT), trained specifically in fire incidents at sea and may be deployed as an airborne or seaborne response. HIWFRS's MRT provides thorough tactical planning, including an assessment to establish the exact nature of the incident, liaison with vessels' crews and marine agencies. This early intervention, enables a shorter resolution of incidents, providing preparation for firefighting when the vessel is moored alongside and reduces firefighter risks, making operations more efficient and effective. HIWFRA delegates the operational discretion to respond 'at sea' to HIWFRS Chief Fire Officer, in accordance with its Constitution.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) supports the Fire and Rescue Services that maintain this 'at sea' capability called the Fire and Rescue Maritime Response group.

HIWFRS's MRT are a designated national asset and may respond to incidents 'at sea' outside the Authority's area and are not restricted to the territorial sea of the United Kingdom.

We will maintain a nationally declared capability for HIWFRS to respond to marine incidents that may be deployed outside of the Authority's area.

We will provide the capability of responding to vessels on route to Hampshire or Isle of Wight Ports, providing an enhanced capability once alongside.

We will ensure maintenance of the appropriate resources to facilities the required capability.

We will continue to collaborate with partners to enable efficient and effective ways for all agencies to respond to incidents at sea.