

Coastguard Rescue Service



Operational Use of CG Response Vehicles

HM Coastguard operates a fleet of blue light response vehicles which are utilised by Coastal Operations. This fleet includes Coastguard Rescue Vehicles (CRV) and Coastal Officer Response Vehicles (CORV)

They are routinely utilised by Coastguard Rescue Officers and Coastal Operations Officers (SCOOs, COACS, CODC, HQ, Coastal trainers) and for a variety of tasks including emergency response, coastal management tasks, transport of personnel, training and public relations

Coastguard Rescue Vehicle (CRV)

A 'blue light' fitted response vehicle equipped to support Coastguard Rescue Team Search and Rescue operations. They are equipped to allow the provision of casualty care (first aid, rescue stretchers), searches and water safety/rescue. Where required these vehicles are also equipped with rope rescue and mud rescue equipment

Use of 'Blues and Twos'



'Blue Light' vehicles may only be operated by appropriately trained personnel. Training requirements are laid out in the Coastal Operations Training Support Material

The use of blue lights and sirens during and emergency response is governed by the Road traffic act. Within HM Coastguard blue lights and sirens are fitted to facilitate progress to incidents, when life is at risk

Drivers must be appropriately trained to HM Coastguard policies before driving CRVs or CORVs during emergency response

Life at Risk

HM Coastguard's definition of 'Life at risk' is:

"the actual or potential risk of harm or death to an individual. The risk can be caused by their health, their position (point of danger), conditions, environment, incident, preparedness or activity"

Examples include:

- Actual or potential risk to a casualty due to; health, position (point of danger), conditions, environment, activity or incident
- Members of the public, bystanders, 'good Samaritans' who are at actual or potential risk due to; health, position (point of danger), conditions, environment, activity, incident or attempting to provide assistance
- Rescuers on scene who require additional personnel, technical skills or rescue equipment
- Rescuers on scene who require additional resource to provide/enhance 'backup rescue'
- Emergency services, other responders, who are at actual or potential risk due to; position (point of danger), conditions, environment or incident
- Emergency services, other responders, additional facilities who are at actual or potential risk due to; providing assistance with a more limited/ or lack of specialist capability

Responsibilities

Vehicle Driver

The responsibility for the use of Blue lights and sirens sits with the trained driver of the vehicle, governed by HM Coastguard policies

Operations Room

Ops Room staff are responsible for providing appropriate information to the driver to allow them to make judgements on the use of blue lights and sirens including

- nature of incidents
- condition of casualties
- timeframes
- conditions on scene
- assets on scene

Crewing levels

The minimum crewing level for CRVs and CORVs is one, but the number of crew will dictate the tasks which may be undertaken. Two or more crew should always be considered as the optimum

Single crew

When Operating with a single trained crew the following rules should be observed

- When responding to an incident, appropriate additional crew should be tasked
- Drivers should utilise Rendezvous points with additional crew to ensure they do not deploy inappropriately to the incident alone
- Driver can only operate the radio mike when the vehicle is safely stopped
- Ops rooms and other rescue units should limit communications with the single crewed unit. If necessary awareness information can be transmitted, without an expectation of an acknowledgement e.g.; change in urgency or stand down

- In adverse weather conditions; Snow, Ice, Storm conditions, flooding, consideration should always be given to deploying with more crew

The decision to operate the vehicle single crewed sits with the trained driver

These rules should be applied if travelling/responding alone or with untrained personnel e.g. trainees or observers

Crew Training and Capability

There will be an expectation from the public and other services that Coastguard Response Vehicles will be manned by personnel capable of dealing with an emergency incident. Untrained personnel could be put under undue pressure to act inappropriately or outside of their training or capability. It is therefore imperative that there is always a minimum of one crew member who is competent in core Coastal Operations skills; Foundation, HMCG First aid, Water Safety and Rescue, Driving. (as set down in the training support material)

In the unlikely event a vehicle has to be moved by a non-operational personnel appropriate advice should be sought from Coastal Operations or Coastal Resources

Uniform

To ensure preparedness and public image Coastguard personnel should always be dressed in appropriate uniform or PPE when driving or travelling as passengers in blue light response vehicles (CORVs and CRVs)

Appropriate inform is:

- Standard Uniform (White shirt)
- Operational Uniform (Blue shirt)
- Working rig (e.g. HMCG polo shirt, T-shirt)
- HMCG Overalls

Identifying/Recording Vehicle Crew

The driver or OIC must ensure that the makeup of the CRV crew is recorded. This is to support co-ordination and to ensure the welfare and safety of occupants in the case of an emergency

During incidents the crew should notify the CGOC of the crew makeup using their individual numbers or letters. This can be done by phone or VHF

During routine duties e.g. re-fueling, transfers of equipment, the crew numbers/ letters should be recorded in CG19 alongside the task and the CGOC informed by phone

Carriage of Non- HM Coastguard Passengers and Casualties

Passengers may be carried in official vehicles in the following circumstances only:

- Other responders in support of operations e.g. Fire, Police, Ambulance, Lifeguards, Animal Rescue organisations etc. This may include equipment which should be stored and secured appropriately
- Contractors, when travelling on Agency business
- Individuals who are responsible for a casualty who are required to take over as the next level of care e.g. Family member, Carer
- Support personnel when attending an approved event e.g. Training, Exercise, PR event
- Uninjured casualties or survivors located as a result of search and rescue action

Injured Casualties



MCA vehicles are not designed as ambulances, nor do Agency personnel have the necessary skills or training to assess the carriage requirements of injured casualties

Injured casualties may only be carried in a CRV in exceptional circumstances, if a qualified paramedic or Emergency Doctor is on scene and has given express confirmation that the casualty should be moved immediately in this way rather than wait for an ambulance, helicopter, or carry the casualty by stretcher

Transporting Pyrotechnics

HMCG vehicles must follow The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2009

To carry operational or discarded pyrotechnics in a vehicle at least one member of the crew must be ADR trained, as per the HMCG TEPs training package. The trained person(s) can be either driver or passenger



If there is no ADR trained person available, all pyrotechnics aboard must be removed and stored securely and appropriately before utilising the vehicle

Severe Weather

Whenever a CRTs is tasked to assist other authorities in severe winter weather the Duty Coastal Officer should be consulted

A joint decision must be made to ensure that the nature of the task justifies the additional risks to the CRT, particularly when a CRV is used

Risks presented by severe winter weather include:

- Injuries to CROs
- Stranding of CRV
- Temporary loss of a SAR resource
- Damage to reputation

Risks might be mitigated by:

- Deployment of supporting CRV
- Allowing for additional transit time
- Taking the safest rather than quickest route



The Duty Coastal Officer must sanction the tasking of CRTs to assist other authorities in severe weather conditions. The Duty National Coastal Commander also needs to be informed



Once approved by the Duty Coastal Officer, the driver makes the final decision whether or not to proceed

Version: 1.0.0.0 - Published: 17/03/2016

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