



# Practice Guidelines

Version	• 1.0
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Date Issued	• 20th May 2025
Review Date	• 20th May 2026
Directorate	• Ambulance Control Centre
Authorised Staff	• Dispatchers • Supervisors • Managers
Guidance	• Water Related Incidents

## Situation

This document addresses the lack of formal guidance on which agencies should be notified when handling incidents involving water. The aim is to ensure dispatchers are supported with clear but flexible guidance to enhance decision-making while maintaining safety and operational efficiency.

## Background

Historically, allocations to water-related incidents have relied on learned practices and local informal protocols. While these approaches have generally worked well, ACC management recognises the need for more formalised guidance. This will not only safeguard dispatchers by providing a clearer framework but also ensure consistency across operations while preserving the flexibility required to respond dynamically to incidents.

## Assessment

It is acknowledged that previous learned practices and informal agreements have proven effective in managing water-related incidents. This document does not seek to replace or undermine these methods but to complement them by offering additional clarity and structure. The guidance is not a rigid protocol but a supportive framework. Dispatchers retain the discretion to deviate from these recommendations when the circumstances justify it, prioritising safety and situational demands.

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## Recommendation

### 1. SAS Deployment

Call Takers will process calls through ProQA in line with current AMPDs practice, and Dispatchers will deploy resources in line with current dispatch process for allocation of resources, in line with PDA (pre determined attendance) for water incidents will consider SORT.

SORT deployment: Dispatchers should make early contact with the regional Special Operations Response (SORT) Team Leader to allow for early notification and to develop a timely and effective working strategy for the incident.

Identifying for consideration:

Coastal incidents (in or out of water)

Inland water incidents (non-domestic situation)

### 2. Partner Agency Notification

ACC dispatch will then notify category 1 responders Police Scotland (PS), the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) & Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA): explicitly detailing the nature of the incident and emphasising the involvement of water, out with domestic drowning situation.

Informing the category 1 responders will allow the cascade of information & deployment to relevant agency partners:-

PS: may contact Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to assist in the operation.

SFRS: may deploy water rescue teams.

MCA, may deploy coastal or land-based assets to assist in the operation, and consider air asset support or RNLI

### 3. Incident Communication

Dispatchers will designate a talk group and clearly communicate to all responding SAS assets that the incident involves water risk or hazard, emphasising the importance of conducting a thorough dynamic risk assessment (DRA) with a strong focus on crew and patient safety and providing a METHANE report (see page 6), for consideration of support through Special Service Desk (SSD).

Awareness that the joint emergency service talk group may be stood up through PS to allow all attending agencies to access a single point of communication in line with Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principals (JESIP).

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## 4. External Agency Deployment

Dispatchers should recognise that, while we as a service can alert partner agencies, we cannot guarantee their deployment.

If an agency decides not to commit resources, further information should be passed to them if it is identified that their presence may be beneficial. This may come as a request via the METHANE report, or as a direct request for assistance from on scene crews or other agencies on scene.

**By implementing these recommendations, dispatchers will have a clearer pathway to managing water-related incidents while maintaining operational flexibility and ensuring the safety of all involved.**

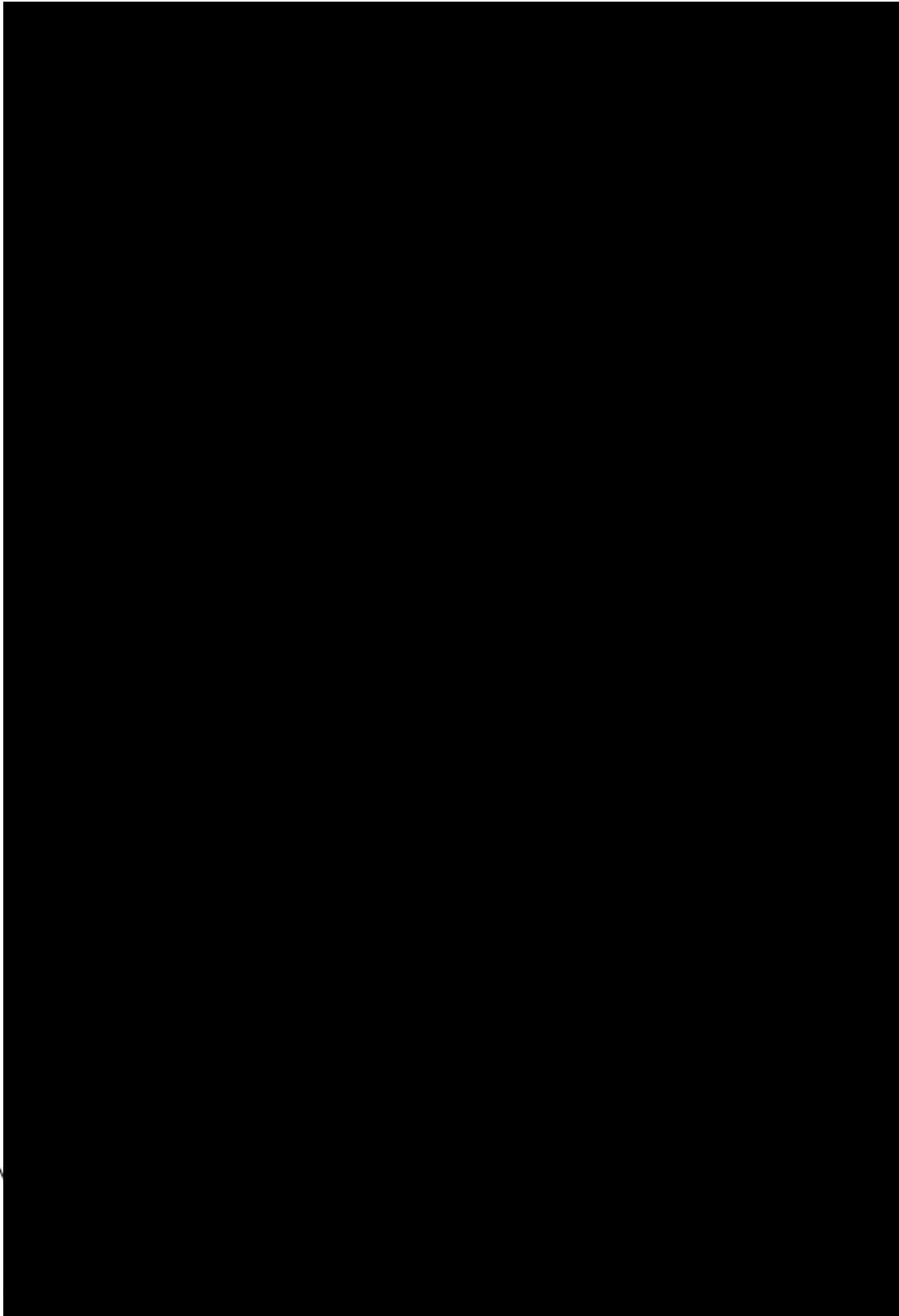
Please also find attached to accompany the guidance an updated SORT PDA and METHANE guide.

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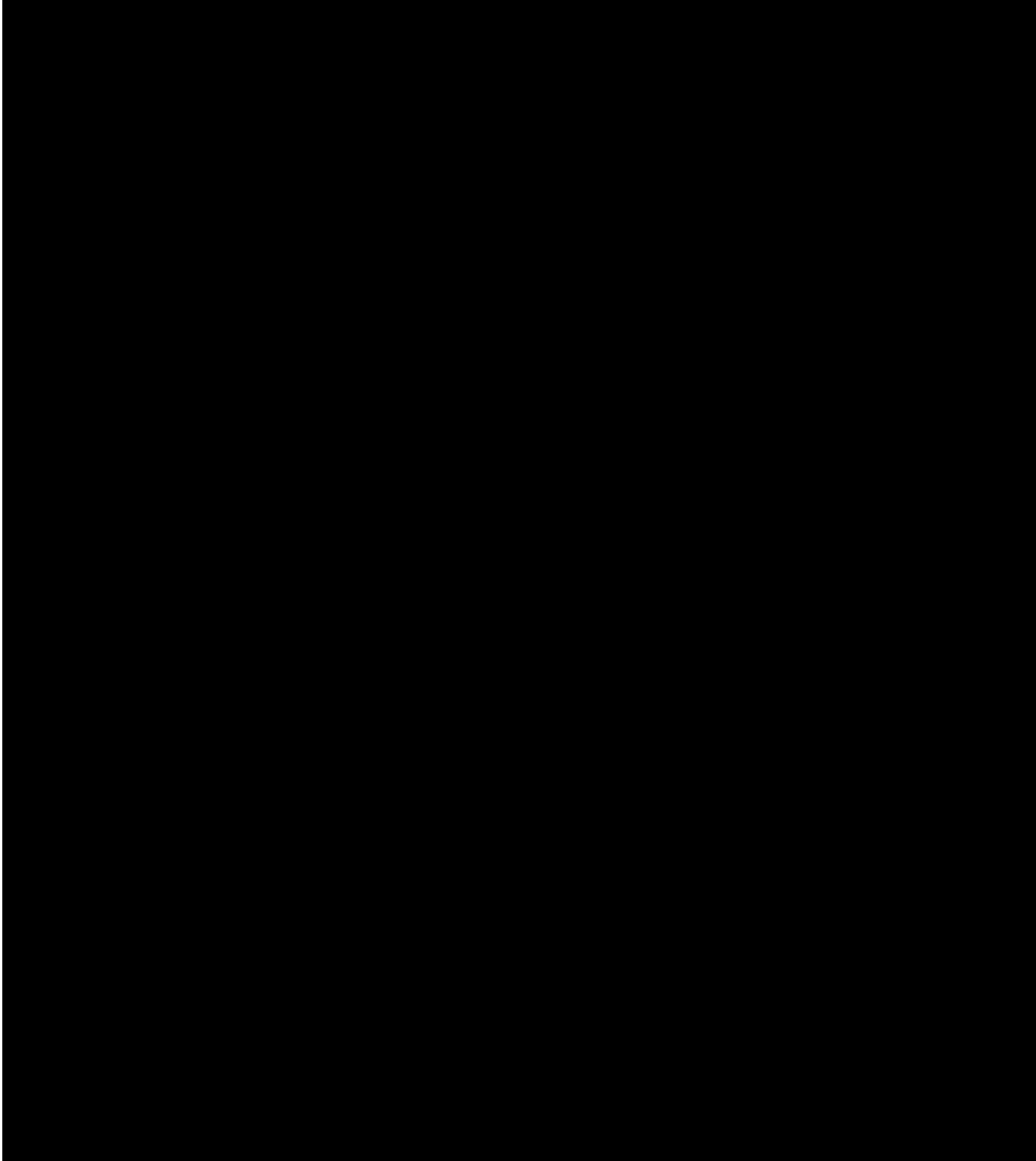
**Scottish Ambulance Service**



Date of release: 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Page no:4	Author: [Redacted] Head of Operations
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REPD  
7 July 2003

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## 4.0 Situation Reports (SITREP)

TIME OF CALL: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORIGIN OF CALL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF CALLER: \_\_\_\_\_ TEL NO: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Major Incident</b>	Declared or Standby (Inc Date & Time of Declaration)	
<b>Exact location</b>	Exact location / geographical area of incident	
<b>Type of Incident</b>	Flooding / Fire / Utility failure / HazMat / Disease outbreak etc	
<b>Hazards</b>	Present and potential	
<b>Access</b>	Effective routes for access and egress / Inaccessible routes / RVPs	
<b>Number of Casualties</b>	Numbers and Types (P1, P2, P3, trapped and dead)	
<b>Emergency Services</b>	Required / On-scene	
<b>Start a log</b>	Intentions / Actions	
	Support / Mutual Aid required	

SITUATION REPORTS (SITREP)

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