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## 12.5 Conning-On

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## 12.5 Conning-On



### 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. A lifeboat crew is working at sea level and does not have the visual advantage of height and so their view of a rescue scene can be limited. Even with moderate waves, the lifeboat crew may not be able to locate a target.
3. Watchkeepers, in most NCI Stations, do have the advantage of height and may be able to see the whole scene. In these circumstances, NCI Watchkeepers may be asked by the lifeboat crew or HMCG to assist by directing the lifeboat onto the target. This is commonly called '*conning on*'.  
  
4. A pilot disc should be available at Stations to assist in providing directions to the lifeboat.

### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

5. The knowledge and skill to carry out conning-on is enhanced by an understanding of:
  - ✓ Radio Skills – Sections 12.4A, B and C
  - ✓ Tides – Section 12.7

### GIVING DIRECTIONS

6. During an emergency it is vital that clear, concise and accurate instructions are passed to the lifeboat crew using standard phrases and terminology. There are different systems used for Conning-On and you should know which system is used by your local SAR assets. The most common is the 'Clock Face' which is described below, and when using it remember
  - the lifeboat crew will expect to hear in which direction the target lies from them specified as a position on a clock face



- 12 o'clock will always be dead ahead of the lifeboat, and 6 o'clock will always be dead astern, irrespective of the compass heading of the lifeboat
- you must re-orient the pilot disc as required, each time the lifeboat changes course



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7. With the 'Rescue Craft' pointer orientated to the same heading as the lifeboat, its crew can be informed which number on the clock face indicates the target's position from the lifeboat.  
**Note:** only provide the position of the target, do not issue helm direction instructions, this is strictly the coxswain's authority; however, an estimated distance may be given.

### CONNING-ON

8. Watchkeepers must not make any initial radio call, either to the lifeboat or HMCG, offering to con-on the lifeboat. If you feel you may be able to assist in an emergency, you must contact HMCG by telephone using your designated local number.
9. Due to relative sizes and distances, it is very difficult to con a boat directly onto a target from left to right or right to left. It is far better to direct the boat so that it would pass behind or in front of the target and stop it when it comes into line with the target. From there, more accurate directions can be given using the clock face as described above.
10. Lifeboat crews prefer to receive a few large changes of direction, rather than many small ones.
11. All conning-on incidents, except exercises, must be recorded in the Logbook, in red ink, and the Station Manager or Deputy informed.

### COMMUNICATIONS

12. If HMCG requests you to con-on a lifeboat in an emergency, they are likely to ask that it takes place on VHF Channel 00, or they might nominate another channel.
13. Radio calls, from HMCG or a lifeboat, must be answered promptly and recorded in the Logbook.