



National
Operational
Guidance

Emergency call management: People at risk

Emergency call management: People at risk 0.12 Consultation copy

Date: 21 February 2022

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk.....	4
Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk.....	7
Control measure – Joint understanding of risk: People at risk.....	12
Control measure – Effective communication: People at risk.....	16
Control measure – Evacuation guidance: People at risk.....	24
Control measure – Safety advice: People at risk.....	30
Control measure – Share information with other agencies: People at risk.....	31
Control measure – Use media to share information: People at risk.....	32
Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk: Fire.....	34
Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk – Building fire.....	36
Control measure – Safety advice: People at risk – Fire.....	39
Control measure – Evacuation guidance: People at risk - building fire.....	40
Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk: Burns and scalds.....	44
Control measure – Situational awareness: Calls from or about people at risk – Burns and scalds.....	45
Control measure – Provide burn injury advice.....	46
Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk: Water.....	49
Hazard knowledge.....	49
Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk – Water.....	54
Control measure – Situational awareness: Submerged casualties.....	56
Control measure – Safety advice: People at risk – Water.....	58
Control measure – Evacuation guidance: People at risk – Water.....	60
Control measure – Share information with other agencies: People at risk – Water.....	62
Control measure – Use media to share information: People at risk – Water.....	65
Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk: Stranded on a road network.....	65
Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk on a road network.....	66
Control measure – Safety advice: People at risk on a road network.....	67

3 **Introduction**

4 **This guidance should be read in conjunction with:**

5 [Fire control guidance: Fire survival guidance](#)

6 [Fire control guidance: Water survival guidance](#)

7 **Person at risk** – A person involved in any situation that exposes them to a risk of injury, illness or
8 death.

9 **Evacuation** – The immediate and urgent movement of people away from a threatened or existing
10 hazard.

11 **Persons reported** – These are incidents involving people believed to be physically at risk from
12 fire, for example trapped by or in physical contact with a fire. ‘Persons reported’ incidents may
13 involve people trapped in a building, vehicle or area.

14 **Trapped** – People at risk who may be unable to reach a place of safety due to:

- 15 • Their ability
- 16 • The location of the incident and how it is developing
- 17 • Hazards preventing them from leaving, or their perception of those hazards
- 18 • Physical limitations of the environment
- 19 • Physical entrapment
- 20 • Concern for others

21 Survival guidance may be provided to help people at risk who are trapped to stay safe until they
22 can be rescued or the hazards controlled.

23 When managing emergency calls where the caller or other members of the public are at risk, fire
24 control personnel should provide appropriate safety advice and reassurance to callers. This advice
25 should:

- 26 • Ensure the safety of members of the public, operational personnel and other emergency
27 responders
- 28 • Help to prevent escalation of the incident
- 29 • Assist people at risk getting to a place of safety
- 30 • Assist operational personnel in the rescue of people at risk

31 This guidance document should be read in conjunction with:

- 32 • Survival guidance – which will provide the information and advice that should be provided
33 to people at risk who are trapped

34 **Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk**

35 *HAZARD KNOWLEDGE*

36 This hazard should be read in conjunction with Hazard – Calls from or about multiple people at risk

37 Fire control personnel will receive emergency calls from or about people at risk. There may be a
38 risk of harm from incidents involving:

- 39 • Fire
- 40 • Water
- 41 • Hazardous materials
- 42 • People trapped
- 43 • Unexploded devices

44 People may become indirectly involved in the incident, which places them at risk because:

- 45 • They are concerned about people or animals involved in the incident
- 46 • They are trying to assist with the incident
- 47 • They want to observe the incident or the activity of emergency responders
- 48 • The incident is affecting a large area or number of people, for example smoke plumes
49 affecting numerous properties

50 A person may remain at risk even after they have evacuated or moved away from the initial
51 hazard, for example if they have evacuated from a vehicle fire on the motorway but cannot leave
52 the motorway and reach a place of safety.

53 People at risk may put themselves or others at greater risk as they attempt to self-evacuate. This is
54 because:

- 55 • Normal evacuation routes are compromised by the effects of the incident
- 56 • They cannot evacuate without injury
- 57 • They attempt to evacuate through unsuitable exits, for example windows at height
- 58 • They do not raise the alarm for others
- 59 • They do not follow safety advice to prevent escalation of the incident
- 60 • They are unfamiliar with building layout

61 People at risk may appear to be physically able but unwilling to follow advice being given by fire
62 control personnel because of:

- 63 • Emotional distress or fear caused by the incident
- 64 • Perception of the dangers relating to the actions they are being asked to take

- 65 • Unwillingness to leave a person, possession or animal
- 66 • A desire to assist with the incident
- 67 • Concern about other people
- 68 • Religious, cultural or social beliefs

69

70 People at risk may find it difficult to follow advice due to a mobility impairment. People with a
71 mobility impairment may have weakened physical, cognitive or sensory functions that affect their
72 ability to reach a place of safety unaided, but who can still move under their own power. Refer to
73 [‘Mobility-impaired’](#) for more information.

74 **Barriers to communication**

75 When communicating with people at risk, there is a requirement for the caller to share information
76 and follow the safety advice or survival guidance being given by fire control personnel. There may
77 be communication barriers that prevent the caller from understanding or following advice; for
78 example they could:

- 79 • Have communication difficulties
- 80 • Be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- 81 • Have English as their second or third language
- 82 • Be emotionally distraught or hysterical
- 83 • Be angry and verbally aggressive

84 Indicators of a communication barrier can include:

- 85 • Delayed responses
- 86 • Difficulty for the person at risk in understanding the questions that fire control personnel are
87 asking
- 88 • Difficulty for fire control personnel in understanding the responses of the person at risk

89 **People with communication difficulties**

90 People with communication difficulties may find it difficult to:

- 91 • Express themselves through speaking
- 92 • Understand spoken words
- 93 • Listen to what is being said directly to them or around them
- 94 • Remember information they have been given
- 95 • Express their feelings and emotions
- 96 • Describe what has happened

97 • Provide a clear sequence of events

98 People with communication difficulties may find noisy situations or complicated instructions
99 stressful, especially when trying to communicate over the phone.

100 A person's ability to communicate can be under- or over-estimated. For example, a person with a
101 physical impairment that affects their speech may give the impression that their level of
102 comprehension is low (under-estimation). In contrast, someone who speaks very well may give the
103 impression that their level of comprehension is high (over-estimation). Both can have negative
104 consequences on someone's motivation to communicate, leading to a communication breakdown.

105 **People under the influence of drugs or alcohol**

106 People at risk may not be able to follow safety or evacuation advice and guidance because they
107 are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This may affect their ability to interpret and understand
108 what is being said to them and to follow instructions. Signs of alcohol or drug consumption include:

- 109 • Slurred or incoherent speech
- 110 • Rambling or repetitive statements
- 111 • Talking loudly

112 It may be difficult for fire control personnel to identify whether people at risk are under the influence
113 of drugs or alcohol as some of the examples above can also indicate a medical condition, fear or
114 physical or mental impairment.

115 **People who are aggressive or abusive**

116 People at risk may be angry and verbally aggressive towards fire control personnel. This may be
117 because they are worried and scared, and fear can manifest itself in abusive language and an
118 aggressive manner. This behaviour can make it more challenging for fire control personnel to
119 provide advice and guidance to the caller.

120 The person at risk may be distraught and unco-operative and may reach their 'hysteria threshold'
121 where their emotional state prevents them from focusing on the questions being asked.

122 Calls from or about people at risk are likely to take longer than other calls because, for example:

- 123 • Distressed or confused callers cannot provide the required information to fire control
124 personnel
- 125 • Callers are more concerned with getting others to safety than communicating with fire
126 control personnel
- 127 • Fire control personnel are providing safety advice, evacuation guidance or survival
128 guidance while the caller is following this advice and guidance

129 Fire control personnel should be aware that people may be confused or upset by the questions
130 they are being asked and the advice and guidance they are being given.

131

132 **Emotional stress**

133 There may be occasions when fire control personnel are speaking to someone who may not
134 survive. Fire control personnel will need to consider carefully what to say, and when it would be
135 reasonable to end the call.

136 Due to the nature of calls involving people at risk, there may be an increased level of stress and
137 pressure on people at risk, members of the public, fire control personnel and operational personnel
138 involved in the incident. This may lead to difficulties in gathering accurate incident location
139 information.

140 Handling calls from people who are emotionally distressed can have profound and long-lasting
141 effects on fire control personnel.

142 When operational personnel are alerted to respond to an incident, the choice of words and phrases
143 used in mobilisation messages may cause them to make a judgement about the urgency of the
144 incident. This may cause a stress reaction that affects their physical and mental ability to respond
145 safely.

146 **Information received from other emergency control rooms**

147 Fire control personnel will receive information from other Category 1 and Category 2 emergency
148 control rooms about incidents involving people at risk. This information will have been obtained to
149 determine their own agency's incident categorisation and response. Fire control personnel may
150 need to ask additional questions to determine the level of response of the fire and rescue service
151 and ensure appropriate guidance is provided.

152 Appropriate incident categorisation is essential to ensure the correct mobilisation of resources and
153 that all required actions are carried out. For incidents where it is indicated or confirmed that people
154 are trapped, this may include mobilising specialist resources and sharing situational awareness
155 with other emergency controls.

156 Given the interdependencies of the topics, it is important that this Emergency call management:
157 People at risk guidance is read in conjunction with Multiple calls and multiple incidents and Fire
158 control command guidance.

159 **Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk**

160 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

161 When dealing with people at risk who are distressed, scared or confused, fire control personnel
162 may find it difficult to gather accurate incident location details. In such situations, use of Enhanced
163 Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC) or Advanced Mobile Location (AML) will provide
164 address and location information if the call is ended before the address is given or if the caller
165 cannot provide the necessary information.

166 Accurate situational awareness will help fire control personnel to categorise the type of call and
167 identify the hazards and risks associated with the incident. This will enable them to share risk-
168 critical information with the personnel attending, provide appropriate evacuation guidance, safety
169 advice or survival guidance and apply dynamic mobilising strategies if the incident or the situation
170 of the people at risk changes.

171 Situational awareness can be gathered from:

- 172 • Questioning callers about the incident, their location and environment
 - 173 • Occupant and premises risk information that is held on the mobilising system, for example
 - 174 Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI)
 - 175 • Risk information shared by other agencies
 - 176 • Updates from operational personnel
 - 177 • Location and vehicle information from in-vehicle safety systems
- 178 Risk information may be out-of-date or inaccurate, and appropriate continual assessment and
- 179 questioning to determine the hazards and risks should still take place.
- 180 It is important to determine whether the people at risk are in a place that will remain safe until the
- 181 incident is resolved or they can be rescued. If people at risk are not in such a place, then it should
- 182 be established whether they are able to evacuate.
- 183 If people at risk inform fire control personnel that they cannot evacuate, or they delay doing so, fire
- 184 control personnel should investigate further to find out why. For example, people at risk may be
- 185 unable or unwilling to leave because:
- 186 • They are injured or otherwise unable to leave
 - 187 • They are distressed or fearful
 - 188 • They are concerned for others
 - 189 • They are attempting to rescue other people, animals or possessions
- 190 This will allow fire control personnel to determine whether the people at risk are physically unable
- 191 to evacuate or whether it is their perception or unwillingness that they cannot evacuate. All
- 192 possible means of evacuation should be explored before giving survival guidance.
- 193 Several key points determine the advice that fire control personnel give to people at risk, and the
- 194 same key points will also assist operational personnel at the scene:
- 195 • The immediate level of risk to the people concerned
 - 196 • The condition, number, age and ability of the people at risk
 - 197 • Whether the people at risk are under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - 198 • The location of the people at risk
 - 199 • The environment the people at risk are in, for example:
 - 200 ○ Road network
 - 201 ○ Water
 - 202 ○ Building or structure
- 203 If people are unable to evacuate, the incident should be categorised as 'persons reported', which
- 204 may affect:
- 205 • The mobilisation of additional resources or personnel where appropriate

206 • The police and ambulance services' response priority level

207 • The tactical plan of the incident commander

208 Fire control personnel can declare 'persons reported' incidents at the point of the first emergency
209 call or following repeat or duplicate calls, or operational personnel may do so when they arrive at
210 the incident.

211 Following the declaration of a 'persons reported' incident, and once operational personnel are
212 confident that no one is trapped, operational personnel must confirm with fire control personnel that
213 everyone has been accounted for. Fire control personnel should prompt operational personnel to
214 make this confirmation if it is not forthcoming.

215 Because incidents change and potentially escalate quickly, it is vital that information gathered is
216 continually reviewed and reassessed, particularly if survival guidance is being given. Fire control
217 personnel can ask simple questions to determine whether conditions are deteriorating, for
218 example:

219 • 'Has anything changed?'

220 • 'Has the situation got better or worse for you?'

221 • 'What has happened since I last asked you?'

222 • 'Tell me exactly what is happening now?'

223 • 'Is there more or less of the hazard?'

224 During the call, fire control personnel can listen for other potential indicators of how the situation is
225 changing and how this is affecting the people at risk, for example:

226 • Vocal signals, such as:

227 • Raised or lowered voice

228 • Rapid or slow speech

229 • Periods of silence

230 • Coughing or spluttering

231 • Sounds in the background from other people at risk

232 • Alarms actuating

233 If fire control personnel identify any change in the situation, or the advice given to the people at risk
234 changes, this should be communicated verbally to operational personnel immediately. If the
235 situational information received from operational personnel requires a change of advice, this
236 should be immediately relayed to all people at risk. Control measure Evacuation guidance: People
237 at risk contains further information.

238 Operational personnel should provide regular updates, which should be used to maintain
239 situational awareness. Fire control personnel and operational personnel should reach a shared
240 understanding of risk, which should be used to identify whether advice to people at risk should

241 change. Timely, efficient and proactive communication by operational personnel is necessary to
242 ensure that fire control personnel's situational awareness is maintained.

243 Where possible, contact should be maintained with people at risk until they have reached a place
244 of safety. If the people at risk are already in a place of safety or contact cannot be maintained, then
245 a method of recontacting the caller should be agreed. Contact may not be maintained when, for
246 example:

- 247 • The caller is calling from a landline that does not have a cordless handset
- 248 • The caller has a cordless handset that needs to be taken out of range of its base unit

249 Fire control personnel may receive emergency calls from people who are not at risk or from friends
250 and relatives indicating that there could be people at risk. These calls should be classed as
251 'persons reported' and details regarding the specific location of people at risk, if known, should be
252 recorded and passed to operational personnel promptly.

253 People at the scene of an incident may be on the phone to people who are trapped or at risk. They
254 may attempt to pass the phone to operational personnel for them to provide advice, guidance and
255 reassurance. Operational personnel should inform people at the scene or people at risk on the
256 phone to clear the line and dial 999 to speak to fire control personnel who can provide appropriate
257 guidance.

258 Operational personnel should attempt to gather the specific location and number of people who are
259 at risk and share this information with the appropriate sector on the incident ground and with fire
260 control personnel.

261 To ensure prompt mobilisation of resources the fire control commander, another supervisory
262 manager or suitably experienced team member may mobilise appropriate resources to an incident
263 while an emergency call is ongoing. This will allow the fire control emergency call taker to focus on
264 providing safety advice or survival guidance. More information can be found in [Fire control
265 command guidance – Emergency call supervision.](#)

266 **Other emergency control rooms**

267 When calls are received from other category 1 and 2 emergency control rooms about people at
268 risk, fire control personnel should request all information gathered by the other agency during the
269 call. There may be occasions where information is not shared because the agency receiving the
270 call believes the information is not relevant. Fire control personnel should apply appropriate
271 questioning techniques to obtain additional information to enable them to mobilise an appropriate
272 fire and rescue service response.

273 **In-vehicle safety systems**

274 For incidents involving people who have been involved in a road traffic collision and are trapped or
275 unable to dial 999 manually, the use of in-vehicle safety systems will help to provide information to
276 emergency control room personnel.

277 Emergency calls may be received from vehicles with eCall, where a call is generated manually by
278 the vehicle occupants or automatically via activation of in-vehicle sensors following a collision. The
279 system allows the vehicle occupants to communicate verbally if they can, and vehicle location data
280 is also sent to the call handling agent. This data can be passed to fire control personnel, enhancing
281 their situational awareness.

282 Likewise, emergency calls may be received from vehicles that have a Telematics service that uses
283 mobile phone technology linked to global positioning system (GPS) information from satellites. This
284 service sends a message to a call handling agent with vehicle and location data prior to setting up
285 a voice call.

286 When an eCall or Telematics call is connected to the fire control room, the emergency operator will
287 highlight that the call is an 'eCall mobile' or 'Telematics mobile' and give the GPS location
288 information. If there is a delay in receipt of the location data, the emergency operator will interrupt
289 with location details when it becomes available.

290 If the caller cannot supply the information required, fire control personnel can ask the emergency
291 operator for further details and can usually obtain the direction of travel, make, model, colour and
292 registration of the vehicle or its identification number, and sometimes other personal information
293 supplied by the customer.

294 Some vehicles have safety systems that, if the car is involved in an accident where the airbag is
295 deployed or the fuel pump cut off, will make an emergency call from the customer's mobile phone.
296 When the emergency operator receives the call, a message will be played giving the co-ordinates
297 of the caller's location. If the call is silent, or there are problems obtaining the location from the
298 caller, the call playback facility can be used to allow the co-ordinates to be played directly to fire
299 control personnel.

300 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

301 Fire services should:

- 302 • Ensure up-to-date risk information can be accessed by fire control personnel
- 303 • Ensure that a process is in place for inaccuracies in risk information to be resolved and
304 systems updated
- 305 • Consider the use of system-based call prompts or aide-memoires to assist fire control
306 personnel gain situational awareness
- 307 • Ensure methods are in place to use or translate co-ordinates to determine an address for
308 use within the mobilising system

309 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

310 Fire control personnel should:

- 311 • Use professional judgement, emergency call management techniques and available risk
312 information to develop situational awareness
- 313 • Appropriately identify and categorise incidents as 'persons reported'
- 314 • Establish whether survival guidance is required
- 315 • Establish a method of recontacting the caller if required
- 316 • Establish the condition, number and ability of the people who are at risk and their location in
317 relation to the incident
- 318 • Establish whether people at risk are in, or are able to move to a place of safety, and any

- 319 immediate hazards
- 320 • If possible, maintain contact with the caller until people at risk have been rescued
- 321 • Continually reassess the situation and recognise signs that the situation may be changing
322 or deteriorating
- 323 • Consider instructing people at risk to evacuate immediately or move to a different location if
324 it is recognised that the situation has deteriorated and they are in imminent danger
- 325 • Continually exchange information between fire control and operational personnel, and use
326 that information to develop situational awareness and amend safety advice and guidance
327 as required
- 328 • Obtain all information gathered by other Category 1 and 2 emergency controls during
329 emergency call management
- 330 • Obtain information about the make and model of vehicles, where possible, and share it with
331 operational personnel
- 332 • Use information obtained from in-vehicle safety systems for locating incidents

333 **Control measure – Joint understanding of risk: People at risk**

334 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

335 Joint understanding of risk can be achieved by sharing information about known, likely and
336 potential impacts of hazards. The sharing of information will allow all hazards to be considered and
337 their risks understood.

338 A joint understanding of risk should be maintained between fire control and operational personnel
339 as well as other responding agencies when handling calls from or about people at risk. This will
340 support the safety of operational personnel and other emergency responders, reduce the impact
341 that the hazards may have on members of the public and operational personnel and allow a co-
342 ordinated response to an incident.

343 To prevent a delay in the sharing of risk-critical information with operational personnel or other
344 control rooms, the fire control commander should ensure that information from an emergency call
345 that is in progress is accurately understood and shared appropriately with operational personnel
346 and other agencies. This task may be allocated to another member of the team. More information
347 can be found in [Fire control command – Emergency call supervision](#) and [Fire control command -
348 Organisation of the fire control function](#).

349 When it has been established on the initial call that an incident is 'persons reported', the use of
350 specific 'persons reported' incident types within the mobilising system will provide an early alert to
351 operational personnel. Where a 'persons reported' incident type is not appropriate, this should be
352 made clear in additional information fields.

353 If the incident becomes 'persons reported' after mobilisation has taken place, this should be
354 communicated immediately to operational personnel.

355 'Persons reported' declarations should also be passed to other emergency service control rooms.

356 When an 'all persons accounted for' message is received and police and ambulance are not yet in
357 attendance, this should be shared with their control rooms to enable them to determine an
358 appropriate response.

359 When sharing incident information, the M/ETHANE structure should be considered. Incident
360 information may be shared with:

- 361 • Operational personnel
- 362 • Fire and rescue service command officers
- 363 • Fire and rescue service specialist officers and emergency responders
- 364 • Other fire control rooms
- 365 • Other emergency service control rooms

366 To ensure the most up-to-date and accurate information is shared, the collation of information in
367 the M/ETHANE structure should be easily identifiable within the incident log and any changes to
368 the M/ETHANE information should be updated promptly. This will ensure all those viewing the log
369 can easily locate current information.

370 To support the effective and timely sharing of information, a single method of communication
371 should be agreed and established with operational personnel and other agencies to allow
372 information to be shared and received. The options available include:

- 373 • The use of a dedicated radio channel to communicate with operational personnel
- 374 • The use of a telecommunications link or conference call
- 375 • Using the Emergency Services Inter Control (ESICTRL) Airwave talkgroup

376 When deciding which method of communication to use, consideration should be given to the most
377 appropriate method that will support timely, efficient and accurate sharing of risk-critical
378 information. Where possible, methods of communication should be via a system that is recorded.
379 This will allow the review and validation of information when required.

380 To support consistency of the information shared, a single point of contact between fire control, the
381 incident ground and other emergency service control rooms should be considered.

382 Before operational personnel are in attendance and a command structure or a command point has
383 been established, information regarding people at risk should be shared with all operational
384 personnel via an agreed method that enables confirmation of receipt of information. Once
385 operational personnel are in attendance and a command point has been designated, ongoing
386 communication and sharing of information should take place via this channel. Fire control
387 personnel should be informed what the designated command point is, and this should be recorded
388 and made clear on the incident log.

389 If fire control personnel cannot make contact or share information with operational personnel via
390 the designated method of communication while en route to an incident, or with the designated
391 command point once in attendance, efforts should be made to make contact via alternative
392 methods, for example:

- 393 • Mobile phone or radio for an alternative fire appliance that is en route or in attendance

394 • Mobile phone or radio for an officer who is en route or in attendance

395 • Mobile Data Terminal (MDT)

396 • Pager message

397 The incident ground should provide regular updates to support joint understanding of risk between
398 fire control and the incident ground regarding people at risk. Fire control personnel should take a
399 proactive approach to request incident updates and maintain shared awareness and understanding
400 when such updates are delayed or are not being received.

401 Any critical information received in fire control should be shared with all fire control personnel using
402 an agreed method. Critical information may be shared electronically or verbally, but confirmation of
403 knowledge and understanding from all fire control personnel should be sought and recorded.

404 Examples of critical information in this context include:

405 • A change in evacuation strategy

406 • A change to the advice or guidance that fire control personnel are giving

407 Emergency calls may be misrouted to other fire control rooms. If these calls involve people who
408 are trapped and are receiving survival guidance, all information regarding the people who are
409 trapped and the advice they have been given should be shared with the host fire control room. This
410 will enable the information to be shared with operational personnel to support a joint understanding
411 of risk.

412 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

413 Fire services should:

414 • Configure mobilising systems to include 'persons reported' incident types

415 • Consider electronic methods of communication between the control room and the incident
416 ground

417 • Ensure a direct method of contact is available between the control room and operational
418 personnel

419 • Ensure a direct method of contact is available between other emergency service control
420 rooms

421 • Ensure processes are in place to allow up to date M/ETHANE information to be readily
422 identified within incident logs by all those viewing them

423 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

424 Fire control personnel should:

425 • Update incident logs with complete, clear and accurate information

426 • Ensure information gathered during ongoing emergency calls is shared appropriately within
427 fire control

428 • Inform operational personnel if an incident becomes 'persons reported' after mobilisation

- 429 has taken place
- 430 • Share relevant information, including 'persons reported' incidents, using the M/ETHANE
431 structure when appropriate
- 432 • Ensure M/ETHANE information is recorded on the incident log and updated promptly
- 433 • Agree a method of communication with operational personnel
- 434 • Communicate effectively with other Category 1 emergency control rooms
- 435 • Communicate effectively with other fire control rooms
- 436 • Consider nominating and maintaining a single point of contact within the fire control room to
437 communicate with other fire and emergency service control rooms
- 438 • Agree a method for fire control personnel to indicate acknowledgement and understanding
439 of risk-critical information
- 440 • Share all appropriate information with the host fire control room if a misrouted call is
441 received
- 442

443 **Control measure – Effective communication: People at risk**

444 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

445 Effective communication occurs when information is given and received without the meaning being
446 distorted or changed. The information given and received can be influenced by the type of
447 questions and manner of questioning. Fire control personnel should give clear and direct
448 instructions to people at risk and provide people at risk the time to carry out those instructions.

449 Fire control personnel should provide only factual information to the person at risk, such as
450 information received from the incident ground. Any reassurance provided should not lead the caller
451 to develop a false sense of security. On occasion, it may be inappropriate to offer reassurance to
452 the caller if the only course of action to save their life is to attempt evacuation. On such occasions,
453 the advice must be both clear and robust in its delivery, leaving the caller in no doubt as to the
454 seriousness of their situation.

455 The use of appropriate techniques when communicating with people at risk can support:

- 456 • The gathering of accurate information
- 457 • Building trust and confidence, leading to people at risk being willing to follow the advice and
458 guidance they are being given
- 459 • People at risk remaining calm
- 460 • People at risk clearly understanding the risks they face and the actions they should take
- 461 • The prevention of putting more people at risk

462 It should be recognised that, despite fire control personnel adopting a range of appropriate
463 techniques, people at risk still may not follow the advice or guidance given.

464 The person at risk may be panicking and emotional. In the first few seconds of calling for help, they
465 will make some subconscious, subjective judgements about the person they are speaking to. If
466 they believe that fire control personnel are helpful, professional and knowledgeable, they may
467 begin to calm down. However, if they perceive otherwise, they may become more emotional.

468 The person at risk may be distraught and may reach their 'hysteria threshold'. Unless this threshold
469 is broken, the caller is likely to provide inaccurate responses to questions. Repetitive persistence is
470 a tool for reaching and breaching this threshold. It involves repeating a question using the same
471 words but accompanying it with a reason for the request, for example 'Tell me where you are, so
472 that I can tell the firefighters your location'.

473 Should the person at risk be verbally abusive or aggressive, fire control personnel should remain
474 calm and explain why the questions are being asked and how they are going to help. Remarks
475 should not be taken personally, and fire control personnel should not react with a matching
476 response. Using different questioning styles and displaying empathy may help in these situations.

477 Fire control personnel may need to adapt their communication technique during emergency calls to
478 overcome any communication barriers. Example techniques include:

- 479 • Using different questioning styles
- 480 • Listening effectively

- 481 • Displaying empathy
- 482 • Providing appropriate reassurance

483 **Questioning styles**

484 **Closed questions** – Usually receive a single word or very short, factual answer. Closed questions
485 are good for confirming understanding. For example, ‘Can you get out by your normal route?’

486 **Open questions** – Prompt longer answers and usually begin with ‘What’, ‘Why’, ‘How’ or ‘Where’.
487 Open questions are good for finding out more detail and developing a picture of the incident. For
488 example, ‘What is stopping you from getting out?’ Statements such as ‘Tell me about...’ can also
489 help fire control personnel to gain additional situational awareness from what the caller is saying.

490 **Funnel questions** – Involve starting with general questions, then drilling down to more specific
491 points. These are useful for gaining more detail at each level, and increasing the confidence of the
492 caller. When using funnel questioning, it is useful to start with closed questions and then progress
493 to using more open questions. For example, ‘Is there another way you can get out?’, ‘Can you
494 reach another room that you can escape from more easily?’, ‘What is the situation now?’

495 **Probing questions** – Are used to find out more detail, gain clarification and build situational
496 awareness. They are useful for drawing out information from people. For example, ‘Can you tell me
497 more about...?’

498 **Multiple questions** – Are when more than one question is asked. For example, ‘Where are you,
499 what is on fire?’ These should be used with care as they may cause confusion.

500 **Forced choice questions** – Contain two or more choices in a question. For example, ‘Is there
501 more or less smoke now?’

502 **Leading questions** – Are used to lead a person to a particular way of thinking. In most
503 circumstances, leading questions should be avoided as they can lead to inaccurate and unreliable
504 information. They should be used with care and only with the best interests of the person at risk.
505 Leading questions may be useful when encouraging people at risk to take action.

506 **Listening styles**

- 507 • Communication is a two-way process. Listening is the basis of effective communication, but
508 it involves more than just hearing words.
- 509 • Effective listening involves:
- 510 • Allowing the caller to speak without interruption
- 511 • Focusing on what the caller is saying, and not being distracted by other thoughts
- 512 • Putting the caller at ease
- 513 • Trying to understand the caller’s point of view or situation
- 514 • Being patient and letting the caller continue at their own pace
- 515 • Being impartial – focusing on what is being said and ignoring styles of delivery
- 516 • Being aware of the volume and tone of what is being said

517 Active listening involves:

- 518 • Listening with empathy where words, thoughts, beliefs and feelings are heard
- 519 • Concentrating on what is being said
- 520 • Considering the caller's situation
- 521 • Observing the caller's vocal inflection, their enthusiasm or lack of it, and style of delivery
- 522 • Listening without interruption
- 523 • Using paraphrasing or clarifying questions to confirm that the intended message has been
524 received
- 525 • Acknowledging the caller

526 Both effective and active listening usually involve observing body language and noticing
527 inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages. There is, therefore, a challenge when
528 listening to voice only, and fire control personnel may need to use a variety of questioning
529 techniques to gather sufficient information to provide appropriate advice.

530 Reflective listening involves:

- 531 • Focusing on what people are saying, helping people at risk to know that they have the
532 attention of the fire control call taker
- 533 • Repeating what has been said when clarification is required
- 534 • Providing reassurance that they have heard what has been said
- 535 • Providing reassurance that they have understood what has been said

537 **Building rapport**

538 To encourage people at risk to listen, trust and follow the advice they are being given, fire control
539 personnel may need to establish, build and maintain rapport with them. Elements of building
540 rapport include:

- 541 • Approachableness – Being calm and open
- 542 • Sharing knowledge – Giving information about what is happening. For example, 'The
543 firefighters are on the way'
- 544 • Empathy – Tone of voice
- 545 • Providing advice – 'Keep away from the building'

546 Building and maintaining rapport may help to develop trust with people at risk. This can help to
547 break down barriers and give people confidence in the advice they are being given and the actions
548 they are being asked to take, however this should be balanced with the need to avoid leading the
549 caller into false sense of security.

550 The sharing of names may help to personalise a conversation, build rapport and add individuality
551 to the call. Asking for the caller's name and using it throughout the call may help the person at risk

552 to feel that they have the full attention of fire control personnel. However, due to the personal
553 nature of this, the sharing of names should be discretionary.

554 Where possible, the vocabulary that fire control personnel use should match that of the person
555 they are communicating with. Where people at risk use specific words to describe something, fire
556 control personnel should use the same words when relevant and appropriate.

557 When appropriate, fire control personnel may consider having a conversation with the person at
558 risk that is unrelated to the incident. This may help to keep people calm.

559 **Empathy**

560 Having empathy for people at risk can also support effective communication. Empathy can be
561 described as the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would
562 be like to be in that person's situation. Developing empathy is crucial for behaving
563 compassionately.

564 Compassionate empathy is about feeling concern for someone and either taking action or helping
565 a person to take action to resolve a situation. Compassionate empathy when communicating with
566 people at risk and during survival guidance situations is crucial because fire control personnel will
567 be encouraging people to take action.

568 Demonstrating compassionate empathy and building rapport will help to gain co-operation and
569 build collaboration between fire control personnel and people at risk.

570 Empathy can be displayed by being natural and calm when communicating with people at risk;
571 adopting a natural tone and a less formal way of speaking will help to achieve this.

572 Using empathetic language to clarify the situation that people at risk are experiencing may help to
573 establish effective communication. Phrases such as: 'I want to make sure that I really understand
574 what you're telling me, and I'm hearing that...' will help to ensure that fire control personnel have
575 accurate information and give people at risk the opportunity to correct your understanding of their
576 situation.

577 Examples of empathetic statements include:

- 578 • 'I understand this is not easy for you, but you are handling it well'
- 579 • 'I know this is difficult'
- 580 • 'This must be distressing'
- 581 • 'I can hear it in your voice that you are anxious'

582 People at risk may disengage during continual reassessment of the situation, becoming frustrated
583 by the ongoing questioning. This could be because they do not understand why the questions are
584 being asked or why specific advice is being given, or they believe that the questions are delaying
585 help being sent. Fire control personnel should ask clear and relevant questions about the caller's
586 circumstances; explaining why they are asking questions and giving advice may support people's
587 understanding. For example questions refer to Control measure – Situational awareness: People at
588 risk.

589

590 **Reassurance**

591 Reassurance means providing words of advice and comfort to make someone feel less worried.
592 Reassurance given by fire control personnel to people at risk or who are trapped and receiving
593 survival guidance may help to put them at ease and should be used where appropriate, however it
594 should be factual and should not lead them into a false sense of security.

595 Phrases such as 'I am going to give you advice to try and keep you safe' and an explanation of
596 'what I am doing to help you' are examples of compassionate and attentive language. They provide
597 an explanation of what action is going to be taken and help provide reassurance to people at risk.
598 Phrases such as 'I appreciate how difficult it is to...' create trust and mutual understanding and
599 may help to break down barriers.

600 Support and encouragement should be given to the caller throughout, however this should not
601 result in people at risk being led into a false sense of security. Over-reassuring people at risk may
602 lead to complacency and over-familiarity, possibly resulting in the caller having a reduced
603 understanding or awareness of the severity of the situation they face. Fire control personnel should
604 aim to adopt communication techniques that balance the need to be calming and reassuring while
605 being honest, leaving the caller in no doubt as to the reality of the situation. An honest and
606 authoritative approach may be needed when people at risk need to take specific actions to
607 increase their chances of survival.

608 Because situations can change rapidly and affect the risk level at incidents, it is vital that fire
609 control personnel continually reassess and review the information gathered for accuracy to
610 maintain situational awareness, including when reassurance is being given to people at risk.

611 Informing people at risk that operational personnel are on their way may also provide some
612 reassurance. However, there may be occasions where operational personnel will not arrive
613 imminently, therefore consideration should be given as to whether informing people at risk of the
614 exact location of operational personnel will have a negative impact on them.

615 Fire control personnel cannot guarantee the rescue, safety or survival of people at risk, so they
616 should not make any promises. Information regarding deployments of operational personnel to
617 attempt to rescue people at risk should be shared with fire control personnel to enable them to
618 maintain situational awareness and to provide an update to the caller when appropriate. It should
619 be recognised that the deployment of operational personnel does not guarantee that they will
620 successfully arrive at the location of the person at risk.

621 In rare circumstances operational personnel may inform fire control personnel that a person cannot
622 be rescued, and it is possible that they may not survive. Such situations should be handled
623 sensitively and with compassion. Words of comfort such as 'I'm here for you' or 'It's ok to feel
624 scared' may be appropriate.

625 Consideration needs to be given to the welfare and mental health of fire control personnel following
626 calls from people at risk. The use of trauma support or defusing mechanisms should be considered
627 to support the mental health of fire control personnel following the handling of emotionally
628 distressing calls. For more information on welfare arrangements for fire control personnel see Fire
629 control command – Risk assessment of fire control activities.

630

631 **Overcoming barriers to communication**

632 There may be barriers to communication in some situations, so fire control personnel may need to
633 adapt their communication technique accordingly. The reason behind barriers to communication
634 may not be apparent, therefore fire control personnel should be aware of verbal cues where people
635 at risk are having difficulty communicating. The following points should be considered to overcome
636 barriers to communication:

- 637 • Avoid jargon and long words that might be difficult to understand
- 638 • Use simple everyday language and short sentences that are clear and concise
- 639 • Check with the person at risk that you have understood what they said. For example, 'The
640 fire is in the kitchen. Is that correct?'
- 641 • Speak slowly and steadily, because it may take people at risk longer to register what is
642 being said
- 643 • Do not assume that the person at risk has not heard you; they may still be processing the
644 question or information
- 645 • Emphasise key words
- 646 • Ask open questions; questions that do not have a simple yes or no answer
- 647 • Give people time to process the question and respond
- 648 • Be prepared to repeat a question or instruction
- 649 • Try not to interrupt or speak for the person at risk
- 650 • Avoid using the phrase 'Don't panic', as this may increase people's anxiety

651 If fire control personnel are having difficulty understanding what the person at risk is saying, such
652 as when speaking to a caller for whom English is their second or third language, it is acceptable to
653 explain this to the caller in a way that does not place any blame on them. Repeating the
654 information and giving the caller the opportunity to correct them can help and avoids assumptions.
655 There may be other people at risk within the property who can help; it may be appropriate to ask
656 using a phrase such as 'I'm sorry I don't speak your language; do you have anyone with you that
657 can help interpret?'

658 Patience may be needed when speaking with an elderly person or a child, as it may take longer for
659 them to answer questions and respond to advice. A change of tone or language being used may
660 be required, particularly when speaking to young children.

661 **People with breathing difficulties**

662 If it appears that the person at risk is having difficulty speaking or seems to be breathless, for
663 example because of a chest injury or smoke inhalation, fire control personnel should ask them if
664 they are speaking normally. If they state they are speaking normally or appear to be breathing with
665 minimal difficulty, consider continuing with open questioning.

666 To stimulate levels of consciousness, elements of reflective listening should be considered by
667 repeating the last few words of the caller's sentence. The caller should be given the space to talk,
668 for example by asking them to speak about themselves.

669 If the caller states they are not speaking normally and are suffering breathing difficulties, they
670 should be discouraged from talking too much, in which case fire control personnel can ask
671 occasional closed questions to check levels of consciousness. If the person at risk appears to be
672 losing consciousness, fire control personnel may continue to communicate verbally with the caller
673 or make a loud noise or tap the end of their headset to stimulate a response.

674 If the person at risk is no longer able to communicate verbally, fire control personnel should
675 consider asking the caller to tap on the phone to acknowledge that they are still listening.

676 **Inclusive language**

677 Fire control personnel should consider the following guidelines when communicating with a
678 disabled person:

- 679 • Avoid the use of negative phrases such as 'suffers from', which suggests discomfort,
680 constant pain and hopelessness
- 681 • Use positive phrases such as 'living with' and 'has a mobility aid' rather than 'confined to a
682 wheelchair'
- 683 • Most disabled people are comfortable with the words used to describe daily living. For
684 example, people who use wheelchairs 'go for walks'
- 685 • Use language that respects disabled people as active individuals with control over their own
686 lives
- 687 • Do not be too precious or too politically correct, as being sensitive to the right and wrong
688 language may hinder the right guidance being given

689 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

690 Fire services should:

- 691 • Provide access to trauma support teams or defusing mechanisms for fire control personnel
692 following distressing or traumatic incidents
- 693 • Consider the use of system-based prompts to enable fire control personnel to amend their
694 communication technique based on the requirements of the call

695 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

696 Fire control personnel should:

- 697 • Give clear and direct instructions to people at risk and provide time for them to carry out the
698 instructions
- 699 • Provide only factual information to people at risk
- 700 • Identify communication barriers, such as breathing difficulties, and change approach to suit
701 the caller

- 702
- 703
- Use appropriate questioning and listening techniques to gather information and continually reassess the caller's situation
- 704
- 705
- Use effective communication techniques to build rapport and provide appropriate reassurance based on factual information
- 706
- 707
- Consider using trauma support and defusing mechanisms following distressing or traumatic incidents
- 708
- Use inclusive language when speaking to people at risk
- 709

CONSULTATION

710

711 **Control measure – Evacuation guidance: People at risk**

712 This control measure should be read in conjunction with:

- 713 • [Control measure – Evacuation and shelter](#)
- 714 • [Control measure - Evacuation and rescue: Buildings that fail](#)
- 715 • [Control measure - Evacuation: Flooding](#)

716 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

717 Evacuation is the immediate and urgent movement of people away from a threatened or existing
718 hazard. Successful evacuation can save lives and reduce risks to operational personnel and
719 people at risk.

720 Evacuation guidance can be given in the following circumstances:

- 721 • When people at risk are not trapped but should immediately evacuate because they are
722 being affected by the hazard
- 723 • When people at risk are not trapped but the hazard conditions are worsening and remaining
724 in their current location may cause harm to people at risk or lead them to become trapped
- 725 • When survival guidance is being given and, through continuous evaluation of information
726 received from the incident ground, it is no longer safe for people at risk to stay where they
727 are and evacuation must be attempted to enhance the chances of survival

728 It is the responsibility of fire control personnel to use effective emergency call management
729 techniques to identify whether people at risk cannot evacuate and require survival guidance.

730 People at risk should attempt to safely move away from the hazard as soon as possible to avoid
731 injury. Evacuation should take place using the nearest safest exit. However, when the nearest
732 safest exit is compromised and cannot be used, alternative exits should be explored with people at
733 risk.

734 People at risk may need to evacuate due to:

- 735 • An act of terrorism
- 736 • The actual or threatened release of hazardous substances
- 737 • Fire
- 738 • An unstable or collapsed structure
- 739 • A risk of explosion
- 740 • Severe weather, including widespread flooding
- 741 • Environmental contamination
- 742 • Transport incidents

743 There may be a delay in people at risk evacuating: they may be physically able to evacuate, but
744 they may believe they cannot do so – in which case they may take actions before evacuating that
745 result in a delay – or they may choose not to. This could be due to:

- 746 • Normal evacuation routes or exits being locked or blocked
- 747 • Injuries sustained or physical limitations
- 748 • Attempting to rescue, or being unwilling to leave, another person, animal or possession
- 749 • Emotional distress or fear
- 750 • Religious, cultural or social beliefs
- 751 • An attempt to minimise or stop the hazard
- 752 • Alerting other people who are at risk about the hazard
- 753 • Misunderstanding or miscommunication about evacuation strategy or policies

754 Some people at risk may be reluctant to leave when told to do so because they perceive that the
755 conditions outside their current location are more hazardous. Fire control personnel should make
756 every effort to fully explore the situation and encourage people at risk to follow the guidance being
757 given. Explaining the benefits of evacuating and informing people at risk what they can expect
758 when they evacuate may help to encourage them to do so. For example:

- 759 • ‘There are firefighters outside who will help’
- 760 • ‘They may give you something to help you breathe better’
- 761 • ‘There is less smoke outside’
- 762 • ‘You will be more comfortable if you take your seatbelt off’
- 763 • Information about the benefits of evacuating should be accurate and should not be based
764 on assumptions, therefore confirmation should be sought from operational personnel before
765 the advice is given.
- 766 • People at risk who will not evacuate may be given advice on how best to protect
767 themselves. Information about the caller’s specific location should be passed to operational
768 personnel.

769 There may be people at risk who, due to their religion or religious beliefs, may be unwilling to follow
770 the advice or guidance given by fire control personnel or they may take actions that result in a
771 delay in evacuating. This may be due to:

- 772 • An unwillingness to leave behind a sacred or holy item
- 773 • An unwillingness to treat a sacred or holy item in a way that is deemed disrespectful
- 774 • Getting dressed appropriately before evacuating
- 775 • Refusal to speak to fire control personnel of the opposite sex

776 Some sacred or holy items are seen as living things and are treated with the same respect as a
777 human. There may be occasions where people at risk would prefer to be in an unsafe environment
778 and put themselves at additional risk than to treat a religious or sacred item in a way that is
779 deemed disrespectful. It should be recognised that these religious beliefs are a normal and natural
780 thing for some people, so there is every possibility that people may not take the actions being
781 asked of them.

782 While the desire to get dressed before evacuating is not confined to people who follow a specific
783 religion, people whose religious beliefs include dressing in a specific way may be more likely to
784 resist evacuation before doing so. For some females, being seen without specific items of clothing
785 is deemed disrespectful.

786 During situations where people are delaying or refusing to evacuate due to their religion or
787 religious beliefs, the same encouraging approach that explains the benefits of evacuating should
788 be used. Continual reinforcement of the need to evacuate should be applied.

789 Research into crowd behaviour has identified some generic behaviours regarding evacuation:

- 790 • Family members prefer to evacuate as a group, and will delay their exit until all family
791 members are ready
- 792 • Parents are more likely to put the safety of their children first
- 793 • Groups of friends prefer to evacuate together
- 794 • It should be recognised that these behaviours may result in slow or delayed evacuation,
795 and that guidance or encouragement by fire control personnel to do things differently may
796 be ignored.

797 When evacuating, people at risk should be encouraged to make other people aware of the hazard
798 by actuating any available alarms or alert systems. However, raising the alarm should not delay
799 evacuation and should not place anyone at any additional risk.

800 For further information, refer to the Cabinet Office publication: [Understanding Crowd Behaviours:
801 Supporting Evidence](#)

802 Where people at risk are within a communal form of transport or building, they should initially follow
803 the evacuation guidance provided by the transport operators or the building owners. This may
804 include finding emergency exits on public transport or in public buildings and following evacuation
805 policies and procedures.

806 When people at risk perceive they cannot evacuate due to normal exits being locked or blocked,
807 they may be able to evacuate via alternative exits, such as:

- 808 • Windows
- 809 • Balconies
- 810 • Doors or stairs

811 When evacuating through a window, consideration needs to be given to the:

- 812 • Height of the window

813 • Who or what is outside and below the window

814 When evacuation through a window is required, efforts should be made to use windows on the
815 ground floor or windows with stable ground beneath them, such as a flat roof.

816 As a last resort, and in case of imminent danger, escape can be made from a first-floor window,
817 climbing out feet first and lowering to arm's length before dropping from the window. Where
818 dropping to a hard surface, soft objects such as bedding should be used to break the fall.

819 If more than one adult is trapped with a child or children and they are required to leave the
820 premises via a window, one adult should leave first and the children passed down before any other
821 adults leave.

822 If a window cannot be opened, a firm blow aimed at the corner of the pane with a hard, sharp
823 object will help to break the glass. Glass left at the edges should be knocked out and, if possible,
824 sharp edges should be covered to prevent injury. Before advising people at risk to break a window,
825 consideration should be given to anyone who may be below the window and could be injured by
826 falling glass. Where possible, people at risk should avoid standing in front of the window due to the
827 risk of exploding glass.

828 Where people at risk cannot evacuate due to injuries sustained or their physical limitations, other
829 people may be able to aid their evacuation. People typically remain structured, organised, helpful,
830 co-operative and co-ordinated during evacuations, and they are usually willing to help.

831 Nevertheless, it may be appropriate to prompt people to assist, provided that it does not put them
832 at any additional risk.

833 The severity or location of the hazard may change as an incident develops or the longer the person
834 is at risk. This may result in:

835 • Operational personnel being unable to rescue people who are trapped

836 • A requirement to change the advice or evacuation guidance that was initially given by fire
837 control personnel

838
839 If operational personnel cannot rescue people who are trapped and immediate evacuation is
840 required, even in difficult conditions, the incident commander should communicate this immediately
841 to the fire control commander.

842 Due to the potential level of activity in the fire control room, calls to non-emergency lines may not
843 be answered. Therefore, direct contact with the fire control commander to discuss a change in
844 evacuation strategy should take place using either:

845 • Airwave radio, or

846 • Direct line that is not a general admin number, for example a fire control commander's
847 mobile phone or a priority line

848 Any telephone numbers that may be used to communicate directly with the fire control commander
849 should be available to operational personnel and incident commanders.

850 Due to the impact on the advice and guidance given by fire control personnel to people at risk, any
851 decision to change an evacuation strategy should be made in consultation with the fire control
852 commander and should not be implemented on the incident ground until such a consultation has
853 taken place. Miscommunication or misunderstanding regarding changes to an evacuation strategy

854 can lead to a delay in evacuation and fire control personnel giving incorrect advice to people at
855 risk.

856 Where reasonably practicable, methods to assist the self-evacuation of people at risk while having
857 minimal impact on operational activities should be discussed with operational personnel. This may
858 include:

- 859 • The location of operational activities taking place
- 860 • Preferred egress routes, such as specific staircases to use or avoid
- 861 • Any protective equipment or strategies that are being used to assist with evacuation

862 The fire control commander should communicate any changes to an evacuation strategy to all fire
863 control personnel as soon as possible. This communication may be electronic or verbal, and
864 confirmation that fire control personnel have received and understood the information should be
865 recorded on the incident log.

866 A change in evacuation strategy may mean the initial advice given by fire control personnel to
867 people at risk is no longer appropriate. Where reasonably practicable, attempts should be made to
868 contact all known people at risk to give them the updated evacuation advice. This includes:

- 869 • People at risk who were told it should be safe to stay where they are as they were not
870 experiencing effects from the hazard
- 871 • Survival guidance callers with whom fire control personnel are no longer in contact

872 The communication techniques used to encourage and support people at risk in evacuating as
873 safely as possible will be key. Research has shown that 'behaviours become more self-centred
874 when time to escape is limited and, therefore, orderly evacuation is not possible' (refer to, for
875 example, Sime, 1983, 1999; Johnson, 1998). For more information refer to Control measure –
876 Effective communication: People at risk.

877 Clear and direct instructions will leave people at risk in no doubt as to what action should be taken.
878 A consistent approach to the guidance and instruction given by fire control personnel should result
879 in people at risk receiving the same information. This includes:

- 880 • Who is calling, for example fire service, fire brigade or fire control
- 881 • The instruction to be given, for example you must immediately evacuate or leave
- 882 • A reason for the instruction being given, for example the hazard or the conditions have
883 deteriorated or are deteriorating
- 884 • Preferred egress information if known
- 885 • Guidance to help with safe evacuation

886 If contact with a person at risk cannot be made, a voicemail should be left containing the time of
887 the call and clear and direct instructions describing the action they should take if they hear the
888 message.

889 When remaining in an environment reduces the likelihood of people at risk surviving and their only
890 option is to evacuate, the severity of the situation should be made clear to people at risk and that
891 evacuation is their only option for survival.

892 For guidance on providing information about a change of advice to multiple people refer to Control
893 measure – Recontacting multiple people at risk to provide a change of advice.

894

895 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

896 Fire and rescue services should:

- 897 • Consider the use of system-based call prompts and aide-memoires to assist fire control
898 personnel to provide evacuation advice
- 899 • Provide suitable training to fire control personnel to allow them to recognise information that
900 may indicate the signs of a failing building during emergency call management
- 901 • Ensure a procedure is in place for an incident commander to consult with the fire control
902 commander where a change in evacuation advice is required
- 903 • Provide a direct method of communication between operational personnel and the fire
904 control commander
- 905 • Ensure telephone numbers, which can be used by operational personnel to advise the fire
906 control commander about a change in evacuation advice, are added to all communication
907 devices
- 908 • Ensure a procedure is in place for prioritising the self-evacuation of people at risk
- 909 • Ensure fire control personnel are aware of procedures to follow when a change in
910 evacuation advice is required

911 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

912 Fire control personnel should:

- 913 • Use risk information, questioning techniques and professional judgement to assist callers to
914 reach a place where they should be safe until operational personnel arrive
- 915 • Maintain contact with the caller, where possible, until the people at risk are in a place of
916 relative safety
- 917 • Agree a method of recontacting the caller when contact is not being maintained
- 918 • Advise people at risk to 'Get out and stay out' when appropriate and where they can do so
919 safely
- 920 • Advise callers on actions to minimise risk to themselves and others when evacuating
- 921 • Provide clear and direct instructions when advising people to evacuate
- 922 • Where normal exits are locked or blocked, establish whether alternative exits are available

- 923 and provide appropriate advice on how to use them to evacuate safely Advise callers to
924 actuate alarms or alert systems, where safe to do so, to advise others of the hazard
- 925 • Advise callers in a communal form of transport or building to initially follow the evacuation
926 guidance provided by the operators or owners
 - 927 • Give water safety advice and water survival guidance if the caller is evacuating into water
 - 928 • Establish if others can assist the caller's evacuation where they cannot evacuate
 - 929 • Advise callers not to re-enter the place of evacuation to search for personal belongings or
930 animals
 - 931 • Provide incident commanders with information from other credible sources that may
932 indicate building failures
 - 933 • Contact callers to assist in self-evacuation, according to the prioritisation agreed with
934 operational personnel and the fire control officer in charge

935 **Control measure – Safety advice: People at risk**

936 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

937 It is likely that safety advice will need to be passed on in some form during all incidents where
938 people are, or have the potential to be, at risk. This may include:

- 939 • Providing safety advice to people who are indirectly involved in the incident, for example
940 advising members of the public to close windows and doors
- 941 • Providing safety advice to prevent more people being put at risk, for example advising
942 members of the public to avoid the area where the incident is located
- 943 • Advising other people who may be at risk to raise the alarm

944 When providing safety advice to people at risk, additional advice can be given to prevent
945 escalation of the incident, for example to isolate power.

946 Safety advice will vary depending on the incident. Safety advice should only be actioned where it is
947 safe to do so.

948 Where there are people at risk in the hazard area, operational personnel will prioritise the rescue of
949 people at risk before attempts are made to save the property, contents or animals. Therefore,
950 people unnecessarily entering the hazard area may delay operational personnel managing the
951 incident and dealing with the hazard. People at risk should be instructed to 'Get out and stay out',
952 leaving them in no doubt as to what they should do.

953 People at risk who have been advised to 'Stay put' should also be informed that if the conditions
954 they are experiencing change, if the hazard gets worse or they become directly affected, they
955 should redial 999.

956 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

957 There are no strategic actions associated with this control measure.

958 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

959 Fire control personnel should:

- 960 • Use their professional judgement to provide relevant safety advice to people at risk
- 961 • Provide safety advice to assist in preventing the escalation of the incident
- 962 • Provide safety advice to assist in the personal safety of people at risk
- 963 • Provide safety advice to prevent more people being put at risk
- 964 • Advise people at risk to 'Get out and stay out' where appropriate
- 965 • Confirm that people at risk are safe to action the advice being given
- 966 • Advise people at risk to recontact the fire service on 999 if the situation they are
- 967 experiencing deteriorates

968 **Control measure – Share information with other agencies: People at risk**

969 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

970 Support or assistance may be requested from other agencies for:

- 971 • Casualty care
- 972 • Crowd control and public disorder
- 973 • Road closures
- 974 • Evacuation
- 975 • Refuge centre or emergency accommodation
- 976 • Assistance for incidents that may not normally require attendance of a fire service
- 977 • Rescue of people at risk

978 This list is not exhaustive.

979 When requesting the attendance of other agencies, information should be provided to allow
980 responding agencies to allocate appropriate resources. A M/ETHANE message should be used to
981 share incident details.

982 Other agencies may hold additional risk information in relation to the premises or people at risk.
983 Gathering this information as early as possible may support the safe resolution of the incident. It is
984 essential that additional information obtained is recorded and shared with operational personnel at
985 the earliest opportunity.

986 Fire control personnel may receive emergency calls that require a fire and rescue service response
987 and the provision of critical medical advice, such as guidance on how to give cardiopulmonary
988 resuscitation (CPR).

989 The call handling agent will provide a verbal handover if it is known at the outset that more than
990 one emergency service is needed. Fire control personnel should confirm with the call handling
991 agent whether they will pass call details to the other emergency services, or whether the call
992 handling agent will remain on the call and connect the caller to the other emergency services
993 requested.

994 If fire control personnel believe that the caller requires urgent medical guidance, the call handling
995 agent should be asked to remain on the call to ensure connection to the ambulance service without
996 delay.

997 If the call handling agent has not remained on the call and the caller needs to speak to another
998 emergency service, fire control personnel should ask the caller to stay on the line while they
999 disconnect themselves. When fire control personnel disconnect from the call, it will be represented
1000 to the call handling agent for connection to the required emergency service.

1001 This process should also be followed for callers needing the assistance of all other emergency
1002 services. More information can be found in PECS Code of Practice.

1003

1004 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1005 Fire and rescue services should:

- 1006 • Ensure agreements are in place with other agencies regarding a response to incidents
1007 involving people at risk
- 1008 • Maintain contact information and methods for other agencies

1009 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1010 Fire control personnel should:

- 1011 • Request other agencies for incidents involving people at risk
- 1012 • Share information about people at risk with other agencies
- 1013 • Gather additional risk information from other agencies and use this to assist with
1014 mobilisation, safety advice and survival guidance for people at risk
- 1015 • Use the call handling agent to transfer the call to the relevant emergency service control
1016 when medical or other critical advice is required

1017 **Control measure – Use media to share information: People at risk**

1018 During incidents or events where people are at risk, social media messages and press releases
1019 can be used to assist by:

- 1020 • Providing widespread safety advice
- 1021 • Sharing public information messages from other agencies to assist in reaching the largest
1022 audience possible
- 1023 • Sharing contact details and web links with agencies who can provide additional advice,
1024 guidance or assistance

1025 Social media messages or press statements may be used to advise members of the public about
1026 actions to take to reduce harm, when to contact the fire and rescue service regarding an ongoing
1027 incident relating to people at risk, or to provide information to support evacuation, including:

- 1028 • Advising members of the public during widespread flooding incidents to only ring 999 if the
1029 water is entering the property or if people are at risk
- 1030 • Advising members of the public to keep doors and windows closed to keep smoke out
- 1031 • Providing the location details of refuge centres that have been set up to support people at
1032 risk who have been displaced

1033 However, as with any method of reducing and filtering calls, there is a risk that calls containing
1034 valuable additional information about the incident or people at risk may not be made, so any public
1035 messaging advising that 999 calls should only be made in certain situations should be considered
1036 carefully.

1037 Due to the potential increased workload of fire control personnel when dealing with incidents from
1038 or about multiple people at risk, press or media support from a media and communications team or
1039 media liaison officer should be considered.

1040 It is important to avoid unnecessary public alarm when using social media to share information and
1041 advice, so any statements and messages should be worded carefully.

1042 During multi-agency incidents, it is likely that a joint media and communications strategy will be
1043 established and a lead organisation agreed. Any press releases or social media messages should
1044 be in line with the agreed media and communications strategy.

1045 When it has been determined that social media statements or press releases will be managed by
1046 the police or another agency, all fire control personnel must be made aware and details added to
1047 the incident log.

1048 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1049 Fire and rescue services should:

- 1050 • Consider having 24/7 media support arrangements in place
- 1051 • Ensure procedures are in place to enable fire control personnel to use social media
1052 appropriately
- 1053 • Provide fire control personnel with access to social media networks
- 1054 • Ensure fire control personnel are aware of how to use communication channels and social
1055 media to provide advice

1056 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1057 Fire control personnel should:

- 1058 • Liaise with personnel providing 24/7 media support where appropriate
- 1059 • Use social media to share relevant information and advice

1060 **Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk: Fire**

1061 *HAZARD KNOWLEDGE*

1062 People may be at risk from flames, heat or smoke and face a risk of injury or death. The effects of
1063 the fire and the severity of the effects will be determined by what is involved in the fire, the situation
1064 or environment the people at risk are in and their ability to move away from flames, heat and
1065 smoke.

1066 Encouraging people at risk to move away from the fire to a place of safety and take actions to
1067 reduce the spread or impact of the fire will help to keep them safe. Where people at risk cannot
1068 move away from the fire or to a place of safety, fire survival guidance (FSG) may need to be
1069 provided.

1070 FSG should only be given following a thorough assessment of the situation and conditions that
1071 people at risk are experiencing, and only when fire control personnel are confident that evacuation
1072 is not possible.

1073 To provide accurate safety advice and evacuation guidance to people at risk from fire, it is
1074 important that fire control personnel have a basic level of understanding of fire behaviour and the
1075 effects of fire.

1076 **Fire behaviour and effects of fire**

1077 **Flames** – Flames generally indicate where the fire is most intense. In buildings, the walls, floor,
1078 ceiling and doors (if they are closed) of the room of origin will to some extent confine
1079 flames. Flames within vertical shafts, such as stairwells, will rapidly spread upwards.

1080 **Heat** – Fires release enormous amounts of heat energy. The extremely hot air and gases
1081 produced are buoyant and, in buildings, will tend to collect initially at ceiling level in a steadily
1082 deepening layer.

1083 **Smoke** – Smoke causes breathing difficulties and can severely impair visibility, resulting in
1084 disorientation, even in familiar surroundings. Smoke may have severe toxic effects, resulting in
1085 irrational behaviour, nausea and fatigue. Inhalation of hot gases and smoke may cause severe
1086 damage to the internal tissues of the throat and lungs and may even cause unconsciousness or
1087 death.

1088 Most people are less inclined to move through smoke when it is 'thick' or 'black', with an estimated
1089 visibility of approximately 0–5m. While descriptions of smoke such as 'thin' or 'thick' are not totally
1090 satisfactory and it may be possible in future to compare subjective and objective evaluations of
1091 smoke density, at the time of writing it is most valid to refer to reactions to smoke in terms of
1092 descriptive categories rather than precise measures.

1093 Evacuation or escape strategies will vary. Some buildings have a policy to simultaneously
1094 evacuate when hearing an alarm, others maintain a 'stay put' or 'defend in place' policy and some
1095 adopt a vertical phased approach. Giving incorrect and uncontrolled 'stay put' or 'evacuate' advice
1096 to people in a building that is on fire may lead to:

- 1097 • A delay in people at risk evacuating safely
- 1098 • Confusion in people at risk who receive contradictory information and advice
- 1099 • Congestion on staircases, impeding firefighting activities and causing delays to people who
1100 are evacuating

- 1101 • Increased levels of anxiety for people who are evacuating or engaged in firefighting or
- 1102 rescue activities
- 1103 • An inability to rescue people
- 1104 • People at risk being told to stay put in a building that has insufficient compartmentation or
- 1105 fire safety features
- 1106 • People at risk not being informed of a change in evacuation strategy

1107 Evacuation or escape strategies will affect the advice and guidance given by fire control personnel
 1108 so a basic knowledge and understanding of the different strategies is required.

1109 **Single private dwellings**

1110 Single private dwellings are not required by law to have a responsible person, and therefore they
 1111 are not required to have a planned evacuation strategy.

1112 **Tall or large buildings**

1113 Taller or larger buildings are likely to have scalable evacuation plans, with some people remaining
 1114 in relatively safe areas of the building during firefighting operations.

1115 The principle of 'stay put' applies to fires that occur in one dwelling (or, less likely, in its common
 1116 areas), and it is normally safe for other residents to remain in their own flat. 'Stay put' is based on
 1117 effective fire safety arrangements that are required, proposed and then provided in the building,
 1118 including compartmentation of the building and suitably protected means of escape.

1119 There are two basic categories of evacuation procedure:

- 1120 • Total evacuation
- 1121 • Total evacuation of people to a place of ultimate safety, by either simultaneous or phased
- 1122 procedures

1123 **Progressive evacuation**

1124 Progressive evacuation of people, initially to a place of relative safety within the building where
 1125 they can remain or, if necessary, complete the evacuation to ultimate safety as part of a managed
 1126 system. Progressive evacuation has two sub-categories: progressive horizontal evacuation and
 1127 zoned evacuation.

1128 Some people may need special arrangements to help them evacuate a building in the event of a
 1129 fire. It is the responsibility of the building safety manager or responsible person to ensure an
 1130 assessment is made and a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) is developed.

1131 It should be recognised that, despite pre-determined strategies and advice from fire control
 1132 personnel, building occupants may choose to leave their property if they are able to do so and they
 1133 do not feel safe.

1134 **Nursing and care homes**

1135 The evacuation strategy for nursing and care homes is usually progressive horizontal evacuation.
 1136 Most care homes are designed and built to have a number of 'protected areas' which are critical to
 1137 the 'progressive evacuation' strategy. These usually comprise sections of corridor which generally

1138 have between four and ten bedrooms per section of corridor. All the resident bedrooms and any
1139 other rooms such as lounges, dining rooms, offices, stores, kitchens or plant, should have fire
1140 resisting separation and self-closing doors. This protects the bedrooms and corridors from
1141 becoming affected by smoke or fire.

1142 'Progressive Evacuation' usually involves the care/nursing staff supporting, or physically carrying,
1143 the residents from the bedrooms on the corridor closest to a fire into an adjacent section of corridor
1144 ('protected area') or into a staircase enclosure if it is large enough. In some cases, depending on
1145 the resident's need, this may require more than one member of staff to assist a resident.

1146 This evacuation can take a considerable amount of time, particularly if many residents are:

- 1147 • Mobility impaired
- 1148 • Dependent on or require medical equipment to be taken with them.

1149 This is particularly important at night, when the nursing staffing levels may be reduced to only two
1150 or three in smaller homes. The use of equipment to assist in evacuation of immobile residents such
1151 as hoists, evac-chairs, blankets and evacuation mats, can be very physically tiring and stressful for
1152 staff and may impact on their ability to evacuate residents quickly and safely.

1153 More information on simultaneous, phased and progressive horizontal and zoned evacuation
1154 strategies can be found in [Control measure – Evacuation and shelter](#).

1155 More information on the hazards of fire, smoke and gases can be found in [Fires and firefighting](#).

1156 **Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk – Building fire**

1157 This control measure should be read in conjunction with Control measure – Situational awareness:
1158 People at risk

1159 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

1160 Where calls are received from or about people at risk from fire in a building, it should be
1161 established whether they should evacuate or remain where they are until they are rescued or the
1162 incident is resolved.

1163 Several factors may affect the advice given by fire control personnel, including:

- 1164 • Type of building
- 1165 • Specific evacuation strategies for buildings
- 1166 • Exact location of people at risk in relation to the flames, heat or smoke
- 1167 • Effects of the fire that people at risk are experiencing
- 1168 • Type of evacuation routes available, for example:
 - 1169 • Internal staircases
 - 1170 • Windows
 - 1171 • External staircases
 - 1172 • Safety of evacuation routes available, for example long drop from windows

- 1173 • Impact of flames, heat and smoke on the viability of evacuation routes
- 1174 • Exact location of people at risk, for example the floor they are located on
- 1175 • Known refuge areas

1176 To enable fire control personnel to determine when immediate evacuation of people inside a
 1177 building fire is required, even during unsafe or arduous conditions, they should have a basic
 1178 understanding of the signs, symptoms and indicators of the following:

- 1179 • Potential flashover
- 1180 • Potential backdraught
- 1181 • Fire gas ignition
- 1182 • Firespread
- 1183 • Failure of building safety systems
- 1184 • Building collapse

1185 Indicators of deteriorating conditions inside the building may include:

- 1186 • Smoke becoming thicker and darker
- 1187 • Smoke entering rooms from more than one point or from more points than initially reported
- 1188 • Smoke coming through the floor, windows, ceilings or walls
- 1189 • Unbearable heat
- 1190 • Loud banging noises
- 1191 • Smoke pulsing through gaps in around closed doors
- 1192 • The door to the compartment being hot to touch at a low level
- 1193 • Bubbling or cracking of the paintwork on the door
- 1194 • A whistling noise as air is drawn in through the gaps around a closed door

1195 Visual footage or images such as those provided by 999eye or similar technologies may also allow
 1196 fire control personnel to identify indicators of deteriorating conditions.

1197 Fire control personnel may use simple questions and the response from people at risk to determine
 1198 whether the conditions they are experiencing are deteriorating. Example questions include:

- 1199 • ‘What has happened to the heat/smoke/flames/conditions since I last asked you?’
- 1200 • ‘How thick is the smoke?’
- 1201 • ‘Has the smoke changed colour?’
- 1202 • ‘How low is the smoke?’
- 1203 • ‘Are you getting fresh air?’

1204 • 'Is it getting hotter?'

1205 Evacuating people at risk due to worsening conditions may have an impact on operational tactics.
1206 Where reasonably practicable, the decision to evacuate people at risk should be communicated to
1207 the incident commander and any impacts understood before the decision is implemented.
1208 Communication with the incident commander should not result in excessive delays to the
1209 evacuation of people at risk to the point where evacuation is no longer possible.

1210 **Care and nursing homes**

1211 Progressive horizontal evacuation strategies are usually used in care and nursing homes to
1212 evacuate residents to a place of relative safety. Care home staff may encounter difficulties with
1213 such strategies when:

- 1214 • Staffing is reduced due to the time of day or other reasons
- 1215 • Residents are mobility impaired
- 1216 • Residents are dependent on or require medical equipment to be taken with them

1217 Fire control personnel should apply additional questioning to identify any potential evacuation
1218 difficulties. This information should be communicated promptly to the incident commander.

1219 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1220 There are no strategic actions associated with this control measure.

1221 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1222 Fire control personnel should:

- 1223 • Attempt to establish the type of building that is on fire or that the fire is within
- 1224 • Attempt to determine the exact location of people at risk and their location in relation to
1225 flames, heat or smoke
- 1226 • Attempt to gather information on the effects people at risk are experiencing
- 1227 • Attempt to establish what evacuation routes are available
- 1228 • Consider the safety of the evacuation routes
- 1229 • Consider the viability of evacuation routes and whether they have been compromised by
1230 the fire
- 1231 • Attempt to determine whether there are any known refuge areas
- 1232 • Continually reassess the situation and recognise the signs of potential incident escalation,
1233 including fire development and signs and symptoms of a failing building
- 1234 • Share with operational personnel information about people who are evacuating due to
1235 worsening conditions
- 1236 • Share with operational personnel information about people who are evacuating from care or
1237 nursing homes and any difficulties being experienced

1238 **Control measure – Safety advice: People at risk – Fire**

1239 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

1240 FSG should be given where people at risk are directly affected by fire and cannot get to a place of
1241 safety. However, there are occasions where people may not be trapped but require safety advice
1242 to ensure they remain as safe as possible from the effects of flames, heat or smoke.

1243 People who are at risk from fire should not be encouraged to investigate or attempt to extinguish
1244 the fire themselves unless they are trained to do so and have the appropriate extinguishing
1245 equipment.

1246 Once evacuation advice has been taken, people at risk should not re-enter the property as they
1247 could put themselves at additional risk and delay or obstruct operational personnel in extinguishing
1248 the fire. If people are still inside the building, the caller should wait at a safe place near the building
1249 and inform operational personnel about the person or people inside.

1250 There may be occasions where callers or other members of the public who are not directly involved
1251 in or affected by the fire want to attempt to rescue people at risk prior to the arrival of operational
1252 personnel. This may be in a building fire or in other types of situations such as a vehicle fire with
1253 people trapped inside.

1254 'Helping behaviour' is a concept in social psychology that refers to voluntary actions intended to
1255 help others, with reward regarded or disregarded. It is a type of pro-social behaviour where an
1256 action – such as sharing, comforting, rescuing or helping – is intended to help or benefit others.
1257 While people who are not at risk should not be encouraged to attempt to rescue people at risk
1258 because of the dangers involved, it should be recognised that people's desire to help in an
1259 emergency may result in them ignoring the advice that fire control personnel provide.

1260 In such situations, the following safety advice can be given to the person who is helping:

- 1261 • Cover mouth and nose with a cloth to help reduce inhalation of smoke and gases
- 1262 • Crouch low to the ground to help reduce the of amount of smoke and hot gases they are
1263 exposed to
- 1264 • Retreat if the flames, heat or smoke are too strong
- 1265 • Keep their exit in view at all times

1266 Road vehicles that are powered by fuels other than petrol or diesel are known as alternative fuel
1267 vehicles (AFV). AFVs that are on fire present different hazards to operational personnel than those
1268 presented by petrol or diesel vehicles. Establishing the fuel type of a vehicle that is on fire and
1269 sharing this with operational personnel will enable them to make an informed tactical plan en route
1270 to the incident and take additional safety precautions. More information on the hazards presented
1271 by AFVs can be found in [Hazard – Roadways: Alternative fuel vehicles](#).

1272 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1273 Fire and rescue services should:

- 1274 • Consider the use of system-based call prompts and aide-memoires for providing safety
1275 advice for people at risk from fire

1276 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1277 Fire control personnel should:

- 1278 • Advise people at risk from fire not to attempt to extinguish the fire unless they are trained to
1279 do so and have the appropriate extinguishing equipment
- 1280 • Advise people at risk from fire to not re-enter the building once they have left
- 1281 • Advise people at risk from fire to wait at a safe place near the building and inform
1282 operational personnel about people that are still inside the building
- 1283 • Discourage callers or people at the scene of an incident from attempting to rescue people
1284 that are trapped by fire
- 1285 • Provide safety advice to callers or people at the scene of an incident who attempt to rescue
1286 people that are trapped by fire
- 1287 • Attempt to obtain the fuel type for incidents involving vehicle fires and share this with
1288 operational personnel

1289 **Control measure – Evacuation guidance: People at risk - building fire**

1290 This control measure should be read in conjunction with:

- 1291 • Control measure – Evacuation guidance: People at risk
- 1292 • Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk – Building fire

1293 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

1294 Fire control personnel should be aware of all buildings that have a specific evacuation strategy and
1295 whether people at risk have a PEEP so that they can give the correct or most appropriate guidance
1296 to people at risk in a building fire.

1297 Fire control personnel may not know which occupants have PEEPs, and should consider this
1298 before giving advice to evacuate or stay put. People at risk who have a PEEP should be advised to
1299 follow the instructions detailed in their plan rather than the generic evacuation strategy for the
1300 building. Fire control personnel should communicate to operational personnel any information they
1301 have about people at risk who have indicated that they have a PEEP, along with any possible
1302 difficulties the people at risk may face while following their PEEP.

1303 People at risk inside a single private dwelling that is on fire should attempt to evacuate the property
1304 immediately. All people in the dwelling should be alerted and doors should be closed behind them
1305 as they leave as this will help to stop the spread of the fire.

1306 People at risk inside a commercial or industrial property should follow the pre-determined
1307 evacuation policies for the building. The evacuation policies should have been designed around
1308 the safety features of the building. Fire exits should be used and should be identifiable from
1309 adequate signage and lighting where appropriate.

1310 If there is a fire inside a residential building with multiple occupants that has a simultaneous
1311 evacuation policy, people at risk should alert all the people in the flat, leave the property
1312 immediately and close doors behind them, following a pre-determined escape plan. This might
40 Emergency call management people at risk 0.12 Consultation copy

- 1313 include maisonettes and purpose-built flats below 18m. When evacuating, people at risk should
1314 use the stairs rather than the lift unless their PEEP states otherwise.
- 1315 If a fire starts in a common area, anyone in this area should make their way out of the building via
1316 the nearest, safest exit.
- 1317 In premises where 'stay put' is the responsible person's pre-determined strategy, it should be safe
1318 for the occupants to remain in their flat, provided they are not being directly affected by flames,
1319 heat or smoke and the spread of fire and smoke is being contained by compartmentation or other
1320 building safety features designed for this purpose.
- 1321 When 'stay put' advice is given, people at risk should be instructed to inform fire control personnel
1322 immediately by redialling 999 if they decide to move away from their flat or to evacuate the building
1323 after the call has ended.
- 1324 If operational personnel have been informed about the location of people at risk who have been
1325 advised to stay put, any known movement of these people should be communicated to operational
1326 personnel as this may affect their tactical plan.
- 1327 For buildings with a simultaneous evacuation strategy, and before operational personnel arrive, fire
1328 control personnel should deliver consistent evacuation advice to all people at risk who make an
1329 emergency call, leaving the caller in no doubt as to what they should do. Once operational
1330 personnel arrive at the incident, they may decide to implement a phased or progressive evacuation
1331 strategy.
- 1332 There may be situations where, due to an escalation of the incident or development of the fire,
1333 there may be a requirement for the incident commander to change the pre-determined 'stay put'
1334 strategy of the building. The number of calls being received and the type of information being
1335 received by fire control personnel may directly influence the incident commander's decision to
1336 change the evacuation strategy due to, for example:
- 1337 • Multiple emergency calls or multiple FSG calls being received by fire control personnel
 - 1338 • Emergency or FSG calls being received from the same building but from a location that is
1339 remote from the initial fire, indicating spread of flames or smoke
 - 1340 • A high number of emergency calls being received, or the number of FSG calls in progress
1341 having a negative impact on the capacity of the fire control room, leading to an inability to
1342 manage the requirements of the incident or effectively share information with operational
1343 personnel and other agencies
 - 1344 • A loss or impairment of situational awareness of the fire control commander
 - 1345 • Occupants not following the advice of fire control personnel and choosing to leave rather
1346 than stay put
 - 1347 • People at risk reporting rapid spread of fire or smoke, either externally or internally from
1348 one compartment or floor to another
 - 1349 • Callers outside the building reporting that the fire is spreading via external cladding
 - 1350 • People at risk receiving FSG for long periods of time and rescues not being made
 - 1351 • People at risk reporting deteriorating internal conditions

1352 Information should continually be shared between fire control personnel and operational personnel
1353 to ensure there is shared situational awareness and a joint understanding of risk. One or more of
1354 the indicators listed above may not lead to a change in evacuation strategy, however the sharing of
1355 this information will enable incident commanders to continually review the strategy and amend it if
1356 required.

1357 Due to the potential impact on the development of the fire, people at risk should only open and
1358 evacuate via a window if it is believed they will not survive without doing so.

1359 Research into how people react in a fire indicates that, in the event of an evacuation, people tend
1360 to move to familiar exits and like to leave the way they came in. They also leave via exits that are
1361 visible to them and will be influenced to use the same exits as other evacuees. These exits may
1362 not always be the safest and may hinder firefighting activity, therefore egress routes specified by
1363 operational personnel should be encouraged.

1364 Access to floor plans or tall building layouts will assist fire control personnel in guiding people at
1365 risk towards egress routes and staircases to support their evacuation.

1366 When people at risk are being informed to evacuate, guidance on how to do this may assist them
1367 doing it safely:

- 1368 • Where there are groups of people evacuating together, linking arms or holding hands will
1369 help them to stay together
- 1370 • Material placed over the mouth and nose can reduce the inhalation of smoke and gases
- 1371 • Doors may be hot to touch and should be checked before hands are placed directly on the
1372 door or handle; burnt palms may hinder ongoing evacuation efforts. The back of the hand
1373 can be used to feel the door or handle; if either the door or handle are too hot to touch then
1374 material should be placed around the hands to provide some protection from the heat
1375
- 1376 • If smoke is encountered on evacuation routes, staying low to the ground should provide
1377 more clear air to breathe

1381 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1382 Fire and rescue services should:

- 1383 • Ensure that information about buildings with specific evacuation strategies is made
1384 available to fire control personnel via electronic systems
- 1385 • Consider providing fire control personnel with access to tall building floor plans or building
1386 layouts

1387 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1388 Fire control personnel should:

- 1389 • Use electronic systems to establish whether a building has a specific evacuation strategy
- 1390 • Establish whether people at risk have a PEEP, and advise those that do to follow the

- 1391 advice it contains
- 1392 • Inform operational personnel if people at risk with PEEPs report that they may have
1393 difficulty in following the advice it contains
- 1394 • Provide appropriate evacuation guidance to people at risk from fire
- 1395 • Identify whether people at risk from fire within a building that has a 'stay put' policy are
1396 being directly affected by flames, heat or smoke
- 1397 • Inform occupants of buildings with a 'stay put' policy who are not directly affected by
1398 flames, heat or smoke that it should be safe for them to remain in their flat
- 1399 • Inform people at risk from fire within a building who have been told to stay put to ring 999
1400 and let the fire service know if they evacuate or move away from the location where they
1401 have been told to stay
- 1402 • Inform operational personnel of any known changes to the location of people at risk from
1403 fire within a building who had originally been advised to stay put by fire control personnel
- 1404 • Deliver consistent evacuation advice to people at risk from fire inside a building with a
1405 simultaneous evacuation strategy
- 1406 • Continually share information with the incident commander about the number of calls and
1407 type of information being received from people at risk from fire within a building that might
1408 affect their decision to review or change an evacuation strategy
- 1409 • Consider using tall building floor plans or building layouts to guide people at risk towards
1410 evacuation routes or staircases
- 1411

1412

1413 **Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk: Burns and scalds**

1414 *HAZARD KNOWLEDGE*

1415 Fire control personnel may receive calls from or about people with burns. Including calls where a
1416 person's clothing has caught fire and immediate guidance is needed to extinguish the flames and
1417 administer initial first aid until category 1 emergency responders arrive.

1418 A burn is caused by dry heat, for example by an iron or a fire. A scald is caused by something wet
1419 such as hot water or steam.

1420 Burns to the skin can be caused by:

- 1421 • Heat or fire
- 1422 • Extreme cold
- 1423 • Electricity
- 1424 • Chemicals
- 1425 • Radiation

1426

1427 Airway burns can be caused by:

- 1428 • Inhalation of steam or aerosolised chemicals
- 1429 • Aspiration of scalding liquids
- 1430 • Explosions
- 1431 • Flammable gases under pressure

1432

1433 If burns are not dealt with quickly, a casualty may experience further trauma and an increased risk
1434 of infection, shock or death.

1435 **Person on fire**

1436 People whose clothes or hair are on fire, either accidentally or deliberately are at significant risk of
1437 immediate harm. Advice may be required if they are disorientated or are unaware of the right
1438 course of action.

1439 People trying to help may be at risk if they take the wrong actions and could be at risk of harm, or
1440 could inadvertently spread the fire.

1441 Callers should not be asked to extinguish a separate or main source of fire unless they specify that
1442 they are trained to do so and have the appropriate extinguishing materials.

1443

1444

1445 **Control measure – Situational awareness: Calls from or about people at risk – Burns**
1446 **and scalds**

1447 This control measure should be read in conjunction with:

- 1448 • Control measure – Situational awareness: Survival guidance
- 1449 • Control measure – Situational awareness: Fire survival guidance
- 1450 • Control measure – Emergency call supervision

1451 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

1452 **Thermal burns**

1453 There are several factors which may affect the advice given to callers by fire control personnel,
1454 these include:

- 1455 • Who the call is received from:
 - 1456 ○ The casualty
 - 1457 ○ A passer-by or a person with the casualty
- 1458 • The location of the casualty
- 1459 • Whether the person is still on fire
- 1460 • Their surroundings and any additional hazards such as fire spread
- 1461 • Any other immediate threat to the casualty or the person making the call
- 1462 • The condition of the casualty for example:
 - 1463 ○ Disorientation or unconsciousness
 - 1464 ○ Shock
 - 1465 ○ Hypothermia

1466 A change in the condition of the casualty may affect the tactical plan for operational or medical
1467 personnel and must be communicated to all responders without delay.

1468 **Chemical burns**

1469 Fire control personnel should attempt to gather information to identify the chemical substance that
1470 has caused the burn. This information should be shared with operational personnel and ambulance
1471 control without delay.

1472 **Emergency call supervision**

1473 Emergency call supervision can assist fire control personnel in gathering information and providing
1474 guidance to callers and will ensure appropriate contact is made promptly with ambulance control,
1475 operational personnel and other category 1 emergency responders.

1476 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1477 There are no strategic actions associated with this control measure.

1478 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1479 Fire control personnel should:

- 1480 • Identify the cause of the burn and other relevant information
- 1481 • Exchange information about the condition of the casualty with ambulance control,
1482 operational personnel and other category 1 emergency responders
- 1483 • Exchange information about chemicals involved with ambulance control, operational
1484 personnel and other category 1 responders

1485 **Control measure – Provide burn injury advice**

1486 This control measure should be read in conjunction with:

- 1487 • Control measure – Protect people at risk: Survival guidance
- 1488 • Control measure – Protect people at risk: Fire survival guidance
- 1489 • Control measure – Multi-agency: People at risk

1490 Treatment for burns injuries should be administered as soon as possible to reduce the severity.
1491 Fire control personnel should redirect calls about burn injuries to ambulance control without delay
1492 once the incident details have been obtained. This will ensure the call is triaged and an ambulance
1493 response is dispatched so that the casualty can receive appropriate medical care.

1494 There may be occasions where it is not appropriate or possible for a call to be redirected to
1495 ambulance control, such as:

- 1496 • The caller is in extreme distress and redirecting the call may increase their distress
- 1497 • There is a risk that the call is ended before any advice or guidance is given
- 1498 • A delay in the call being answered in ambulance control is anticipated

1499 Where any of these conditions exist, fire control personnel should contact ambulance control to
1500 share all information gathered and request an appropriate ambulance response.

1501 Guidance given to people at risk by fire control personnel in such situations will support them in
1502 taking action to reduce the severity of the burn injury.

1503 Control measure – Multi-agency: People at risk provides information about redirecting a call to
1504 another emergency service.

1505 **Stop – Drop - Roll**

1506 In situations where a person or an item of their clothing is on fire, the burning process should be
1507 stopped as quickly as possible. Fire control personnel should tell the person on fire to:

- 1508 • **Stop** – Prevent the person from running around as this may fan the flames and make them
1509 burn faster
- 1510 • **Drop** - Try to get the person to the floor and lie down as this will make it harder for the fire
1511 to spread and reduce the effect of flames on the face and head

- 1512 • **Roll** – Get the person to roll around to smother the flames. A fire blanket, heavy cloth
1513 blanket, coat or rug can also be used to smother the flames

1514 The casualty may need help dropping to the floor. If all options have been explored and the
1515 casualty is still not on the ground another person can use their leg to sweep the casualties' legs
1516 from under them so they drop to the ground. This may cause additional injury to the person on fire
1517 or to the third party so should only be considered as a last resort.

1518 A fire extinguisher can be used to extinguish the flames if there is one available.

1519 **Cool the burn**

1520 A burn injury will continue to burn until heat has been taken away. The burn should be cooled
1521 immediately with cool or lukewarm water for 20 minutes or until operational personnel or a medical
1522 response arrives. Any water source that is available can be used as the benefits of the cooling
1523 process outweigh the risk of contamination. Ice, iced water, creams or greasy substances such as
1524 butter must not be used.

1525 **Remove burnt clothing**

1526 Attempts should not be made to remove clothing that is stuck to the skin. Clothing or jewellery that
1527 is near the burnt area of skin, including babies' nappies should be removed. Jewellery retains heat
1528 and continues tissue damage if left in place.

1529 **Keep warm**

1530 The cooling of burns may cause hypothermia, especially in the very young or elderly casualties. The
1531 casualty should be kept warm taking care to avoid rubbing blankets or other materials against burnt
1532 skin.

1533 **Cover the burn**

1534 After cooling the burn should be covered loosely with a layer of cling film to aid wound hygiene. Cling
1535 film should not be wrapped around the burn due to the possibility of swelling. If cling film is not
1536 available the wound may be loosely covered with clean, damp cloth.

1537 Covering the burn wound:

- 1538 • Minimises contamination by shielding the burn wound from secondary infection
1539 • Reduces pain produced by the exposure of the damaged nerve endings (in partial
1540 thickness burns) to the air currents
1541 • Provides protection during transport

1542

1543 **Sit up**

1544 If the face or eyes are burnt the casualty should try to sit up to help reduce swelling.

1545 **Watch for shock**

1546 If the person is uncommunicative, delirious, or the caller indicates that the casualty looks pale, they

1547 may be in shock. The casualty should be sat up or propped up and kept warm.

1548 **Chemical burns**

1549 The principles of 'Remove – Remove – Remove' will help if someone has a chemical burn.

1550 People helping the casualty should avoid getting the chemical on themselves.

1551 The following actions will help people to limit the effects of the chemical until category 1 emergency
1552 responders arrive:

- 1553 • Remove themselves from the contaminated area to avoid further exposure to the substance
- 1554 • Remove contaminated clothing, cutting off with scissors to avoid pulling over the head.
- 1555 • Remove the substance from the skin using a dry absorbent material to either soak it up or
1556 brush it off
- 1557 • Do not pull off clothing that is stuck to the skin
- 1558 • Do not smoke, eat or drink
- 1559 • Rinse the burn or contaminated area with copious amounts of water
- 1560 • For facial burns, lean the casualty forward and pour water over the back of the head
- 1561 • Wash eyes out directly

1562 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1563 Fire and rescue services should:

- 1564 • Ensure methods are in place to obtain medical advice for people with burns
- 1565 • Consider the use of system-based call prompts and aide-memoires for providing burn injury
1566 advice

1567

1568 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1569 Fire control personnel should:

- 1570 • Redirect the call to Ambulance for medical advice as soon as possible
- 1571 • Request assistance from medical responders as soon as possible
- 1572 • Give appropriate stop, drop and roll advice when required
- 1573 • Provide appropriate burn injury advice when required
- 1574 • Follow 'Remove' principles when providing guidance for casualties with chemical burns

1575

1576 **Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk: Water**

1577 **Hazard knowledge**

1578 There are many reasons why incidents involving water may put people at risk. It may be because
1579 flooding has caused a dramatic rise in normal water levels, which have affected structures, or it
1580 may be because someone has purposely or accidentally entered a body of water.

1581 It is likely that if a child or animal is in the water, a person will enter the water and attempt to rescue
1582 them.

1583 With the use of modern technology such as smartwatches, it is possible that calls may be received
1584 from people who are in water. However, it is probable that calls will be received from people who
1585 are not in water, in which case the caller will need to communicate advice to the person at risk.

1586 **Types of water**

1587 Various types of water can pose risks to people, however water conditions are not static and can
1588 change rapidly:

1589 **Flat or still water**

1590 Flat or still water is defined as water that has minimal movement, except for locally induced wind
1591 currents. Examples include:

- 1592 • Lakes
- 1593 • Lochs
- 1594 • Ponds
- 1595 • Quarry pools
- 1596 • Reservoirs

1597 **Moving water**

1598 Moving water can have strong currents, some of which are underwater.

1599 Moving water will erode underwater surfaces such as mud and stone. Erosion or under-cutting can
1600 make riverbanks unstable, collapsing when weight is applied, and together with steep and slippery
1601 banks this can make it difficult to get out of moving water.

1602 The noise produced by moving water can make communication difficult between a person in the
1603 water, members of the public and emergency responders.

1604 **Tidal waters**

1605 Tidal conditions are predictable and can be anticipated and prepared for, however the depth of
1606 water can change rapidly as the tide turns. Some rivers, inlets and estuaries are also influenced by
1607 tides.

1608 Tidal bores occur where the incoming tide forms a wave or waves of water that travel up a river or
1609 narrow bay against the direction of the river or bay's current.

1610 **Coastal waters**

1611 Calls about people at risk in coastal waters would usually be directed to the Maritime and
1612 Coastguard Agency (MCA), however it is recognised that some calls may be received by fire
1613 control personnel.

1614 A rip current is a strong flow of water running from a beach out to sea. Rip currents can quickly
1615 drag people and debris away from the shallows of the shoreline into deeper water. They tend to
1616 flow at 1–2mph but can reach 4–5mph, are especially powerful in larger surf and can also be found
1617 around river mouths, estuaries and man-made structures like piers and coastal defence barriers.
1618 Rip currents are a major cause of accidental drowning at beaches.

1619 Beaches change every day according to the weather, tides and currents in the sea. Tidal cutoffs
1620 are a major cause of Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) callouts as people are unaware that
1621 they are in potential danger. A number of factors cause tidal cutoffs:

- 1622 • Causeways – Raised paths or roads that are sometimes submerged and re-exposed during
1623 a tidal cycle; causeways sometimes provide access to islands
- 1624 • Sandbanks – Flat sandy areas with raised banks around which the tide flows; water around
1625 sandbanks can be very deep, cold and fast-moving
- 1626 • Headlands and rocky outcrops – These create bays that can be cut off by an incoming tide;
1627 cliffs can create an additional hazard if there is no safe exit

1628 **Flood water**

1629 Flood water should be considered as moving water even when the conditions appear to be still. As
1630 with tidal conditions, water levels can rise rapidly during periods of extreme weather conditions or
1631 when flood defences fail.

1632 Flowing flood water can create a significant amount of force, enough to cause structural damage
1633 and potentially result in the collapse of temporary or unstable structures. Flood water has been
1634 known to wash away transport infrastructure such as roads, railway lines and bridges.

1635 Flooded environments may create unexpected underwater entrapment hazards such as displaced
1636 drain covers and submerged street furniture.

1637 Widespread flooding is likely to affect multiple people, so fire control rooms should expect to
1638 receive multiple calls from or about people at risk when flooding occurs.

1639 **Coastal flooding**

1640 Heavy storms, or other extreme weather conditions combined with high tides, can cause sea levels
1641 to rise above normal, force seawater on to the land and cause coastal flooding. The Environment
1642 Agency and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) constantly monitor sea levels and
1643 issue flood warnings when required.

1644 **River flooding**

1645 River flooding occurs if a river bursts or over-tops its banks and floods the surrounding areas. River
1646 flooding is generally caused by prolonged, extensive rain or snow melt.

1647 **Flash flooding**

1648 A flash flood is a fast-moving and unexpected flood usually caused by heavy rain. While natural
1649 events may be responsible for most flash flooding, it may also occur if flood defences fail, or
1650 drainage systems are overwhelmed or damaged.

1651 **Groundwater flooding**

1652 Groundwater flooding can occur when water levels underneath the ground rise above normal
1653 levels, approaching the surface. It is usually caused by prolonged periods of rainfall and can last
1654 for weeks or months.

1655 **Risks to people in water**

1656 People who have entered water are at risk of submersion, entanglement, cold water shock,
1657 hypothermia or drowning.

1658 Inhaling or swallowing even small amounts of water into the lungs is serious. Drowning can happen
1659 quickly and in as little as 5cm of water. People who are in water may become distressed,
1660 particularly if they are not confident in water. Distress can lead to rapid breathing (hyperventilation),
1661 which may cause people to inhale or swallow water.

1662 A high proportion of people who die in water have alcohol or drugs in their bloodstream; they may
1663 be unable to catch a throwline or climb out of a flooded or floating vehicle safely.

1664 There may be occasions where people at risk are able but unwilling to follow the advice being
1665 given by fire control personnel because:

- 1666 • They are emotionally distressed or afraid of water
- 1667 • They are concerned about getting wet or damaging their clothing or possessions

1668 The ability of people at risk to evacuate safely from water will depend on a combination of the
1669 distance to solid ground, the depth, speed and temperature of water, and any underwater
1670 obstructions that may not be visible.

1671

1672 **Depth and speed**

1673 The risks posed to people cannot be determined on the depth or speed of the water alone. Shallow
1674 water may be low risk when still or slow-moving, however 15cm of fast-flowing water is enough to
1675 knock an adult off their feet and 60cm of water is enough to float a road vehicle.

1676 Deep water may appear still or slow-moving from the surface, however there may be hidden
1677 underwater currents.

1678 **Distance to solid ground**

1679 Water conditions can vary significantly in different areas of the same body of water. Water
1680 conditions are more likely to change the further the distance from solid ground.

1681 **Obstructions in the water**

1682 Obstructions in the water can lead to people at risk becoming injured, entangled or submerged.
1683 Poor water clarity will make it difficult to identify underwater objects.

1684 Strainers – such as manufactured objects like fences and drains or natural objects like partially
1685 submerged trees and bushes – allow water to pass through but trap solid objects.

1686 Siphons are underwater gaps or holes in a barrier or structure that allow water to flow through.

1687 People can be pulled underwater or become trapped due to the force of the water flowing through
1688 strainers or siphons.

1689 **Temperature**

1690 Cold water can seriously affect breathing and movement and can result in cold water shock or
1691 hypothermia. This effect can begin at temperatures below 15°C; river temperatures in the UK are
1692 often colder than this, only warming up from July to October.

1693 Deep water is likely to be colder than shallow water.

1694 **Cold water shock**

1695 The term ‘cold water shock’ refers to a range of natural reactions in the human body caused by
1696 sudden immersion in cold water.

1697 An initial gasp for breath followed by hyperventilation is the first stage of cold water shock. Once
1698 breathing is back under control, this is the best opportunity to get out of the water before any
1699 further effects of cold water shock begin.

1700 Blood pressure increases during the second stage of cold water shock as the body tries to keep
1701 blood warm by moving it towards the middle of the body; this often results in people appearing
1702 pale.

1703 ‘Swim failure’ characterises the third stage of cold water shock as muscles cool, and strength,
1704 endurance and muscular control reduce to the point where people cannot swim or rescue
1705 themselves. People are likely to drown if they are still in the water at this stage and do not have a
1706 form of buoyancy aid.

1707

1708 **Hypothermia**

1709 If people are exposed to cold water, they could become hypothermic in just a few minutes. As well
1710 as the health risks, hypothermia may affect people’s ability to follow advice and communicate with
1711 fire control personnel. Hypothermia remains a risk even after people get out of the water, so it is
1712 essential that the process of warming them is efficient and begins as soon as possible.

1713 The symptoms of moderate hypothermia include:

- 1714 • Feeling cold
- 1715 • Uncontrolled shivering
- 1716 • Cold to the touch, with cold and pale hands and feet
- 1717 • Loss of manual dexterity
- 1718 • Mild confusion, disorientation or irritability

- 1719
- The person possibly denying having any problem and rejecting assistance

1720 The symptoms of severe hypothermia include:

- 1721
- Slurred speech and an apathetic, confused and irrational state
- 1722
- Change of colour to lips, gums or tongue; this may be a blue or grey tone depending on
- 1723
- people's natural complexion
- 1724
- Reduced consciousness
- 1725
- Shivering stopping

1726 A baby with hypothermia may be:

- 1727
- Cold to the touch and with reddening of the skin
- 1728
- Floppy
- 1729
- Unusually quiet and sleepy and may refuse to feed

1730 **Submerged casualties**

1731 Fire control personnel may receive calls regarding submerged casualties (people who have
1732 entered the water and have not resurfaced), including casualties trapped in submerged vehicles.

1733 It is important to distinguish between rescue and recovery as it should influence the incident
1734 commander's decision-making. In almost all circumstances the level of acceptable risk for a rescue
1735 is considerably higher than that for a recovery.

1736 A model has been developed to help incident commanders decide if a casualty is survivable and
1737 involves decision-making with other emergency services or rescue organisations that are in
1738 attendance.

1739 The survivability model is designed to give casualties every reasonable chance of rescue and
1740 resuscitation and is balanced against the risk of harm to responders when carrying out rescues.
1741 The main factors to be considered are the length of time the casualty has been submerged and the
1742 water temperature.

1743 For more information on the triage of casualties and the survivability model refer to the guidance
1744 document: Control measure – Triage of casualties: Water rescue and flooding

1745 The public may attempt a rescue themselves if they do not see emergency personnel intervening,
1746 which may lead to multiple casualties needing to be rescued. In turn, this may oblige operational
1747 personnel to deploy into a hazard area when it is unlikely that any of the original casualties have
1748 survived. For more information refer to [Operations – People](#).

1749

1750 **Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk – Water**

1751 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

1752 Where calls are received from or about people at risk from water, it should be established if it is
1753 safer for them to evacuate or to remain where they are until they are rescued or the incident is
1754 resolved.

1755 Several factors may affect the advice that fire control personnel give, including:

- 1756
- Type of water, for example:
 - 1757 ○ Lake
 - 1758 ○ River
 - 1759 ○ Flood water
 - 1760 ○ Tidal waters
 - Speed and depth of the water
 - Temperature of the water
 - Physical condition of the people, for example if they are suffering from cold water shock or
1764 hypothermia
 - Environment people are in, for example:
 - 1765 ○ Open water
 - 1766 ○ Within a vehicle
 - 1767 ○ Within a building
 - Proximity to solid ground
 - Weather forecasts, tide times or river-level forecasts
 - How confident people are with water and their swimming ability
 - Whether people have a flotation aid, such as:
 - 1773 ○ A lifejacket
 - 1774 ○ A lifebelt
 - 1775 ○ A piece of watersports equipment
 - Available water rescue equipment that may be used to assist, including:
 - 1776 ○ Life rings and other buoyancy aids
 - 1777 ○ Throwlines
 - 1778

1779 Conditions can change rapidly during situations that involve people at risk near water, therefore it
1780 is important to continually reassess the situation to ensure that appropriate advice is given.

1781 People may find it difficult to judge the speed and depth of water without putting themselves at risk.
1782 However, speed of water can be judged by comparing it to walking speed, and depth can be

1783 judged by describing the water level against objects such as a building or a walking stick. Such
1784 comparisons should only be used where it is safe for people to do so.

1785 Fire control personnel can use simple questions and people's responses to them to determine
1786 whether the conditions they are experiencing are deteriorating. Example questions include:

1787 • 'What has happened to the water/conditions since I last asked you?'

1788 • 'Is the water level rising?'

1789 • 'Is the water moving faster or slower?'

1790 Fire control personnel can use information about locations affected by tides to assess the risk of
1791 tidal waters.

1792 Fire and rescue services should receive notification of weather warnings, tide predictions and river
1793 levels from environment agencies, the Met Office, the Rivers Agency or local water management
1794 groups such as the Canal Trust or local drainage board; some information will also be available
1795 from the Met Office Hazard Manager. This information should be used to assist in building
1796 situational awareness and to identify a change in situation or potential escalation of an incident.

1797 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1798 Fire and rescue services should:

1799 • Ensure up-to-date risk information for bodies of water is available for use by fire control
1800 personnel

1801 • Ensure arrangements are in place with external agencies that give fire control personnel
1802 access to weather, tidal, flood and river-level warnings

1803 • Ensure fire control personnel can access up-to-date risk information relating to tidal
1804 influences

1805 • Ensure fire control personnel have access to the Met Office Hazard Manager for weather
1806 predictions and flood forecasts

1807 • Ensure fire control personnel are aware of how to access predicted weather, tidal, flood and
1808 river levels to build situational awareness

1809 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1810 Fire control personnel should:

1811 • Identify the type of water where people are at risk

1812 • Establish the approximate depth, speed and temperature of the water

1813 • Identify the environment where people are at risk from water and their proximity to solid
1814 ground

1815 • Establish and monitor the condition of people at risk and recognise any signs and
1816 symptoms they are suffering from cold water shock or hypothermia

- 1817 • Attempt to establish the people's confidence with water and their swimming ability
- 1818 • Identify whether any buoyancy aids or water safety equipment that may be used to assist
- 1819 are available
- 1820 • Use available weather, tidal, flood and river predictions to build situational awareness and
- 1821 identify or predict a change in situation
- 1822 • Reassess the situation and recognise the signs of potential incident escalation, including a
- 1823 rise in water levels

1824 **Control measure – Situational awareness: Submerged casualties**

1825 This control measure should be read in conjunction with Water rescue - Hazard – Submerged
1826 casualty

1827 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

1828 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) [position statement](#) on the rescue of submerged
1829 casualties states that all rescues of a submerged casualty should be conducted from land, the
1830 surface of the water or by personnel in the water maintaining the correct levels of Personal
1831 Protective Equipment (PPE). Operational discretion should not be used to remove PPE, enter
1832 confined spaces underwater or act outside of service policy to go underwater.

1833 To minimise the risk of exposure to operational personnel, fire and rescue services may consider
1834 mobilising a subject matter adviser or member of personnel to survey the scene. This may be
1835 appropriate if a casualty has been submerged for longer than 90 minutes and their likelihood of
1836 surviving is minimal. Conversely, if the information received cannot be verified or the casualty is
1837 within the survivability model for rescue operations, consideration should be given to mobilising an
1838 appropriate water rescue response.

1839 Fire control personnel should gather sufficient situational awareness to allow them to mobilise the
1840 most appropriate and informed resources as detailed by their fire and rescue service water rescue
1841 mobilising procedures.

1842 Fire control personnel should share the situational awareness they have gained with operational
1843 personnel to support them with their risk assessments and decision-making, including information
1844 which may give an indication of when the 90minutes survivability 'clock' should start.

1845 Where possible, fire control personnel should gather the following information to aid mobilising
1846 decisions and share it with operational personnel and other responding agencies to inform a joint
1847 understanding of risk.

1848 **Witness**

- 1849 • Whether someone witnessed the person or vehicle enter the water

1850 **Time**

- 1851 • The time that the person or vehicle entered the water
- 1852 • The time that the person was last seen before becoming submerged
- 1853 • Whether the person resurfaced and, if so, when

- 1854 • The time that the call was received (if received from another control room)

1855 **Casualties**

- 1856 • The number of casualties
- 1857 • The age of the casualties
- 1858 • The clothing that casualties were wearing
- 1859 • Whether the casualties were conscious or unconscious
- 1860 • The casualties' state of mind
- 1861 • The casualties' position in the vehicle, where relevant

1862 **Vehicle (if relevant)**

- 1863 • The type of vehicle
- 1864 • The size of the vehicle (if the type is unknown)
- 1865 • Whether the vehicle is fully submerged
- 1866 • Whether the windows or doors are open
- 1867 • Whether the vehicle is upright or upside down

1868 **Location**

- 1869 • The point that the person or vehicle entered the water (point of entry)
- 1870 • The point that the person or vehicle was last seen (point last seen)
- 1871 • The last known position of the person or vehicle (last known position)

1872 **Water**

- 1873 • The type or body of water
- 1874 • Whether the water is tidal, static, or fast- or slow-moving
- 1875 • The depth of the water
- 1876 • Whether the water is frozen or icy
- 1877 • The direction in which the water is flowing (in relation to other landmarks)

1878 It is not possible to know for certain when a casualty became submerged, so the survivability clock
1879 should start when the first emergency responder arrives on scene. It should not be assumed that
1880 the casualty has been submerged for longer than this. However, if fire control personnel can gather
1881 credible information to identify an accurate time for when the casualty became submerged, the
1882 clock can be started at this point. Credible information sources that may be able to confirm this can
1883 be:

- 1884 • Visual awareness systems, such as 999eye

- 1885 • Closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage
- 1886 • Credible witnesses, such as other emergency service responders.
- 1887 • All information gathered by fire control personnel should be recorded on the incident log
- 1888 and shared promptly with the incident commander.

1889 Fire and rescue services should consider mobilising different levels of response based on the

1890 survivability model for submerged casualties. The levels of response should reflect the casualties'

1891 likelihood of surviving and the level of risk to which operational personnel will be exposed.

1892 When fire control personnel are in any doubt about the credibility or accuracy of information

1893 received, appropriate mobilisation should take place.

1894 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1895 Fire and rescue services should:

- 1896 • Ensure fire control personnel are aware of the survivability model for submerged casualties
- 1897 • Provide fire control personnel with a means of gathering sufficient information to enable an
- 1898 appropriate water rescue response, including the use of system-based call prompts and
- 1899 aide-memoires
- 1900 • Ensure fire control personnel have clear guidelines for the mobilisation response to
- 1901 submerged casualties

1902 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1903 Fire control personnel should:

- 1904 • Gather sufficient situational awareness to allow them to mobilise the required resources as
- 1905 detailed by their fire and rescue service water rescue mobilising procedures
- 1906 • Gather sufficient information to establish how long the person has been submerged for
- 1907 • Share information gathered with operational personnel and, where relevant, other
- 1908 responding agencies to promote a joint understanding of risk

1909 **Control measure – Safety advice: People at risk – Water**

1910 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

1911 Where people at risk are directly affected or at imminent risk from water, then water survival

1912 guidance should be provided. However, there are occasions where people may not be directly

1913 affected by water, including:

- 1914 • People on solid ground who have witnessed people or animals in water
- 1915 • People in buildings with water nearby but which is not likely to enter the building imminently

1916 Witnesses who have seen people or animals in water may attempt to enter the water to assist in

1917 the incident. People can assist with water incidents in various ways, including relaying evacuation

1918 advice to callers and assisting in their rescue as detailed in water survival guidance. However,

1919 people helping should be advised to stay out of the water and away from unguarded edges and
1920 banks that might collapse.

1921 **Stay warm**

1922 It is important that medical advice is followed to protect people who have been able to exit the
1923 water from hypothermia, including:

- 1924 • Move people indoors or somewhere sheltered as quickly as possible
- 1925 • Replace any wet clothes with dry clothes if possible
- 1926 • If casualties cannot be moved indoors, protect them from the ground by providing some
1927 insulation
- 1928 • Wrap them in a blanket, sleeping bag, dry towel or similar, making sure their head is
1929 covered
- 1930 • Give them a warm non-alcoholic drink and some high-energy food
- 1931 • Do not apply direct heat to warm them up, with a hot water bottle for example; it may
1932 damage the skin or cause an irregular heartbeat
- 1933 • Do not massage or rub the person as vigorous or jarring movements may trigger cardiac
1934 arrest

1935 It is important to maintain contact with people at risk during all calls where possible, however it is
1936 vital if a person is potentially suffering from hypothermia. People suffering from hypothermia may
1937 feel tired and lose consciousness; engaging them in conversation or asking questions may assist
1938 in keeping them awake until emergency resources arrive.

1939 Where flooding has affected a large area, it is likely that calls will be received from people who are
1940 concerned that water is approaching their property. People should be advised on the steps to take
1941 to protect their building and belongings, including:

- 1942 • Using sandbags to protect their property:
 - 1943 ○ Sandbags may be provided by local councils; callers are likely to be required to
1944 contact their local council to request sandbags
 - 1945 ○ Pillow cases or refuse sacks filled with soil can be a home-made alternative where
1946 sandbags are not available
- 1947 • Moving possessions to higher levels within their property

1948 The following are examples of public online and telephone services that provide advice on the
1949 actions people should take to prepare for floods, as well as information on current flood warning
1950 levels in the area:

- 1951 • GOV.UK flood information service
- 1952 • GOV.UK flood warnings
- 1953 • The National Flood Forum website
- 1954 • SEPA Floodline

- 1955 • Natural Resources Wales – Flooding
- 1956 • Northern Ireland Direct – Flooding
- 1957 If water has started to enter the building or the building has been surrounded and there is imminent
- 1958 danger that the water will enter, then the advice in water survival guidance should be followed.

1959 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

1960 Fire and rescue services should:

- 1961 • Consider the use of system-based call prompts and aide-memoires for providing water
- 1962 safety advice

1963 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

1964 Fire control personnel should:

- 1965 • Advise people at risk to stay out of the water, stay away from unguarded edges and banks
- 1966 and to not enter the water to attempt rescue
- 1967 • Advise people at risk on how to protect their building and their belongings from water,
- 1968 including the use of sandbags or moving possessions to higher levels in a property
- 1969 • Consider sharing with people at risk from flooding details about online and telephone
- 1970 services that are available
- 1971 • Consider providing water safety advice as a pre-warning of flooding
- 1972 • Recognise when safety advice is no longer appropriate and water survival guidance should
- 1973 be given
- 1974 • Consider advising members of the public on how to safely provide a buoyancy aid to a
- 1975 person at risk in water
- 1976 • Provide people who have exited the water with advice on how to keep warm
- 1977 • If possible, continue talking to people who have exited from or are in the water, to
- 1978 encourage them to remain awake until they can be rescued or receive medical attention

1979 **Control measure – Evacuation guidance: People at risk – Water**

1980 This control measure should be read in conjunction with:

1981 Control measure – Evacuation guidance: People at risk

1982 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

1983 Calls may be received from or about people at risk from water from people who have witnessed the

1984 incident and are not in the water. In these situations, fire control personnel should give advice to

1985 the caller to pass on to the people at risk who are in or near the water.

1986 Due to the risks associated with water, people at risk should not be advised to enter deep, fast-

1987 flowing or large areas of water. Any exposure to water should be kept to a minimum. The safest

- 1988 way to exit from water is to wade to a safe place where possible. The following advice should
 1989 assist people in wading:
- 1990 • Only wade through moving water that is ankle-deep or less, or still water that is less than
 1991 knee-deep
 - 1992 • Only wade through water that is moving at or slower than walking speed
 - 1993 • If possible, use a stick or similar object to assist wading by:
 - 1994 ○ Testing the depth of water
 - 1995 ○ Checking for any obstructions
 - 1996 ○ Locating stable areas to place feet
 - 1997 • Move one foot at a time, making sure one foot is stable before moving the other
 - 1998 • If using a stick or similar object, ensure there are two points of contact with the ground at all
 1999 times
 - 2000 • Move slowly, ensuring that feet are approximately shoulder width apart to allow the water to
 2001 flow between the legs
 - 2002 • Advise multiple people in the water to wade together:
 - 2003 ○ Two people should wade one behind the other, the person at the back holding on to
 2004 the waist of the person in front
 - 2005 ○ Three or more people should form a wedge or triangular shape when wading
 2006 through water
 - 2007 • Do not wade through large expanses of water
 - 2008 • Only wade through water when a place of safety and safe means of exiting the water are
 2009 visible
 - 2010 • If at any point the water becomes unsafe and people are required to turn back, they should
 2011 turn their body downstream when changing direction
- 2012 Due to the hazards and risks associated with water, if people cannot exit the water using the
 2013 methods above, then it is likely that fire control personnel will be required to provide them with
 2014 water survival guidance as detailed within the survival guidance document on methods to keep
 2015 themselves safe.
- 2016 There may be circumstances where people at risk who are not in the water at the time of the call
 2017 may be in a place where they are safe to remain until they are rescued. This may include people
 2018 on high ground who have become surrounded by water.
- 2019 If people at risk are inside a property and are required to evacuate via a window due to flooding,
 2020 fire control personnel should consider advising them to take extra precautions, such as using life
 2021 jackets if available or removing heavy clothing and footwear if they will be dropping into water. Fire
 2022 control personnel may need to give people water survival guidance before they drop into water.

2023 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

2024 There are no strategic actions associated with this control measure.

2025 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

2026 Fire control personnel should:

- 2027 • Inform people at risk to not enter deep, fast-flowing or large areas of water
- 2028 • Advise people who are not in the water to remain out of the water
- 2029 • Establish whether it is safe to wade through water
- 2030 • Provide advice on how to wade safely through water
- 2031 • Establish if people at risk are in a place where they are safe to remain until they are
2032 rescued

2033 **Control measure – Share information with other agencies: People at risk – Water**

2034 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

2035 Several agencies can assist with single and multiple incidents involving people at risk from water.
2036 These agencies can assist with:

- 2037 • Water search and rescue
- 2038 • Submerged casualty rescue
- 2039 • Body recovery
- 2040 • Casualties requiring medical attention in the water

2041 **Water search and rescue**

2042 The police are responsible for co-ordinating search and rescue on land and inland waters and have
2043 a responsibility to plan, organise and manage a missing persons search, including calling off a
2044 search. While the police will co-ordinate the overall search operations, it is recognised that some
2045 functions will be supported by partner agencies with specific water rescue expertise, including flood
2046 rescue tactical advisers and water and flood incident managers.

2047 The MCA, through HM Coastguard (HMCG), is responsible for co-ordinating search and rescue at
2048 sea, but will also respond to rescues on the coastline, within tidal waters and in certain delegated
2049 inland waters by local agreement.

2050 HMCG and the police can call on various water search and rescue assets, for example lifeboats
2051 from the RNLI, cave rescue, mountain rescue and lowland search and rescue. Although these
2052 assets are usually requested via the police, some fire and rescue services may have local
2053 mobilising arrangements in place.

2054 Air assets such as drones (classified as a type of unmanned aircraft by the Civil Aviation Authority)
2055 can be provided by many agencies, including the Environment Agency, which has a 24-hour drone
2056 response capability.

2057 Fixed-wing assets can also support more traditional air assets, such as helicopters from the
2058 National Police Air Service and MCA search and rescue service.

2059 Further information can be found in:

- 2060 • Search, rescue and casualty care – Aerial resources: Drones for search
- 2061 • Search, rescue and casualty care – Aerial resources: Helicopters for search and rescue

2062 **Submerged casualties rescue**

2063 Fire and rescue services should try to identify dive teams that can provide an underwater search
2064 and rescue capability for incidents involving submerged casualties. If available, they should be
2065 mobilised to incidents where a fire and rescue service intervention is not possible. This may be due
2066 to the depth or position of a casualty, or a situation that may result in personnel being exposed to
2067 an underwater rescue situation.

2068 **Body recovery**

2069 The police are responsible for body recovery and should be requested if not already in attendance.
2070 Fire and rescue services may be involved depending on local arrangements.

2071 **Medical assistance**

2072 There may be occasions where casualties require medical attention while they are in water.
2073 Hazardous Area Response Teams (HARTs) and Special Operations Rescue Teams (SORTs)
2074 have skills and equipment that enable them to access, stabilise and treat casualties in the water
2075 environment. The decision to mobilise HARTs and SORTs will normally be the responsibility of
2076 ambulance control personnel. To allow the correct mobilisation to take place, it is important that
2077 sufficient information relating to the location and condition of the casualty is passed to ambulance
2078 control personnel.

2079 **National flood rescue assets**

2080 The Department for Environment, Fishing and Rural Affairs (Defra) Flood Rescue Concept of
2081 Operations (FRCO) sets out the processes for managing and maintaining flood rescue capability
2082 and the national co-ordination of flood rescue assets in England, however it has been adopted
2083 nationally.

2084 Defra's Flood Rescue National Asset Register holds a list of teams or assets that voluntarily join
2085 the register and maintain availability for national deployment. These assets include teams from the
2086 fire and rescue service, lowland rescue, mountain rescue, the police, the RNLI, the Royal Society
2087 for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and many other organisations. The management
2088 of the Defra Flood Rescue National Asset Register is contracted to the NFCC and is managed by
2089 the National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC).

2090 Fire and rescue services should update the availability of their own flood rescue assets and
2091 request national flood rescue assets in the same manner as other national assets. When making a
2092 request for a national asset, the M/ETHANE structure for sharing information should be used.

2093 Where possible, the following information should also be shared with the NRFC:

- 2094 • Prevailing weather and, if known, water conditions
- 2095 • The requirement for urban search and rescue (USAR) teams; they may be able to construct

- 2096 landing platforms
- 2097 • An estimate of mutual aid resources required (as detailed in the FRCO); this may be flood
2098 rescue team types and flood rescue tactical advisers

2099 Emergency planning groups should hold a list of local flood rescue assets. To enable local and
2100 national assets to work alongside each other during an incident, it is recommended that local
2101 assets also meet the Defra team typing standards as detailed in the [Defra Flood Rescue Concept
2102 of Operations \(FRCO\)](#). During a multi-agency response to a flooding incident, emergency planning
2103 groups should use local assets identified in their MAFP before they access assets on the National
2104 Asset Register.

2105 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

2106 Fire and rescue services should:

- 2107 • Ensure fire control personnel have methods for contacting agencies that can assist with
2108 people at risk from water
- 2109 • Ensure mobilisation and communication procedures are in place with agencies that can
2110 assist with incidents involving people at risk from water
- 2111 • Ensure fire control personnel are aware of agencies that can assist with water rescue and
2112 how to mobilise them
- 2113 • Ensure fire control personnel are aware of partner agencies with specific water rescue
2114 expertise, including flood rescue tactical advisers and water and flood incident managers
- 2115 • Ensure fire control personnel have access to the list of teams and assets held on the Defra
2116 Flood Rescue National Asset Register
- 2117 • Ensure fire control personnel can update the availability of their own flood rescue assets
2118 and request national flood rescue assets in the same manner as other national assets

2119 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

2120 Fire control personnel should:

- 2121 • Consider requesting agencies that can assist with water search and rescue
- 2122 • Consider requesting agencies that can assist with casualties requiring medical attention in
2123 the water
- 2124 • Consider requesting partner agencies with specific water rescue expertise, including flood
2125 rescue tactical advisers and water and flood incident managers
- 2126 • Consider requesting teams or assets from the Defra Flood Rescue National Asset Register
- 2127 • Update the availability of their own national flood rescue assets and consider requesting
2128 national flood rescue assets where applicable
- 2129 • Provide advice to members of the public who are assisting the rescue of people at risk to
2130 stay away from unguarded edges and banks

2131 **Control measure – Use media to share information: People at risk – Water**

2132 This control measure should be read in conjunction with Control measure – Use media to share
2133 information: People at risk

2134 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

2135 Fire and rescue services can assist in reducing the number of calls by providing widespread safety
2136 advice to prevent additional people becoming at risk from water.

2137 In some circumstances, there may be warning or notification that flooding is likely and safety
2138 advice can be provided in advance of the flooding happening.

2139 Where a multi-agency response has been set up in line with the Defra FRCO, there will be a joint
2140 media and communications strategy to ensure that there is guidance on the effective use of all
2141 media (including social media) in major incidents.

2142 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

2143 Fire and rescue services should:

- 2144 • Ensure arrangements are in place to support a joint media and communications strategy in
2145 line with the Defra FRCO

2146 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

2147 Fire control personnel should:

- 2148 • Consider the use of social media and press releases to provide water safety advice
- 2149 • Consider sharing the flood warnings and safety advice issued by other agencies
- 2150 • Consider the use of widespread water safety advice during widespread flooding to prevent
2151 more people from being at risk
- 2152 • Consider advising people on the location of flooded roads to encourage people to avoid
2153 certain routes

2154 **Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk: Stranded on a road network**

2155 *HAZARD KNOWLEDGE*

2156 There may be occasions where people have moved away from the initial hazard but remain at risk
2157 from the environment in which they are located, for example when people at risk have evacuated
2158 from a car that is on fire, but, because of the road network or motorway they are located on,
2159 additional risks are present.

2160 Busy road networks or motorways create additional risks due to:

- 2161 • The volume of traffic passing by
- 2162 • The speed of vehicles passing by
- 2163 • Limited areas in which to seek refuge

- 2164 • The increased time it takes for operational personnel and other agencies to arrive due to:
 - 2165 ○ Difficulty in accessing the incident because of specific access points
 - 2166 ○ Build-up of traffic, resulting in emergency vehicles not being able to get through
- 2167 • Encouraging people at risk to move to a place that is as safe as possible will reduce the risk
 - 2168 of them being involved in traffic collisions.
- 2169 • The type of road upon which people at risk are located will affect what guidance to give
 - 2170 them. A basic understanding of the different types of road is therefore required:

2171 **Single carriageway**

2172 A single carriageway road is a road where there is no separation between two-way traffic. Single
 2173 carriageways can have more than one lane running in each direction.

2174 **Dual carriageway**

2175 A dual carriageway is a road where there is a separation between two-way traffic. This could be in
 2176 the form of a central barrier, raised kerb or a grassed area. Dual carriageways can have more than
 2177 one lane running in each direction.

2178 **Motorway**

2179 A motorway is a wide road for fast-moving traffic with a limited number of places at which drivers
 2180 can enter and exit. Motorways do not have traffic signals, so traffic on motorways is uninterrupted.

2181 **Smart/Managed motorway**

2182 A smart or managed motorway is a section of a motorway that uses traffic management methods
 2183 to increase capacity and reduce congestion in particularly busy areas. These methods include
 2184 using the hard shoulder as a running lane and using variable speed limits to control the flow of
 2185 traffic.

2186 Emergency refuge areas (ERAs), or SOS areas, are located on smart motorways and are
 2187 designed to offer a place of relative safety for stranded vehicles where the hard shoulder is being
 2188 used as a running lane. Increasingly painted orange for improved visibility, ERAs appear up to
 2189 every 1.5 miles on 'all lane running' smart motorways.

2190 Smart or managed motorways currently only feature in England and have not yet been adopted in
 2191 Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

2192 **Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk on a road network**

2193 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

2194 Several factors may influence the safety advice that fire control personnel give to people at risk on
 2195 a road network:

- 2196 • The nature of the incident, for example:
 - 2197 ○ Road traffic collision
 - 2198 ○ Vehicle fire

- 2199 • The type of road upon which people at risk are located
- 2200 • Whether any active traffic management methods are in place
- 2201 • A combination of the above factors will determine whether people at risk should stay in their
- 2202 vehicle or exit it.

2203 People at risk may not be aware if there are active traffic management methods in place on the
 2204 motorway, therefore the agency responsible for the motorway should be informed. This may be:

- 2205 • National Highways
- 2206 • Traffic Wales
- 2207 • Traffic Scotland
- 2208 • DfI Northern Ireland

2209 The responsible agency may make changes to active traffic management methods to enable
 2210 people at risk to evacuate their vehicle safely. This may affect the advice and guidance that fire
 2211 control personnel provide.

2212 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

2213 Fire services should:

- 2214 • Ensure arrangements are in place to enable fire control personnel to communicate with
- 2215 responsible agencies for motorways

2216 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

2217 Fire control personnel should:

- 2218 • Establish the nature of the incident
- 2219 • Attempt to determine the type of road upon which the incident is located
- 2220 • Determine whether people at risk should stay inside their vehicle or attempt to exit it
- 2221 • Inform the agency responsible for incidents on the motorway and discuss whether changes
- 2222 to the active management systems can be made to enable people at risk to exit their
- 2223 vehicle safely

2224 **Control measure – Safety advice: People at risk on a road network**

2225 *CONTROL MEASURE KNOWLEDGE*

2226 Fire control personnel may receive calls from people at risk while they are still in their vehicle. If it
 2227 is safe to do so, they should attempt to position their vehicle as far to the left as possible. If the
 2228 incident occurs in a live lane or in roadworks on a motorway, the people at risk should drive to the
 2229 nearest emergency refuge area, if safe to do so.

2230 People at risk should exit the vehicle if it is safe to do so. If it is not safe to exit the vehicle on the
 2231 right-hand side due to the risk from passing traffic, they should exit via the left-hand side.

2232 Once people at risk have exited the vehicle, they should stand in a safe place that is upstream of
2233 their parked vehicle. Where possible, they should stand behind a safety barrier as this offers extra
2234 protection; they should not stand next to their vehicle or between their vehicle and oncoming traffic.

2235 If people at risk are standing on verges, they should try to remain aware of any unseen hazards
2236 such as uneven ground or debris.

2237 People at risk should wear bright or highly visible clothing, if available, to make themselves more
2238 visible to other road users.

2239 Due to the risk of companion animals being scared, running into traffic and causing a collision, it
2240 will be safer for them to remain in the vehicle. Companion animals should only be removed from
2241 vehicles in an emergency, for example if the vehicle is on fire, and should be kept under control
2242 and stay with people at all times.

2243 Even if it is raining, cold or dark, people at risk should still be encouraged to follow the advice
2244 above as this should be safer than remaining in their vehicle.

2245 If people at risk cannot exit their vehicle because they are located in a live traffic lane, because of
2246 the volume of passing traffic or they feel their life is in danger, they should stay in their vehicle with
2247 their seatbelts and hazard lights on. This will only be appropriate where the vehicle is not on fire.

2248 If the incident is located on a motorway, people at risk should not use warning triangles as they are
2249 unsafe to use in that environment.

2250 *STRATEGIC ACTIONS*

2251 There are no strategic actions associated with this control measure.

2252 *TACTICAL ACTIONS*

2253 Fire control personnel should:

- 2254 • Give advice to people at risk who are still inside a vehicle
- 2255 • Encourage people at risk to exit the vehicle and give advice on how to do this safely
- 2256 • Advise people at risk about where safe places to stand are located and the hazards to be
2257 aware of if they are standing on verges
- 2258 • Encourage people at risk to wear highly visible clothing where possible
- 2259 • Give appropriate advice regarding companion animals
- 2260 • Give appropriate advice to people at risk who cannot exit their vehicle safely
- 2261 • Inform people at risk located on a motorway not to use warning triangles