

Press Release

Date: 29-30/11/2008

Begins:

Title: Launch of the Inland Flood Rescue Association (IFRA)

The inaugural meeting of the Inland Flood Rescue Association got under way on the frosty morning of the 29th of November 2008, present were Flood Rescue teams from around the country and guest speakers from the Fire and Rescue Service and Water Rescue Training providers.

The introduction for the morning was given by the Chairman of the Association Rob Murray, who outlined the primary and secondary objectives of IFRA.

Primary Objectives:

- To obtain a seat on UK SAR to represent water rescue teams within the UK
- To provide support for developing water rescue teams within the voluntary sector and give advice and guidance on providing a professional accredited rescue service.
- To co-ordinate and provide information on specialist approved teams available to the emergency services within the UK
- To provide advice and assistance to its members on matters of insurance, qualifications and current legislation.
- To lobby government and other bodies to the benefit of member water rescue teams within the UK.

Secondary Objectives:

- To develop and improve methods of water rescue.
- To test, evaluate, and endorse/report on new equipment for its members.
- To provide technical information on all aspects of water rescue for its members
- To share information, training and provide support to other teams when required.
- To enable teams to obtain equipment and insurance at discounted prices by bulk purchase.
- To apply for grants, support and equipment for the mutual benefit of its members.

Fire and Rescue Service talks

After the introduction Rob invited to speak Mr Paul Hayden, Chief Fire Officer for Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. During the talk he outlined the FRS proposals in response to the 2007 Pitt Review and Gave the meeting great insight in to the future of Flood Rescue and how there will be a role for voluntary teams within this future. Although still uncertain Paul made the conference aware that ad-hoc, unregistered and un-audited teams would not be part of the planned response and would be unable to attend incidents, this gives us all a confidence that those that are operational during



severe flooding are capable of fulfilling their role.

The Second Talk from the FRS was given by Martin Bills, who has been working on a system of "Team Typing", this is a system which allows teams to be trained equipped and audited to fit the roles needed in a flood rescue situation. A "Typed" team could be from any agency, organisation or voluntary group and fulfil the roles assigned by the governing body. Although in draft we were privileged to learn of the latest moves in the direction of the final draft to allow the teams present to prepare for what will come soon.

Training in Swift Water and Flood Water

Next followed a presentation by Paul O'Sullivan, Managing Director of Rescue 3 UK. Paul outlined the need for Training in the appropriate environment as well as the need for accountability for that training. His ideas and insight into this area were well received by the Teams Attending and will certainly help with the direction of the IFRA framework to ensure the UK's volunteers are ready to work alongside the Government agencies responsible for Flooding response.

Launch Weekend Demonstrations

After a fine Buffet lunch at Upton Upon Severn Marina, arranged by the Weekends host Mercia Rescue it was off out into the crisp, cold air to watch the teams provide demonstrations for the attendees. With Global Rescue using Search Dogs to locate a simulated Drowned person and Inshore Search and Rescue Midlands deploying a Water Rescue Team from a bridge to the water 8 metres below, and various rescue craft were on show.

Outcomes of the Weekend

The formation of IFRA was finalised by a meeting of Team Leaders from around the UK, and agreement has been unanimous with the adoption of the Proposed "team typing" if it is instated as it has been proposed. IFRA will be looking for funding to claim centrally for all member teams and distribute this funding to those teams whom need the most help in complying with the standards.

Training will be standardised within the Association to help all Member teams to develop and integrate when deployed. IFRA will work hard to ensure that Equipment meets the regulations and to provide advice on equipment to manufacturers and teams alike. The Association will also seek to give feedback and assistance to Training Providers on equipment, training and hazards faced by the teams.

Insurance will be looked in to and with the assistance of the FRS IFRA hope to put in a national policy on insurance.

For further information please contact: info@floodrescueuk.com

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