



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

**A Framework for  
Major Emergency Management  
Land Based Response to  
Marine Emergencies  
Multi-Agency Protocol 7 – May 2011**

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

[gov.ie/housing](http://gov.ie/housing)

*Multi-Agency Protocol (7)*

**LAND BASED RESPONSE TO MARINE  
EMERGINCES**

**A FRAMEWORK FOR MAJOR EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT**

**MAY 2011**



## **INTRODUCTION TO THE PROTOCOL FOR MULTI-AGENCY LAND BASED RESPONSE TO MARINE EMERGENCIES.**

‘A Framework for Major Emergency Management’ (2006) replaces the Framework for Co-ordinated Response to Major Emergency, which has underpinned major emergency preparedness and response capability since 1984.

The Framework sets out the arrangements, by which the principal response agencies will work together in the management of large-scale incidents. This Multi-Agency Protocol is intended to support the Framework and provide support to the Co-ordination of land-based response to Marine Emergences.

M.E.M. Project Team,  
National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management,  
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage,  
Custom House,  
Dublin 1.  
Email [emergencymanagement@housing.gov.ie](mailto:emergencymanagement@housing.gov.ie)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PART I

<b>1. INTRODUCTION TO PROTOCOL</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. AGREEMENT AND UNDERTAKING</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS</b>	<b>10</b>

### PART II

#### MARINE EMERGENCIES

<b>2.1. Introduction</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.2. The Irish Coast Guard</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.3 Defence Forces Capabilities in Response to Marine Emergencies</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.4. Royal National Lifeboat Institution</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.5. Functions of Port Authorities and Harbour Masters</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.6. Functions of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB)</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.7. Potential Interface Scenarios</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.7.1. Extensive Emergency at Sea         No Significant Impact on Land (Scenario 1)</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.7.2. Extensive Emergency at Sea         Significant Impact on Land (Scenario 2)</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.7.3. Extensive Emergency at Sea         Rapid and Significant Impact on Land (Scenario 3)</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>2.8. Emergencies on Inland Waterways.</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2.9. Lifeguards</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2.10. Search and Rescue (SAR) Emergencies within Ports / Harbours</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2.11. Pollution</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2.11.1. Pollution Responsibilities</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2.11.2. Pollution Emergencies with Ports/ Harbours</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2.11.3. Pollution Emergencies on the coastline</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2.11.3. Intervention</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.11.4. Existing Legislation</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.11.5. Contingency Planning</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.11.6. Strategy for Combating Pollution at Sea</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2.11.7. Strategy for Combating Pollution Ashore</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2.11.8. Pollution Resources</b>	<b>28</b>

**PART III**  
**LAND-BASED RESPONSE PROCEDURES FOR MARINE EMERGENCIES**

<b>3.1 Introduction</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.2 Functions of the Principal Response Agencies</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.2.1. Local Authorities</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.2.2. An Garda Síochána</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.2.3. Health Service Executive (HSE)</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.3. Functions of the Irish Coast Guard</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>3.4 Media Arrangements</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>3.5 Shared Information</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3.6 Exercises</b>	<b>34</b>

**APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix 1- Abbreviations and Terminology</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix 2- All Coast Guard 24/7 SAR Declared Resources</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix 3- Irish Coast Guard Helicopters</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Appendix 4- Marine VHF Communications Network</b>	<b>40</b>

## PART I

### 1. INTRODUCTION TO PROTOCOL

---

This protocol is prepared under the aegis of the National Steering Group (NSG) on Major Emergencies, with the assistance and co-operation of the Department of Transport and the Irish Coast Guard (IRCG). It is prepared as part of the implementation of the 2006 Framework for Major Emergency Management<sup>1</sup>.

This protocol should not be interpreted as restricting initiative or common sense, having regard to the nature of the particular major emergency that may arise and the possibility of continually changing circumstances that may accompany any major emergency. The protocol has been developed as a guide to best practice and not a prescriptive formula. It is intended that the draft protocol will be formally approved by all relevant agencies below when the consultation process is complete.

This protocol is prepared to enable the Principal Response Agencies (PRAs) (An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities) and their Principal Emergency Services to work together and to respond effectively and safely to marine emergencies, which are impacting on, or expected to impact on, land or on land-based services. The protocol provides arrangements for the Principal Response Agencies to be mobilised by, and to work with, the Irish Coast Guard and others to successfully coordinate marine emergency events, as well as dealing with interface issues for inland waterway emergencies and IRCG coordinated emergencies coming ashore.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Framework for Major Emergency Management was devised to enable the Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and Local Authorities (the Principal Response Agencies) to prepare for and make a co-ordinated response to major emergencies resulting from local and regional events such as fires, transport accidents, hazardous substances incidents and severe weather. The Framework puts in place arrangements that facilitate the three Principal Response Agencies to co-ordinate their efforts whenever a major emergency occurs. The Irish Coast Guard as the 4<sup>th</sup> PES is responsible for the initiation, control, coordination and response to maritime emergencies (Search & Rescue, Pollution, Salvage, and Casualty) in the Irish territorial waters, harbours and coastline, which include the Irish International Search and Rescue Region and the Pollution Responsibility Zone.

The protocol takes account of the international and national marine legislation, agreements and conventions, under which the IRCG operates.

It is agreed by all the agencies shown below that the provisions of this protocol will apply to all marine emergencies, regardless of the scale of the incident, and whether a major emergency<sup>2</sup> is declared or not.

---

<sup>2</sup> A Major Emergency is defined as: *an event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the principle emergency services in the area in which the event occurs, and requires the activation of specific additional procedures and the mobilisation of additional resources to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response.*

## **2. AGREEMENT and UNDERTAKING**

It is hereby agreed that each of the agencies involved will:

- Work with the other signatory agencies in accordance with the provisions of this protocol to manage and coordinate the on-shore element of marine emergencies;
- Adopt the provisions of this protocol into its Risk Assessment and Major Emergency Plans (in the case of the Principal Response Agencies) or other specific emergency plans, as appropriate, and into other relevant internal orders, code instructions, standard operating procedures, aide memoirs, etc.;
- Prepare to undertake the roles specified in this protocol and, in particular, prepare its own internal procedures, consistent with the provisions of this protocol, for undertaking the roles (both general and specific) assigned to it;
- Promulgate this protocol and its own internal procedures within the agency, and undertake appropriate training for relevant staff, based on the information contained in this protocol;
- Participate in inter-agency exercises to enhance preparedness; and
- Report to the National Steering Group on preparedness and on involvement in emergency events, as appropriate.

The following agencies endorse this Protocol:

<b>DHLGH</b> Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	<b>DJ</b> Dept. of Justice	<b>DH</b> Dept. of Health	<b>DoD</b> Dept. of Defence	<b>DT</b> Dept. of Transport
<b>CCMA</b> City & County Managers Assoc.	<b>AGS</b> Garda Síochána	<b>HSE</b> Health Service Executive	<b>Irish Naval Service</b>	<b>IRCG</b> Irish Coast Guard
			<b>Irish Air Corps</b>	
<b>EPA*</b> Environmental Protection Agency			<b>DF</b> Defence Forces	

\* The EPA is now under the aegis of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.

### 3. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- This protocol will inform and underpin land-based response to marine emergency events impacting ashore and to emergency events on the inland waterways;
- The relevant local authority will act as “lead agency”, in accordance with provisions of Section 5.4.2 of the Framework for Major Emergency Management, for the purpose of co-ordinating the land-based response and linking with the Irish Coast Guard;
- The Department of Transport will act as “Lead Government Department” for multi agency response in marine emergency events including situations where a NECC response is required;
- The Irish Coast Guard may convene a crisis management group which may be constituted from the Irish Aeronautical and Maritime Emergency Advisory Committee (IAMEAC);
- The Irish Coast Guard provides a response and coordination service for maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), counter pollution and salvage, which includes the mobilisation, organisation and tasking of adequate resources to respond to persons in distress at sea, or to persons at risk of injury or death on the cliffs, shoreline and inland waterways of Ireland;
- Each agency will undertake the specific roles assigned to it in this protocol in responding to marine emergency events. These are summarised in the Table below; and
- Each agency will participate fully in the inter-agency co-ordination arrangements for the response.

**TABLE**  
**SUMMARY OF AGENCY ROLES**

X denotes a role for the agency

<b>ROLE</b>	<b>LA</b>	<b>AGS</b>	<b>HSE</b>	<b>IRISH COAST GUARD</b>	<b>MET. EIREANN</b>	<b>DOT</b>	<b>OTHERS<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Hazard Information</b>	X			X	X		
<b>Preparation of Emergency Plan</b>	X	X	X	X			
<b>Agency Specific Procedure</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Forecasting</b>					X		
<b>Warning</b>	X			X	X		
<b>Informing</b>	X	X	X	X			X <sup>4</sup>
<b>Evacuation</b>	X	X	X	X		X	X
<b>Responder Welfare</b>	X	X	X	X			X
<b>Rest Centre Facilities</b>	X		X				X
<b>Victim Registration</b>		X	X				X
<b>Humanitarian Relief</b>				X			X
<b>De-Cont. &amp; Clean Up</b>	X			X			X

<sup>3</sup> The Voluntary Emergency Services can provide assistance during large-scale marine emergency events.

<sup>4</sup> The Media, particularly TV and Radio, could play a vital role in communicating key messages to the Public.

## **PART II**

### **MARINE EMERGENCIES**

---

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This protocol is designed to provide for effective linking of the plans and procedures of the land-based agencies involved in the implementation of the Framework for Major Emergency Management, with the National Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) Framework 2010 and relevant standard operational procedures. It is designed to underpin existing emergency response arrangements, and to provide a reference point, by which those unfamiliar with these arrangements can readily ascertain the roles and coordination arrangements approved by their organisation.

The protocol provides a mechanism to ensure that decision-making during marine emergencies impacting on land or on land-based services is coordinated and that the obligations and expectations of all stakeholders to marine emergencies are clearly defined.

A marine emergency can be defined as an emergency event occurring in the maritime domain, which may or may not impact onshore, which creates a situation that taxes the normal resources of any response agency. A marine emergency response may involve multiple agencies over a course of days or weeks.

#### **2.2 The Irish Coast Guard.**

The overall objective of the IRCG is to reduce the loss of life within the Irish Search and Rescue Region and on rivers, lakes and inland waterways, to protect the quality of the marine environment within the Irish Pollution Responsibility Zone, harbours and maritime Local Authority areas, and to preserve property.

The Minister for Transport has the responsibility for a national system of marine emergency management and this task is assigned to the Irish Coast Guard, which is a

Division within that Department. The delivery of Maritime SAR, its participants and their functions are listed in the National Maritime SAR Framework. This document is available at [www.transport.ie](http://www.transport.ie). The marine emergency management functions which the Irish Coast Guard carries out include the following:

- Providing a national marine search and rescue response service;
- Providing a coastal, inland and where appropriate, cliff search and rescue service;
- Providing a casualty/body search and recovery service and a family liaison service;
- Provide a national maritime communications, paging and surveillance system including incident alert and notification;
- Provide and co-ordinate response to marine pollution and ship casualty incidents and the preparation, co-operation, direction and co-ordination of sea and on-shore recovery and clean-up operations;
- Issuing directions, or taking direct action under the Minister's powers of intervention, to prevent, mitigate or eliminate pollution;
- Developing and co-ordinating an effective regime in relation to marine pollution cooperation, preparedness and response;
- Approving Local Authority, harbour/port and off-shore oil pollution and hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) response plans; and
- Provide a coastal vessel traffic management information system

These functions of the Irish Coast Guard are derived from Government policy and a variety of national and international legislation.

The Irish Coast Guard manages and operates three co-ordination/communication centres, at the Marine Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC), Dublin, the Marine Rescue Sub Centre (MRSC) at Malin Head and the Marine Rescue Sub Centre at Valentia, for marine emergency management. MRCC Dublin, as well as providing marine Search and Rescue response services, acts as the Coast Guards National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) which also co-ordinates the response to marine casualty incidents within the Irish Pollution Responsibility Zone and acts as a national single point of contact for a variety of services.

Computer-modelling programs are available at NMOC Dublin, as decision support tools.

The Irish Coast Guard also has capacity to establish a mobile Incident Command Centre at a site close to an incident. This facility is normally used during protracted incidents, such as shoreline searches for missing bodies, which occur in remote areas.

The Irish Coast Guard has contracted six medium-lift Sikorsky Search and Rescue helicopters, deployed at bases in Dublin, Waterford, Shannon and Sligo. The helicopters are designated airborne in 15 minutes during daylight hours and 45 minutes at night. These aircraft can be used for pollution aerial surveillance during daylight hours or to assist other PRAs in land based emergency response. Specialised aerial surveillance aircraft can be contracted internationally at short notice. See Appendix 3 for helicopter capabilities

The Irish Coast Guard assists Harbour Masters and Local Authorities in providing pollution response courses on shoreline clean up, management and techniques.

In accordance with the European Communities (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 573 of 2010) may in the event of exceptionally bad weather or sea conditions, the Irish Coast Guard or a port authority, considering that there may be a serious threat to the safety of human life or of marine pollution, will inform ships in a port area of those conditions and of any danger which could affect ships and all persons on board; may issue a recommendation or prohibition to a ship or ships; and will act to limit or prohibit the bunkering of ships.

For accommodation of a ship in need of assistance, the Director of the Irish Coast Guard may, at the time of the operation, take independent decisions on his or her own initiative.

Following an incident or accident at sea, if it is considered that there is a threat to maritime safety and the protection of the environment the Irish Coast Guard may

direct the master of the ship to do any and all such things as will assist for safety of human life and pollution prevention, including, in the event of imminent peril, requiring a ship to put into a place of refuge, or that a port authority accept a ship into a place of refuge under its control.

In the event of an aviation emergency over a maritime or littoral area, the IAA's Air Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) will co-ordinate the incident in close liaison with MRCC/MRSC. Should an aircraft force land in a maritime area the ARCC will be responsible for determining the initial search area, but co-ordination will then transfer to MRCC/MRSC with continued close co-operation and back-up services from the ARCC.

### **2.3 Defence Forces Capabilities in response to Marine Emergencies**

Department of Defence resources are available to the Irish Coast Guard within the terms of a Service Level Agreement, (SLA), which was signed in December, 2008.

As the State's principle seagoing agency, the Naval Service maintains a constant presence in Ireland's SAR Region and is therefore positioned to contribute in marine emergency operations. The Government has given the Naval Service the role "to contribute to the maximum to all the State's requirements in the maritime domain". The Naval Service has expertise and experience in dealing with the most demanding SAR operations and in accordance with the agreed SLA, Naval Service personnel may be appointed by the IRCG as on-scene co-ordinators during a SAR operation. All personnel on Naval ships are trained and often engage in operations that involve fire fighting at sea.

The Naval Service divers are available to the IRCG and are used for a number of maritime services including under water searches, recovery and the piloting of a Remote Operation Vehicle, (ROV), (can be used to locate items on the sea bed such as a flight recorder following an air accident).

The Irish Air Corps provide CASA fixed wing aircraft to act as top cover for SAR operations. This aircraft is a Maritime Surveillance Aircraft, ideally suited for

maritime search operations and with the capability of dropping life rafts. The Air Corps fleet of helicopters may be used as additional resources.

## **2.4 Royal National Lifeboat Institution**

The RNLI is a charity that operates around the coasts of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. It is predominantly a voluntary organisation, independent of Government, dedicated to the purpose of saving life at sea, and in certain cases on inland waters.

The RNLI Concept of Operations that relates to the lifeboat service is that:

- The RNLI saves lives at sea throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland by providing a strategically located fleet of all weather lifeboats which are available at all times and tactically placed inshore craft which are subject to weather limitations. All RNLI lifeboats operate to a defined standard of performance, commensurate with the resources available, and are operated by trained and competent people who, wherever possible, are volunteers.
- RNLI lifeboats are declared to the Irish and UK Governments for the search and rescue of persons in distress around the coast of the island Ireland. There are 34 operational locations established within the Republic of Ireland and 10 within Northern Ireland.

## **2.5 Functions of Port Authorities and Harbour Masters**

Harbour Masters are responsible for the safety of navigation within their Harbour Authority defined areas of jurisdiction, under various Acts, and, in the case of a Harbour under the management of Iarnroid Éireann – Irish Rail, have specific powers to regulate and control all Shipping/Boat movements in the Harbour and its approaches. Inter-alia, the Harbour Master may also exercise the following powers:

- A Harbour Master may refuse entry into the harbour, over which s/he has control, to a ship, which s/he has reasonable cause to believe would cause a serious threat of damage to flora or fauna, living marine resources, the harbour or other ships, unless the entry of the ship is necessary for the purpose of saving life;

- A Harbour Master may decide to close the harbour and/or restrict movements;
- No vessel is to be moved from any jetty, mooring buoy or anchorage, after the receipt of an emergency notification, without the permission of the Harbour Master, except when the vessel is in immediate danger. Such movements should only take place where absolutely necessary and the Harbour Master must be informed as soon as possible;
- Under no circumstances may any vessel on fire or in danger of sinking, or causing major pollution, be moved or brought into the harbour, without the specific authority of the Harbour Master, who will designate a suitable berth. If a pollution incident or potential pollution incident occurs, the Harbour Master will activate the Oil Spill Contingency Plan and inform all the relevant agencies;
- A Harbour Master shall notify the Irish Coast Guard of any pollution or ship casualty incident within his/her area of responsibility.

In accordance with national legislation, one of the principal objectives of each Port Company/Harbour Authority is “to take all proper measures for the management, control, operation and development of its harbour and the approach channels thereto”. In that context, each Port Company/ Harbour Authority has prepared plans to deal with marine emergencies within its functional area. These plans outline the procedures to be implemented in various scenarios, including collision, grounding and fire, and the callout of the emergency services, including the Local Authority Fire Service, the Irish Coast Guard, the ambulance service, An Garda Síochána and other agencies. The plan also lists the resources available to deal with such emergencies.

The plan also deals with the actions to be taken where there is an incident involving a “SEVESO” establishment, which is adjacent to the harbour. In cases where the external emergency plan of a Seveso Establishment is activated, the Harbour Master provides advice to the emergency services, co-ordinates the deployment of marine resources and controls the movement of shipping, where required. Port

Company/Harbour Authority Oil Pollution plans are activated where there is a threat of pollution from an incident.

Under the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act, 1999, the Minister for Transport through designated Officers of the Irish Coast Guard may give direction, to the Harbour Authority to do or refrain from doing something, which in his opinion is necessary for incident response.

## **2.6 Function of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB)**

The function of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) is to investigate marine casualties that take place in Irish waters or involve Irish registered vessels. The main purpose of the Board's investigations is to establish the cause, or causes, of a marine casualty, with a view to making recommendations to the Minister for Transport for the avoidance of similar marine casualties. It is not the purpose of an investigation to attribute blame or fault. The MCIB is an independent body, with its own funding, provided by the Oireachtas, under Section 19 of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act 2000.

## **2.7 Potential Interface Scenarios**

There are numerous potential emergency scenarios where a co-ordinated effort from both the Irish Coast Guard and the land based principal response agencies may be required. Some of these incidents may involve the activation of Major Emergency Plans and others will not. This protocol aims to build on existing good practice and provides a mechanism for a co-ordinated approach to all such emergencies.

Where the Irish Coast Guard is involved in an emergency, and the assistance of PRA resources is required, the IRCG SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) will request such resources through agreed current arrangements, while continuing to co-ordinate the overall marine aspects of the response. These arrangements can be summarised as follows.

- Where the assistance of the Garda Síochána is required, contact is made with appropriate Garda communication centres.
- Where the assistance of Medico Cork is required, contact should be made via the relevant telephone numbers supplied to MRCC.

- Where the assistance of the HSE Ambulance Service is required, contact should be made through the relevant Regional Ambulance Control Centre.
- Requests for the HSE Marine Ambulance Response Team (MART) should be made through HSE Control, Townsend Street, Dublin.
- Where the assistance of the Fire Service is required, contact is made via the relevant Regional Control Centre.
- Where the assistance of the Defence Forces is required by the Irish Coast Guard contact will be made in accordance with the Service Level Agreement between the two parties.

Where a Principal Response Agency, or its emergency service, requests the assistance of Irish Coast Guard resources in the response to an incident, the initial request must always be made, in the first instance, to the MRCC/SC which is nearest to the incident.

Requests for use of the Irish Coast Guard helicopters must be made through the designated officer of a Principal Response Agency:

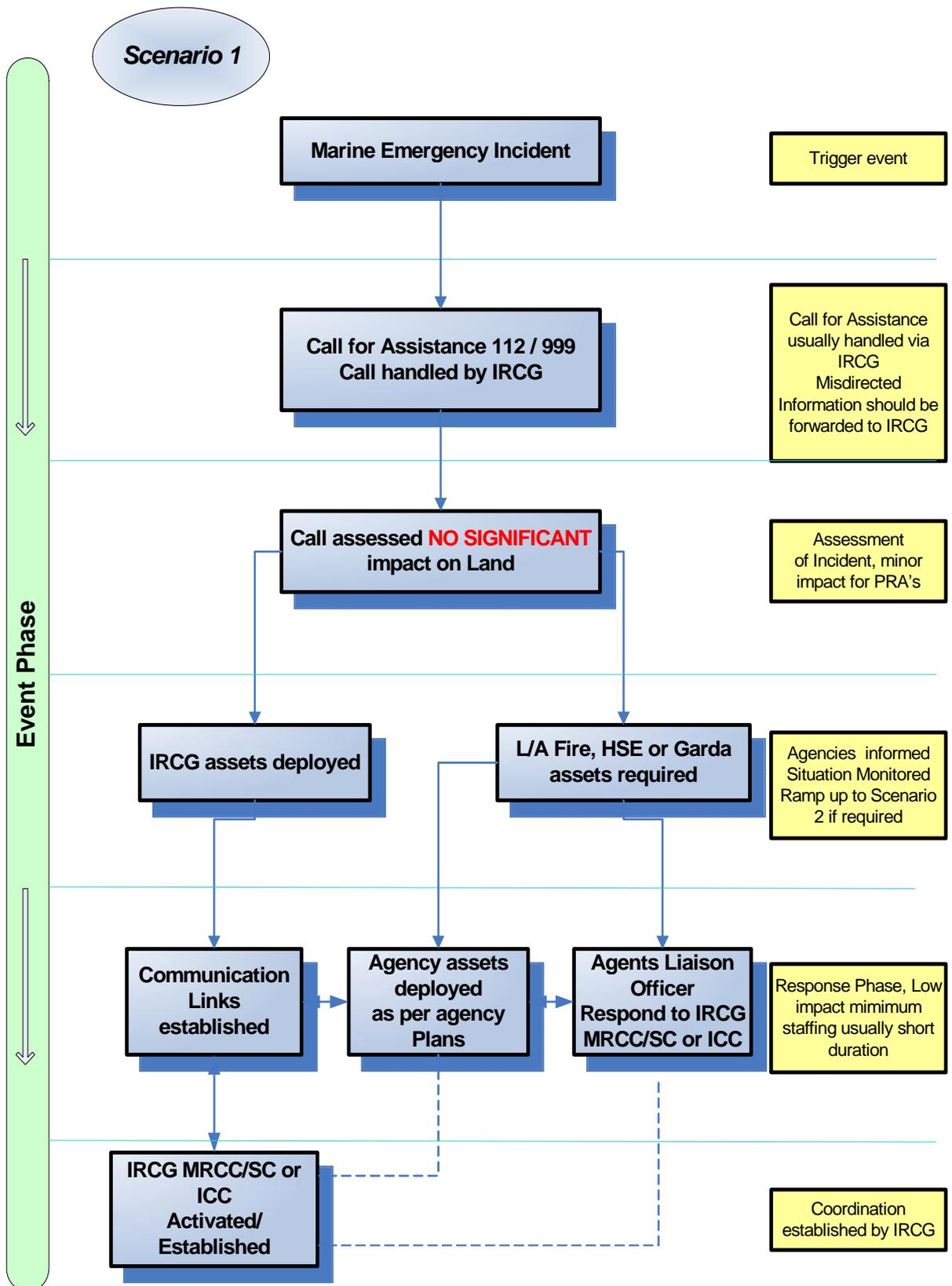
- An Garda Síochána- A member of at least Superintendent rank (exception to this are mountain rescue incidents where any Garda Communication Centre can request support)
- HSE- Ambulance Control Centre Duty Manager
- Local Authority- Rostered Senior Fire Officer or Director of Service

No cost will be levied for an incident in response to a threat to human life (excluding intra-hospital transfers).

### **2.7.1 Extensive Emergency at Sea, but with No Significant Impact on Land. (Scenario 1)**

Such emergencies could include a ship in distress, on fire or with a number of injured passengers or crew. In this type of scenario, the Irish Coast Guard manages the coordination of the emergency response and the input of the Principal Response Agencies is largely in a supporting role. This role could involve either, the provision of fire fighters or Ambulance Service personnel (possibly, a Marine Ambulance Response Team), which are air lifted out to sea, or the placing on standby of

ambulances and/or hospitals, which are ready on shore to receive casualties. In such a situation, the Irish Coast Guard Marine Rescue Coordination Centre, or one of the two Sub Centres, will act as the main Co-ordination Centre for the emergency and the PRAs involved will send liaison persons to represent them at meetings there. It is likely that MRCC Dublin will coordinate this response in most cases of extended major emergencies and, as part of that process, its Marine Emergency Room (MER) will be activated as will the Irish Aeronautical and Maritime Emergency Advisory Committee (IAMEAC). To facilitate their involvement in meeting there, it is proposed that the PRAs and/or PESs and the Defence Forces will have pre-positioned decision support and communications equipment in the MER. However, where an emergency is close to land, and away from the MRCC and MRSCs, it is likely that the Irish Coast Guard will activate a local Incident Command Centre (ICC) in an operationally convenient site. (See Fig 1.)



**Fig 1.**

## **2.7.2 Extensive Emergency at Sea, with Significant Impact on Land.**

### **(Scenario 2)**

Such emergencies could include a passenger ship at sea, which is in distress and where passengers and crew may need to be evacuated, or a tanker in distress, with a potentially serious pollution hazard for the coastline. In this type of scenario, the activities at sea will be coordinated by the Irish Coast Guard, either from the MRCC in Dublin or one of the two MRSCs. On land, a Major Emergency will most likely be declared and the appropriate resources mobilised. Depending on the nature of the event, it may be appropriate to activate an On Site Co-ordination Centre at a suitable location, such as one that is close to where most survivors are being brought ashore or the area where pollutants are washing up; otherwise only the relevant Local Co-ordination Centre will be activated. Linkage between the Irish Coast Guard Co-ordination Centre and the On Site and Local Co-ordination Centres will be achieved by the exchange of liaison officers, with the Garda Síochána, the HSE and the Local Authority being represented at the Irish Coast Guard Co-ordination Centre, while the Irish Coast Guard will be represented at the On Site and/or Local Co-ordination Centres, as appropriate. (See Fig 2.)

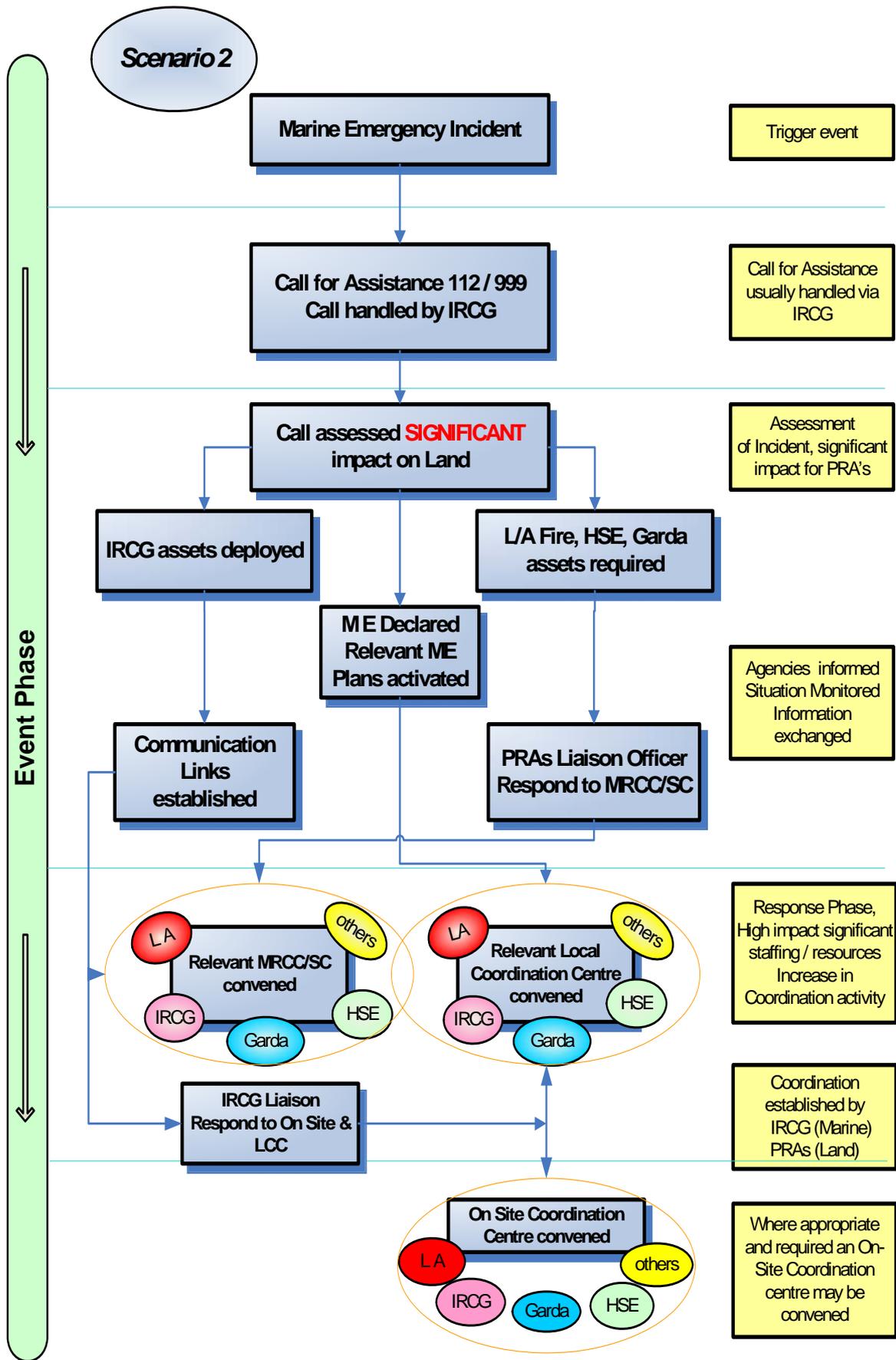


Fig 2.

### **2.7.3 Extensive Emergency at Sea with Rapid and Significant Impact on Land.**

#### **(Scenario 3)**

Such emergencies could include a ship aground on the shore, an aircraft crash close to the coast or a ship on fire in sight of land. In this type of scenario, the event will, most likely, have an obvious and immediate impact on the Principal Response Agencies and a Major Emergency is likely to be declared at a very early stage. In such a situation, the early establishment of an On-site Co-ordination Group, supported by Crisis Management Teams and a Local Co-ordination Group is likely. In parallel, the Irish Coast Guard Marine Rescue Co-ordination Centre, or one of the two Marine Rescue Sub Centres, is also likely to be activated and will deal with the marine aspects of the emergency. The establishment of an efficient and effective inter-agency co-ordination structure, involving the Principal Response Agencies and the Irish Coast Guard, will be crucial to efficient management of this type of emergency. The format of this co-ordination may vary, depending on the exigencies of the situation, but, as a general rule, the Irish Coast Guard will be represented at the On Site and Local Co-ordination Centres and the relevant Principal Response Agencies will be represented at the MRCC/SC. To facilitate this process, the On Scene Co-ordinator (OSC) of the Irish Coast Guard will attend at the On Site or Local Co-ordination Centre, as appropriate. (See Fig 3.)

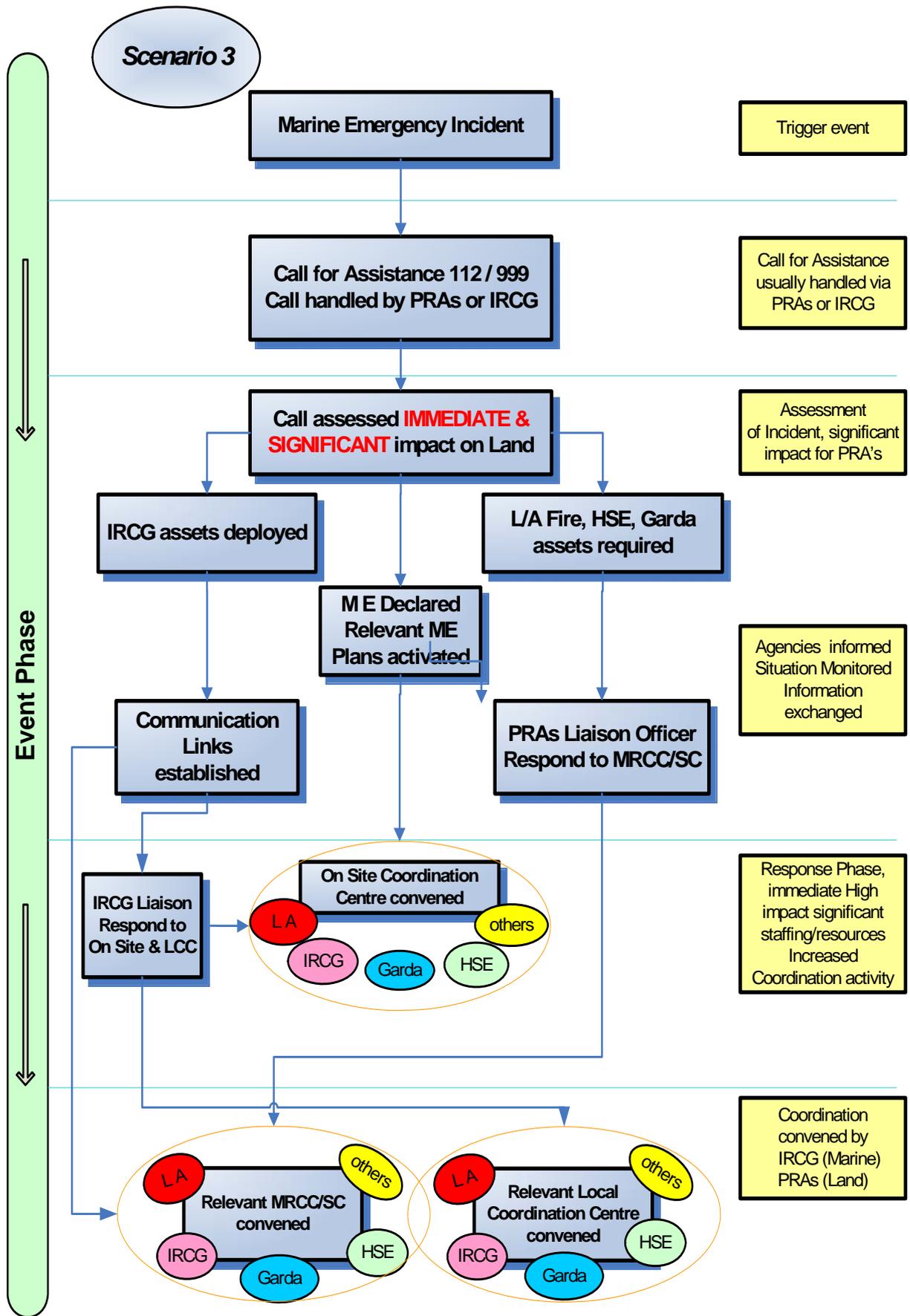


Fig 3

## **2.8 Emergencies on Inland Waterways.**

The IRCG also has SAR responsibilities on inland waters, rivers and lakes, and this section provides a working formula for such inland waterways incidents. For this document, inland waterways are defined as fresh water navigatable rivers, lakes and canals, excluding ports and harbours with access to the sea. In accordance with the Framework for Major Emergency Management the coordination of inter-agency response to emergencies on inland waterways is the responsibility of the Garda Síochána, although they may assign the co-ordination of Search and Rescue (SAR) to the Irish Coast Guard.

## **2.9 Lifeguards**

This Protocol does not supersede the existing liaison agreements between the Coast Guard and certain local authorities with regard to lifeguard services. Included in these Liaison Agreements the following has been agreed:

- Local authorities that allow their lifeguards to be designated as a declared facility will develop and make available to IRCG written operating procedures, which will include a full Normal Operating Policy and Emergency Action Plans
- All lifeguards will have available telephonic communication equipment to communicate with IRCG in the event of an emergency. Local authorities will submit to IRCG all telephone numbers of their Lifeguard Units at the commencement of the season
- Local authorities will ensure that their lifeguards are trained in the correct procedure for contacting the IRCG in the event of an emergency
- Where lifeguards are provided daily or on weekends, precise dates, times, number of lifeguards and limits of patrolled areas are to be notified to the IRCG
- Lifeguard Units will be equipped with appropriate, well-maintained equipment, a list of which will be made available to IRCG

## **2.10 Search and Rescue (SAR) Emergencies within Ports / Harbour**

In ports and harbours, the Irish Coast Guard will coordinate on – water SAR response, up to the Port Company/ Harbour Authority's defined internal upstream navigational

limit, in consultation with the Port Company/ Harbour Authority and, where appropriate, An Garda Síochána.

## **2.11.0 Pollution**

### **2.11.1 Pollution Responsibilities**

The Department of Transport, through the Irish Coast Guard, has the principal responsibility for exercising the Irish Government's duties in respect of counter pollution response at sea, arising from spillage or loss of oil, or hazardous or noxious substances, which threaten pollution of the Irish coastline or related interests. The Irish Coast Guard is responsible for preparedness and response to marine pollution incidents within the Irish Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ)

The Irish Coast Guard has been given the statutory responsibility to inspect, approve and audit the contingency plans for all the various harbours and local authorities under the Convention for Oil Pollution Preparedness Response and Co-operation (1990) and to oversee and where necessary direct any required response.

### **2.11.2 Pollution Emergencies within Ports/ Harbours**

In the event of pollution occurring in a port or harbour, the Harbour Master must be informed as soon as possible and all steps taken to isolate the cause and prevent further pollution. The Harbour Master will initiate the Harbours Oil Spill Contingency Plan if required and will report the spill to the Irish Coast Guard.

Under the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999, the Minister for Transport may give a direction, to the Harbour Authority to do or refrain from doing something, which in his opinion is necessary for incident response and has warranted senior officers in the Irish Coast Guard to act on his behalf (see Section 2.7.2)

### **2.11.3 Pollution Emergencies on the coastline**

In the event of pollution occurring on the coastline, the affected Local Authority must be informed as soon as possible and all steps taken to isolate the cause and prevent further pollution. The Local Authority will initiate the Local Authority's Oil Spill Contingency Plan, if required, and will report the spill to the Irish Coast Guard.

Under the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999, the Minister for Transport may give a direction, to the Local Authority to do or refrain from doing something, which in his opinion is necessary for incident response and has warranted senior officers in the Irish Coast Guard to act on his behalf (see Section 2.7.2)

#### **2.11.4 Intervention**

The Minister has nominated senior officers within the Irish Coast Guard, with warranted authority under national legislation, to monitor/intervene in actual or threatened marine pollution incidents following a maritime casualty, for the purpose of preventing, mitigating or eliminating danger from pollution, or threat of pollution, by oil, or by any other hazardous or noxious substance. These warranted officers may issue binding directions to a harbour master, the owner, master, salvor or person in charge of a ship, following a maritime casualty, to take such actions and do such things as s/he considers necessary and reasonable for the purpose of preventing, mitigating or eliminating danger from pollution or the threat of pollution.

#### **2.11.5 Existing Legislation**

The existing IRCG pollution legislation is contained in the Sea Pollution Act 1991, as amended by the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999 and the Sea Pollution (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006. These Acts outline the structure of the Irish Government's oil pollution prevention and response plans, with respect to ship and offshore pollution incidents, and include both preventative and post-incident powers. An overview of these powers is provided in the following sub sections.

#### **2.11.6 Contingency Planning**

The Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999, provides the Minister with the legislative power to require Ports Companies, Harbour Authorities, the operators of offshore units, oil handling facilities and maritime Local Authorities to prepare oil spill contingency plans, based on a realistic risk assessment, and to submit these for approval by the Irish Coast Guard. These contingency plans should include the risk assessment and a comprehensive breakdown of response capabilities, including command and control, communications, manpower, equipment, training and

exercises. These contingency plans are part of the overall National Contingency Plan, also required by the above Act, which is being prepared by the Irish Coast Guard.

Masters of vessels calling at ports in Ireland are required to ensure that there is, onboard the ship, an emergency plan for a pollution incident.

#### **2.11.7. Strategy for Combating Pollution at Sea**

In the event of pollution at sea, a response plan to combat the pollution is prepared and executed based on reports received from aerial surveillance. The main strategy is to recover floating oil from the sea surface, applying mechanical recovery systems and cargo transfer capabilities. The stated Irish Coast Guard policy on dispersants is that no dispersants will be used close to shore, without the approval from the Minister, provided through the Irish Coast Guard, except in life threatening situations. The decision to use dispersants will be made on a case-by-case basis, based on the real-time evaluation of the likely fate of the oil and on the possible impact of the dispersed oil. Where dispersants are to be considered the Irish Coast Guard will, wherever possible, consult with other relevant Government agencies.

#### **2.11.8 Strategy for Combating Pollution Ashore**

The main strategy for combating pollution ashore is physical recovery, based on mechanical and manual means, undertaken with the aid of public works equipment. Depending on the type of oil involved, the recovery will be executed by a combination of mechanical means, a mix of booming/ recovery systems and manpower. Local Authorities and Harbour Authorities will remove the oil from the shoreline, under the direction and with the assistance of the Irish Coast Guard;

- Implementing the search and rescue plan where required;
- Monitoring the performance of other assets participating in the search
- Developing and implementing the rescue plan (when needed)
- Providing regular SITREPS to the SAR Mission co-ordinator (SMC)

#### **2.11.9 Pollution Resources**

The Minister may arrange for the provision of equipment and materials for the prevention or minimising of damage resulting from discharges of oil or hazardous noxious substances (HNS). This equipment and materials may also be used for the

purposes of operations, undertaken in relation to vessels in distress, in accordance with Section 7 of the Merchant Shipping (Salvage and Wreck) Act 1993, or in relation to salvage operations, as defined in Section 12 of that Act.

The Irish Coast Guard maintains national stockpiles of pollution response equipment and materials at Killybegs, Castletownbere and Dublin. Regular exercises are carried out using these stockpiles. The equipment, as far as possible, compliments the equipment held at the ports and harbours. This equipment is being added to each year. The equipment is divided into 30% appropriate to offshore response and 70% appropriate to on-shore response. No country has sufficient State equipment and materials to respond to every pollution emergency. However, there are commercial companies who will provide equipment and materials on request and guarantee it will be on-site within 12/24 hours. The Irish Coast Guard has authority to contract such equipment and materials as required.

There are 21 principal ports around the coast of Ireland and each Port Company, Harbour Authority and maritime Local Authority has some pollution response equipment and materials, based on a local risk assessment. These resources are typically equipped for what could be considered localised response and would be available in the event of a pollution incident on a local or national scale.

## **Part III**

### **LAND-BASED RESPONSE PROCEDURES FOR MARINE EMERGENCIES**

---

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In the event of an emergency, good co-ordination arrangements are critical to enable the contribution of all organisations to be effective. In the case of an Irish marine emergency, the primary responsibilities at sea, for saving life and on scene co-ordination, rest with the Irish Coast Guard. Arrangements are in place for the An Garda Síochána, HSE, the Local Authority and the Defence Forces to provide assistance during marine incidents, under the coordination of the IRCG. However, some marine emergencies will have significant consequences for PRAs on land, for which an integrated inter-agency response will be required. Where such a response is required, the Local Authority will coordinate the on-Shore response, through the activation of an inter-agency Local Co-ordination Centre at a pre arranged location and an On Site (Shoreline) Coordination Centre, close to the primary shoreline receiving location, where appropriate. (Section II)

#### **3.2 Functions of the Principle Response Agencies**

The functions of the Principal Response Agencies in response to marine emergencies reflect the normal functions of these agencies and their services and, in general, align with the functions set out for each in Appendix F5 of the Framework for Major Emergency Management. In this context, the most significant of these are:

##### **3.2.1 Local Authorities**

- Arranging/overseeing clean-up and disposal of any resulting chemical or oil pollution on the coastline;
- Support for the Coroner's role, including the provision of Temporary Mortuary facilities;
- The provision of accommodation and welfare for survivors, evacuees and persons displaced by the emergency (Emergency Rest Centres);
- The provision of food, rest and sanitary facilities, as appropriate, for personnel involved in the response to the emergency;

- Engaging any specialist (land-based) contractors required to assist at the emergency operations; and
- The establishment of Friends and Relatives Reception Centres, if required.
- The Local Authority Fire and Rescue Service will engage in:
  - The saving of life in conjunction with other emergency services;
  - The protection and rescue of persons and property;
  - The controlling and/or extinguishing of fires;
  - The rescue of trapped casualties;
  - The prevention of further escalation of the incident by dealing with released chemicals and other hazardous materials; and
  - Assisting the Garda Síochána to recover bodies, when requested.

### **3.2.2. An Garda Síochána**

- The saving of life in conjunction with other emergency services;
- The maintenance of law and order;
- Traffic management;
- The provision of information to the public on actual or potential dangers arising;
- The co-ordination/conducting of searches for missing persons;
- The collecting of information on casualties and survivors;
- Arrangements in respect of the dead, in association with the Coroner;
- The recovery of bodies;
- The provision of a Casualty Bureau;
- The protection and preservation of the scene;
- The collection of evidence and forensic work;
- The provision of air support, to undertake aerial reconnaissance of the affected areas;
- The provision of security for visiting dignitaries.

### **3.2.3. The Health Service Executive (HSE)**

- The saving of life in conjunction with other emergency services.
- The provision of medical advice and assistance;
- The provision of medical aid to casualties;

- The triage of casualties and their transport to hospitals for treatment;
- Certification of the dead;
- The issue of public health warning/ advisory notices;
- The provision of community welfare services; and
- The provision of Psychosocial Support to affected persons.

### **3.3. Functions of the Irish Coast Guard**

- Minimising loss of life amongst seafarers and coastal users;
- Minimising the risk of pollution of the marine environment from ships;
- Obtaining and evaluating all relevant information from appropriate sources;
- Initiating distress and urgency broadcasts as necessary;
- Alerting and tasking appropriate marine SAR resources;
- Alerting emergency services as required;
- Determining search areas, formulating search plans and tasking resources effectively;
- Appointing an On Scene Co-ordinator (OSC), where appropriate, to exercise co-ordination at the scene of SAR operations;
- Co-ordinating the action of all SAR units involved;
- Co-ordinating response to at-sea salvage and pollution incidents outside of Harbour Authority Areas;
- Monitoring salvage and pollution incidents inside Harbour Authority Areas and giving support where necessary;
- Providing support to the relevant Marine Response Centre (MRC) and On Site / Local Coordination Centres where necessary;
- Mobilising units to assist with the search for survivors;
- Providing aerial assets; and
- Dispatching mobile unit to the designated shoreline Control Point.

### **3.4 Media Arrangements**

Following an emergency, increased media interest and activity should be anticipated and it is imperative that all agencies engage in a shared, consistent media strategy. Information provided in Guidance Document 5 “A Guide to Working with the Media” will assist all agencies in developing a media strategy and ensure that critical

messages and information are managed appropriately. Agencies operating at the scene/onshore will most likely be exposed to intense media activity, with the media seeking immediate statements, information and access. As a general rule, media statements should be coordinated and issued jointly by agencies, maximising and prioritising available information. Coordination of these activities will involve gathering and linking the available information from the Onsite and Local Co-ordination Centres, as appropriate, and the MRCC/SC.

It is likely that the architecture for such coordination will take some time to establish, therefore, for the first hour of activities, the Garda Síochána will take the lead on media matters, gather information and providing the media with any relevant or critical information.

The following should assist in the provision of consistent, co-ordinated messages:

- Each Response Agency will provide a Media Liaison Officer, or Media representative, at the site (where a “site” exists).
- The activities of these Media Liaison Officers/Media Representatives will be Coordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency.
- The lead agency will establish a Media Centre at or near the site of the emergency for use by the Response Agencies.
- All inter-agency media statements will be issued from one agreed source and location. This arrangement should be made clear to the media at the earliest possible opportunity.
- All statements to the media, at or near the site, must be cleared by the On-Site Coordinator or his/her Media Liaison Officer.
- Once it is established, the Local Coordination Group should take the lead in terms of working with the media, away from the site.
- As with arrangements at the site, each Response Agency should provide a Media Liaison Officer / Media Representative at the Local Co-ordination Centre
- The activities of these Media Liaison Officers will also be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency.
- The Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency should be involved in Local Co-ordination Group Meetings, so that s/he is fully briefed and can effectively plan the media response.

- All statements to the media at this level should be cleared with the Chair of the Local Co-ordinating Group.

### **3.5 Shared Information**

It is crucial that all Response Agencies keep each other informed across the architecture of co-ordination. The effective sharing of information in such situations will decrease the chance that any one of the Response Agencies may be uninformed on a critical issue or development and their response requirements or commitments thus compromised. Information must be made readily available, and freely exchanged, among the responding emergency services, as well as the port, harbour, shipping, airline or other companies involved.

### **3.6 Exercises**

Since opportunities to deal with significant incidents involving both the IRCG and the PRAs are rare and challenging, the conduct of regular joint exercises, involving the PRAs and IRCG, and the joint exercising of the key co-ordination element of this Protocol are particularly important.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY**

<b>IAMEAC</b>	Irish Aeronautical and Maritime Emergency Advisory Committee
<b>ICC</b>	Incident Command Centre
<b>Maritime On Scene Co-ordinator</b>	When a number of SAR assets are working together on the SAR mission in the same location, there may be an advantage if one unit is assigned to coordinate the activities of all participating assets. The SMC in the MRCC/MRSC will designate this role to an On Scene Co-ordinator, who may be the person in charge of a ship of aircraft participating in the search or someone at another nearby facility in a position to handle OSC duties
<b>MART</b>	Marine Ambulance Response Team
<b>MER</b>	Marine Emergency Room at NMOC Dublin
<b>MRCC</b>	Marine Rescue Co-ordination Centre
<b>MRSC</b>	Marine Rescue Sub Centre
<b>NECC</b>	National Emergency Response Co-ordination Committee
<b>NMOC</b>	The Coast Guards national maritime operations centre located at MRCC Dublin
<b>PRA</b>	Principal Response Agency
<b>SAR</b>	Search and Rescue
<b>SEVESO</b>	<p>The European Union ‘Seveso 2’ Directive, Council Directive 96/82/EC (as amended by Directive 2003/105/EC) on the Control of Major Accident Hazards is a European Union directive whose aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances</li> <li>• The limitation of the consequences for humans and the environment of such accidents as do occur</li> </ul> <p>The ‘Seveso 2’ Directive is given effect in Ireland by SI No 74 of 2006 – European Communities (Control of Major Accidents Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2006, referred-to in this guidance as ‘the Regulations’.</p> <p>The Regulations are principally directed towards the Operators of certain Establishments which are involved either in industrial activities or in the storage of dangerous chemicals.</p> <p><b>Categories:</b> For the purposes of the Regulations, these Establishments are divided into three categories as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishments where the quantity of dangerous substances present is less than the lower threshold levels given in the Directive</li> </ol>

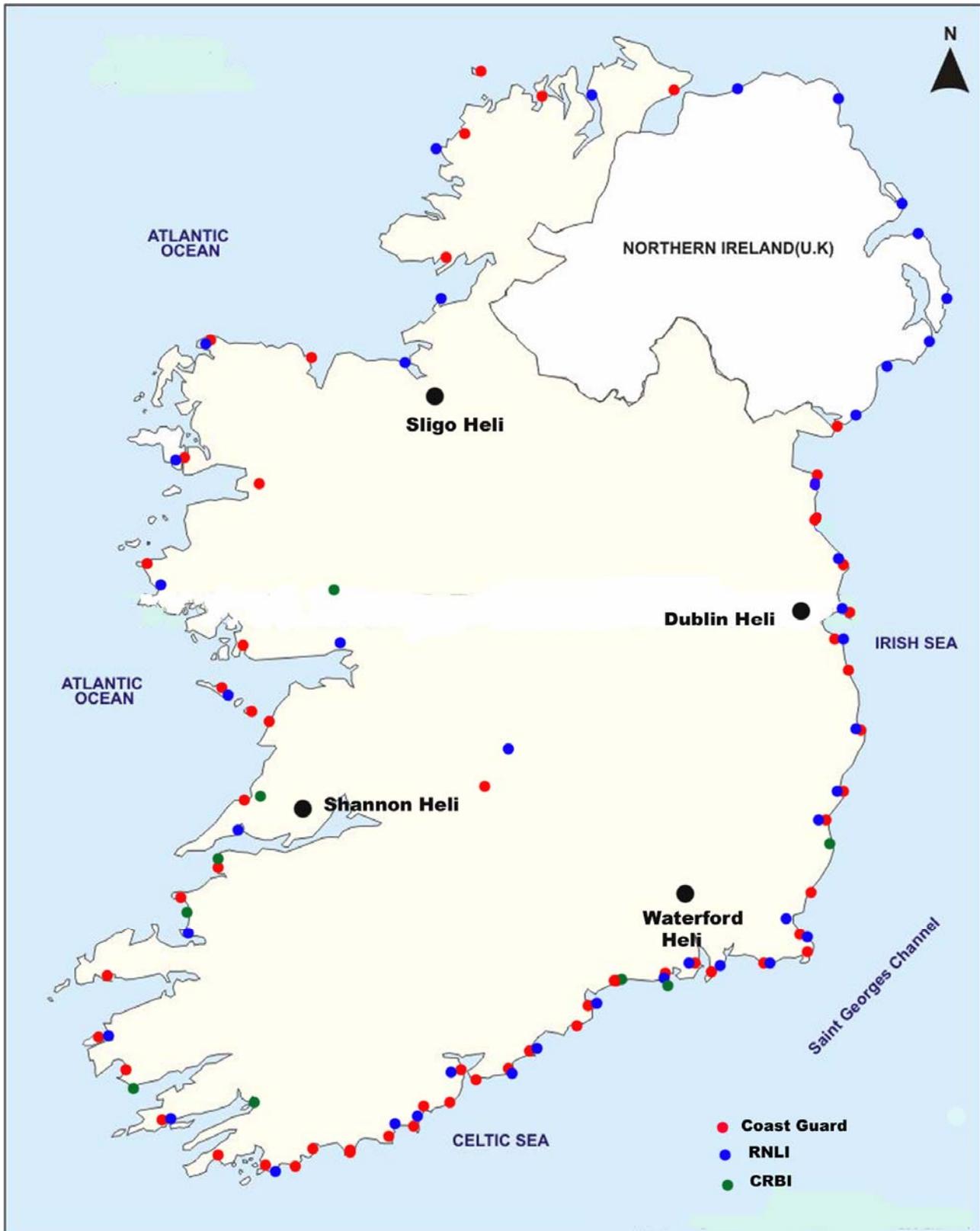
2. Establishments where the quantity of dangerous substances is above the lower threshold set in the Directive, but below the upper threshold. Such Establishments are covered by the lower tier requirements

Establishments which hold quantities of dangerous substances above the upper threshold contained in the Directive. These are known as Upper Tier Establishments and all of the requirements contained within the Directive apply.

**SMC**

SAR Mission Co-ordinator

APPENDIX 2  
ALL COAST GUARD 24/7 DECLARED RESOURCES



### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **IRISH COAST GUARD HELICOPTERS**

The Irish Coast Guard has contracted six medium-lift Sikorsky Search and Rescue helicopters deployed at bases in Dublin, Waterford, Shannon and Sligo. The helicopters are designated airborne from initial notification in 15 minutes during daylight hours and 45 at night. One aircraft is fitted and its crew trained for under slung cargo operations up to 3000kgs and is available on short notice based at Waterford.

#### ***Expected performance criteria***

- Achieve 95% launch time of 15 minutes on urgent calls from normal ground readiness between 0700 – 2100 hrs
- Achieve a 95% launch time of 45 minutes on urgent calls from normal ground readiness between 2100 – 0700 hrs
- Achieve a 95% availability of all weather SAR (All Weather SAR - AWSAR) aircraft at each base.
- Achieve a 97% availability of AWSAR plus limited SAR (Limited SAR - LIMSAR) aircraft at each base.

These aircraft respond to emergencies at sea, inland waterways, offshore islands and mountains of Ireland (32 counties). They can also be used for assistance in flooding, major emergencies inland, intra-hospital transfers, pollution, and aerial surveillance during daylight hours, lifting and passenger operations and other operations as authorized by the Coast Guard within appropriate regulations. The Coast Guard can contract specialised aerial surveillance or dispersant spraying aircraft at short notice internationally.

Helicopter tasks include:

- The location of marine and aviation incident survivors by homing onto aviation and marine radio distress transmissions, by guidance from other agencies, and by visual, electronic and electro-optical search. IRCG Helicopters are fitted with AIS, nightsun, FLIR (forward looking infra red) and video recording equipment.

- The evacuation of survivors from the sea, and medical evacuees from all manner of vessels including high-sided passenger and cargo vessels and from the islands.
- The evacuation of personnel from ships facing potential disaster.
- Search and/or rescue in mountainous areas, caves, rivers, lakes and waterways.
- The transport of offshore fire-fighters (MFRTs) or ambulance teams (MARTs) and their equipment following a request for assistance.
- The provision of safety cover for other SAR units including other Marine Emergency Service helicopters.
- Pollution, casualty and salvage inspections and surveillance, and the transport of associated personnel and equipment.
- Inter-agency training in all relevant aspects of the primary role.
- Onshore emergency medical service, including evacuation and air ambulance tasks.
- Relief of the islands and of areas suffering from flooding or deep snow.

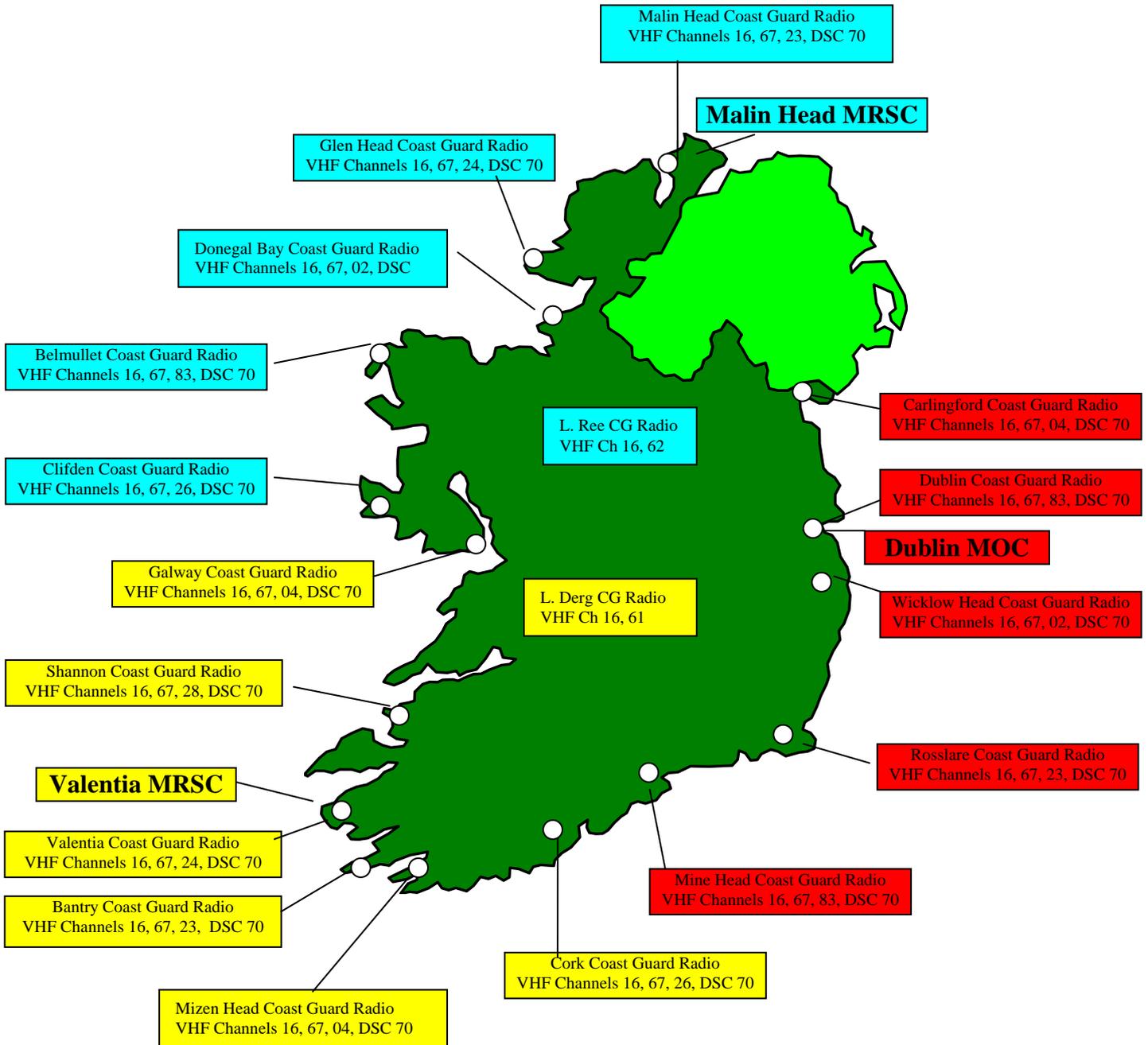
**The secondary roles of the helicopter are:**

- The exercise of the primary search, rescue and evacuation roles in adjacent Search and Rescue regions.
- Assistance to onshore emergency services.
- Public safety awareness displays and demonstrations.
- Providing helicopter expertise for seminars and training courses.

IRCG provide aeronautical assets for Search and Rescue in the Mountains of Ireland. Request for IRCG assets are made to the Marine Rescue Centres. Requests are accepted from An Garda Síochána and nominated persons in MR Teams.

Requests from SAR Unit/Mountain Rescue teams for training/incident response with Air Assets are to be channelled through the IRCG Divisional Controller/SMC at the nearest Marine Rescue Co-ordination Centre.

## APPENDIX 4 VHF COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK



Weather Forecasts at 0103, 0403, 0703, 1003, 1303, 1603, 1903 & 2203 on working channels.

<span style="color: red;">■</span>	<b>DUBLIN CONTROLLED RADIO STATIONS</b>
<span style="color: cyan;">■</span>	<b>MALIN HEAD CONTROLLED RADIO STATIONS</b>
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span>	<b>VALENTIA CONTROLLED RADIO STATIONS</b>
○	<b>AIS STATION</b>

[gov.ie/housing](http://gov.ie/housing)

