
12.3A Incident Reporting



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INTRODUCTION

1. The primary function of all NCI Watchkeepers is to spot any vessel or person in difficulty or at risk, whether on land or at sea, and immediately report the essential facts to HMCG.
2. We are the '*local eyes and ears*' of HMCG and, as such, must always act speedily, and with accuracy, when dealing with an incident.
3. NCI's contribution to the national SAR community is in helping to maintain a safe coastal environment – our professionalism must therefore be a continuous priority.
4. Immediately a potential incident is identified, Watchkeepers must follow NCI's standard Incident Reporting Procedure, summarised as **SPOT, PLOT, REPORT AND RESPOND**

SPOT	Visual observation of the incident
PLOT	Establish location of the incident
REPORT	Notify HMCG in a timely manner
RESPOND	Follow directions of HMCG or designated agency

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

5. In order to carry out the Incident Reporting procedure effectively, all Watchkeepers must possess a level of underpinning knowledge, comprising:
 - ✓ Safeguarding – Section 10.1
 - ✓ Watchkeeping – Section 12.1
 - ✓ Logbooks – Section 12.2
 - ✓ Incident Response Guide – Section 12.3B
 - ✓ Radio Fundamentals – Sections 12.4A, 12.4B and 12.4C
 - ✓ Chartwork – Sections 12.8A and 12.8B
 - ✓ Lost and Found Children – Section 12.10

WHAT IS AN INCIDENT?

6. An event is defined as an incident if:
 - Watchkeepers initiate a call to any emergency service (HMCG, Police, Fire or Ambulance) in connection with an accident or incident and request their assistance
 - Watchkeepers provide assistance to the emergency services in connection with an accident or incident, whether HMCG initiated or not
 - HMCG or the police provide an incident reference number
 - the Station Manager believes that there are lessons to be learned by NCI as a whole

Watchkeepers do not need to automatically notify HMCG when they call the police, fire or ambulance service in an emergency, or when they are asked for assistance by any of those services. However, if the incident is likely to be relevant to HMCG operations the Coastguard must be informed.

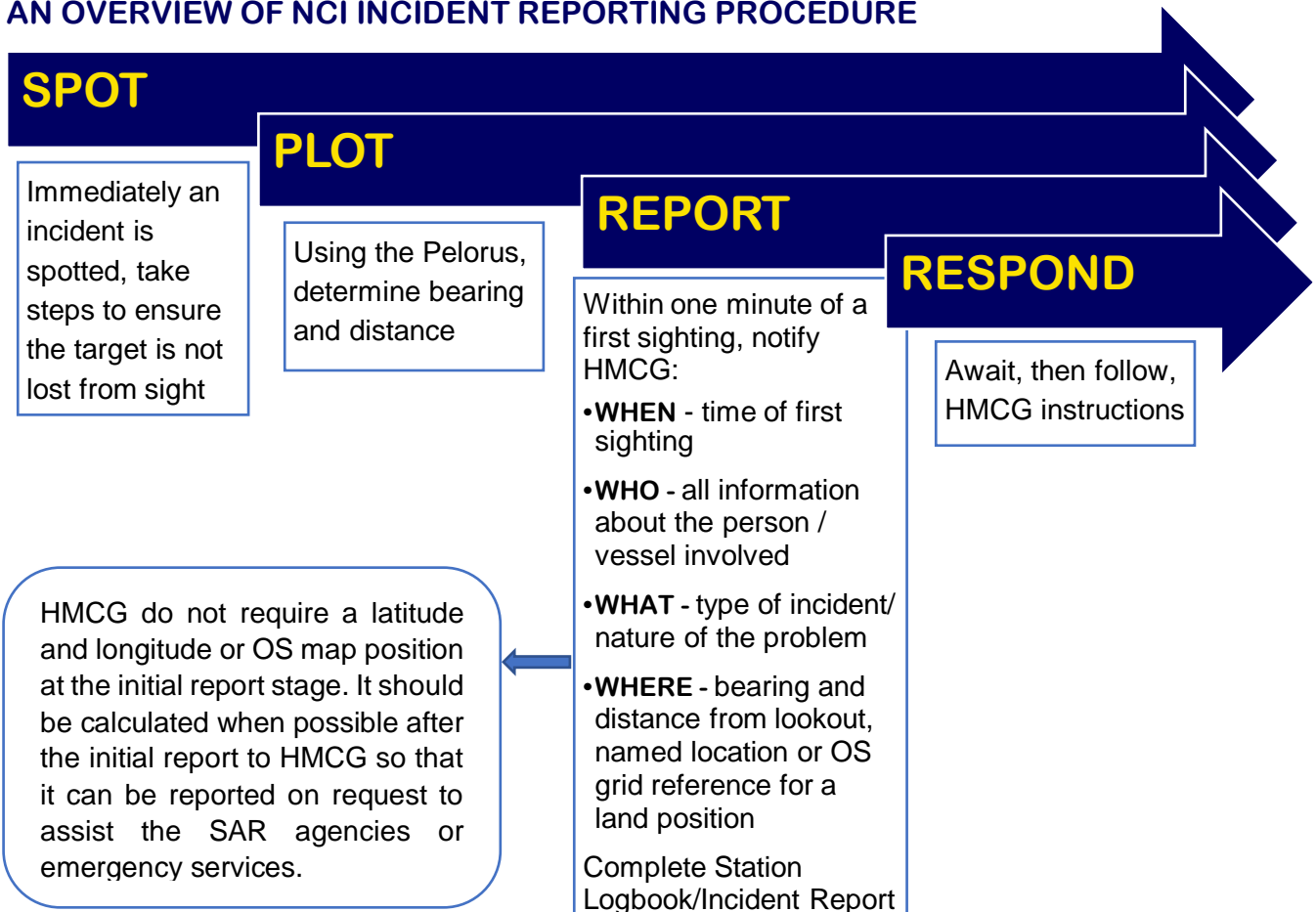
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INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE and supporting notes

7. Watchkeepers must never leave their Station unattended to investigate any incident, occurrence or debris.
8. If you are unsure of what you have seen, check with your Station Manager or a member of your local management team and if you believe that life or property is at risk '*call it in*'.
9. It is the duty Watchkeeper's responsibility, using experience and judgement, to determine the seriousness of the incident. When an incident is known to have involved a fatality, the Station Manager, Sector Manager, Liaison Trustee, and National PRO must be informed as soon as possible
10. Obtain an incident number from HMCG or the designated agency dealing with the situation – it will be required when reporting your actions in any Incident Report raised by the Station Manager to be sent to NCI National Office.

AN OVERVIEW OF NCI INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE



REPORTING THE INFORMATION – serious incidents

1. Telephone 999 and ask for the Coastguard
2. On contact with HMCG say "*THIS IS XXX NCI . . .*"
3. Report 'WHEN, WHO, WHAT, WHERE' – facts only, do not speculate

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AT SEA – other information needed	ON LAND – other information needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ more detailed description of vessel/person▪ if flares sighted – colour, length of time visible, estimated height, smoke drift▪ nearby vessels of a size able to assist▪ weather conditions and sea state at target's location▪ what is happening on scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ any assistance already provided▪ weather conditions at scene▪ what is happening on scene▪ OS grid reference of nearest vehicular access point

DOCUMENTING THE INFORMATION

11. You must:

- obtain an incident number from HMCG after the situation has been dealt with
- seek additional contact information when an incident is reported by a MoP including the first informant's name and contact details
- make a full record of the facts of the incident, including relevant times, in the Station Logbook, transferring information from any rough notes made during the incident; keep these notes as well as any CCTV recordings available
- log all relevant telephone calls and radio traffic
- log any SAR personnel in attendance during an incident
- ensure that all information documented is legible and cross-referenced to the Station Logbook
- enter all incidents where NCI has actively taken part, in red ink or underline in red, in the Station Logbook
- pass sufficient information to the SM, or Station Secretary, so an electronic Incident Report can be completed from the information in the Station Logbook within 24 hours of an incident
- in the case of lost or found children, follow the protocols set out in NCI's 'Lost and Found Children' (Section 12.10 of the Manual); and the principles set out in our Safeguarding Policy must always be borne in mind

WHY DOCUMENTING THE INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT

12. Serious incidents might become the subject of a subsequent investigation and/or hearing in a court of law. Such incidents may involve:

- loss of life
- serious injury
- collision at sea
- wreck or loss of a vessel
- fire causing major damage
- serious pollution

Where this is the case, Station personnel could be called upon to present the Station Logbook and any other material evidence, for example photographs, rough notes and/or CCTV recordings or recordings of phone calls.



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13. Any queries received from HMCG or other agencies, regarding incidents will be answered by referring to the Station Logbook. General enquiries from authorised parties can also be answered by interrogation of the filed incident reports held on NCI's national database.

RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT

14. Watchkeepers must:
- carry out all instructions given by HMCG
 - keep the target in sight, reporting any changes to HMCG
 - ask all unofficial visitors to leave the Station during an incident
15. When the Station has more than one watchkeeper on duty:
- one Watchkeeper must maintain constant watch, updating the plot of the target's position
 - the other Watchkeeper should monitor the telephone/radios and make rough notes ready to transfer to the Logbook after the incident is ended
16. When an incident is in progress at the time of Watch Handover it may be necessary that 'off going' Watchkeepers remain on Station.
17. The Incident Response Guide (Section 12.3B), provides further useful information.

UNUSUAL OR SUSPICIOUS COASTAL ACTIVITY

18. There is a perceived increased threat from serious and organised crime including likely exploitation of routes by migrants/people traffickers from mainland Europe. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has been working with other Government Departments, including UK Border Force (UKBF), to streamline the reporting of 'Unusual or Suspicious Coastal Activity' by organisations such as NCI.
19. There is a single reporting route for all incidents, whether Saving of Life at Sea (SOLAS) or suspicious activity. It has been agreed by UKBF that any Unusual or Suspicious Coastal Activity observed by an NCI Station must be reported to HMCG.
20. This reporting system will ensure that any information or intelligence will be passed quickly to the multi-agency National Maritime Information Centre (NMIC) where it will be assessed and acted upon as appropriate.

INDICATORS OF SUSPICIOUS COASTAL ACTIVITY

21. The following indicators are examples only and should not be regarded as an exhaustive list:
- boats with above average number of crew for that size of vessel
 - single or inappropriately small crew numbers
 - any observations of mismatched data, such as AIS vs visual observations
 - any activity which seems to be outside the normal pattern of maritime activity in the area
 - packages being transferred at sea from larger boats



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RECORDING SUSPICIOUS INCIDENTS

22. Watchkeepers should use their experience, local knowledge and judgement to identify anything which arouses their suspicion and should not hesitate to report it, however minor it might seem. It could be the final small piece of a jigsaw which enables the authorities to act on a known threat. Equally it could be the first indicator of an important, hitherto unknown, threat.
23. You will never be criticised for using your judgement to report something which arouses your suspicion. HMCG and UKBF attach great value to the local knowledge and expertise of NCI Watchkeepers and our ability to spot something which 'looks wrong' or out of place in the area.
24. A record of any unusual or suspicious activity must be entered in the Station Logbook, including the fact that it was reported to HMCG.
25. The Station Manager must be informed, and an electronic report must be raised summarising what was observed, the fact that it was reported to HMCG (including relevant incident number) and any further contact from HMCG or other agency.

CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT FOR WATCHKEEPERS

26. If you feel distressed or would just like to talk about anything after managing a serious incident, you can contact, in confidence, your Sector Manager or Head of HR & Admin. Contact details are available in the Internal Telephone Directory (ITD) in the password-protected section of NCI's national website.

NON-EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

27. Ensure that your Station has easily available, non-emergency contact details for:
 - HMCG nearest MRCC/JRCC
 - Police
 - RNLI and/or local volunteer lifeboat organisations
 - local landowners
 - your local/district/town Council
 - wildlife agencies
28. All Watchkeepers must be able to locate these contact numbers easily when needed. You must also understand each of these agencies' role(s) and know in what circumstances they should be contacted.