

# Take 5

To prepare



## Resilience and specialist operations team briefing note:

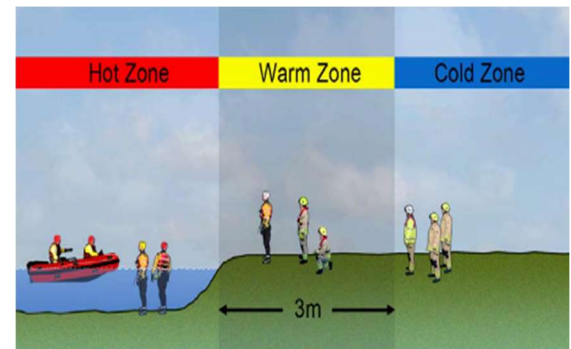
### Water Incidents

As the weather tries its hardest to improve and lock down restrictions are easing, more and more people are starting to venture out.

Within the East of England, we cover a patch of approximately 7,380 square miles, we have over 500 miles of Coastline, 190 miles of Broads, Over 2,300 miles of main river with an estimated additional 3000 miles of smaller rivers, tributaries, lakes and streams.

When you go near a water source, you are said to be “Near the water” if you go within 3m of the water’s edge.

It is important to consider some safety factors. You may be the most competent of swimmer, but water is cold, if you fall or jump in, your body will go through an automatic physiological involuntary response, gasping is the most common reflex!!!



Watch out for some of the more common Hazards.

- Steep or slippery banks leading down to the water, making it difficult to get out
- Tripping hazards such as Mooring poles or ropes around marinas and jetties
- Hidden ditches or culverts leading to the river that you may not see
- Water levels rising quickly. You may get trapped or washed away
- Automated sluices or locks opening without notification leading to water levels rising quickly
- Sub surface hazards, tree roots, “Strainers” that will pin you
- As the speed of water doubles, the force that it exerts on your body quadruples
- Structural failure of walkways, gang planks, bridges and jetties
- Debris both adjacent to and in the water
- Contamination (rats dribble urine constantly around water sources, Leptospirosis etc)

Be careful getting in a fire service or coast guard boat in case it overturns, or you fall out, as you don’t have the correct PPE or training, and this could put you at risk

If you have to go within the warm zone, you must consider the following.

- Early request for HART as they can work in Warm and Hot zones

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HART Carry the following PPE and aids

- Full water PPE including Dry Suits
- 20m Throwlines
- 17m reach pole
- 2 m wading / reach poles
- Inflatable Rescue sleds

They are trained to rescue in fast flowing water and have training to implement a full safe system of work.

You should request a Crewsaver (auto inflating life jacket) and a helmet. See if you can access some aids such as a reach pole and throwline (in case you or your colleague falls in)

If you are attempting to remove a patient from a narrowboat, be mindful of securing your patient in a carry chair with straps in case you slip, and they fall in strapped to the chair.



If you come across a patient in the water, use the following formula. Always start with shouting to your patient.

- **Shout**
  - Give instructions to the patient to aid them to self-rescue or tell them to stay and hold on
- **Reach**
  - Use a broom handle or any stick maybe a branch to try and reach your patient and pull them to the water's edge. Lay down when you do this to prevent yourself from being pulled in.
- **Throw**
  - Throw a rope to your patient and tell them to grab it and turn on their back whilst you pull them in.

If you do fall in and you can't immediately swim to the bank and get out, turn on your back, lift your feet up if possible and float downstream looking for suitable place to get out.