



MIRG sets out its agenda

AT THE LAST MIRG LEAD OFFICERS' meeting held at the Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh in February 2007, Craig Cook, the MCA Fire Liaison Manager, outlined his proposal for a series of new annual MIRG meetings.

In 2006, the first "Equipment Seminar" was held, aimed at MIRG personnel who were servicing, maintaining and handling the MIRG equipment on a daily basis, this meeting was deemed a great success by all who attended. Craig proposed that from 2007 on, the "MIRG Meetings" that had been held each year, (attended predominantly by the MIRG Fire & Rescue Service Lead Officers), would be replaced by two "Strategic" level meetings, one "Tactical/Training" meeting and one "Equipment" meeting. This will encourage engagement with the appropriate stakeholder groups dealing with the promulgation of all MIRG related information and allow for the

formation of "practitioner working groups" from within each meeting.

At the second Equipment Officers' Meeting held in January this year, Humberside FRS agreed to carry out research and development on "Transit Lines", Hampshire is producing a draft P-STASS Log Book, Northumberland are researching Command Wallets and Suffolk FRS is researching an equipment carrying bag.

The first Tactical Group Meeting was held at the Fire Service College on the 6th & 7th June. The meeting proved to be very productive and one of the main outcomes was the formation of five practitioner working groups. These groups will research and develop the following subjects in relation to MIRG: ICS, Communications, HAZMATs, Strategy & Tactics and Industrial Accident (including working in confined spaces and irrespirable atmospheres).



www.mirg.org.uk

THE MIRG WEBSITE, "LAUNCHED" at the last Lead Officers' meeting in February, is going from strength to strength. It now appears second on the list when "MIRG" is typed into search engine Google! In May, the site attracted 36268 "hits" and the trend is ever upwards. Nigel Bruty, MIRG Training Officer has added five albums of photographs to the GALLERY section of the site, showing MIRG team members in action and taking part in training courses as well as photos from the MV Calypso fire taken in May 2006. The GALLERY has undoubtedly helped to increase the profile of MIRG by attracting more visitors to the site from both the UK and overseas. The FLM has dealt a number of requests for assistance and information that have been received via the link on the website.

The MIRG website is a fantastic "tool" for the MIRG

team, acting as a "one-stop shop" for all things MIRG and a means of promulgating information and training packages to existing team members. The MIRG 3 year Training Plan can also be accessed in the member's area of the site. This plan contains the dates of all planned training over a three year period. Recent updates to the site include the incident database and a new section where MIRG standard forms can be accessed.

Please note that we intend to change the user name and password to the member's area in the near future. All MIRG teams will be notified of the change.

If you would like information allowing access to the member's area please contact the Fire Liaison Manager. craig.cook@strathclydefire.org

MIRG incident 24.06.07

A CALL REQUESTING ASSISTANCE was received by Yarmouth MRCC at approximately 0800 (local) from the master of the 371 gt tug "HT Blade". He reported a fire in the engine room and requested the assistance of the Fire Service. The Suffolk FRS MIRG team was alerted.

Additional teams of firefighters from Lincolnshire FRS MIRG team were also put on stand by. A Command structure was established at Yarmouth MRCC and two teams from Suffolk MIRG team were transported to the incident by helicopter.



• Tug "HT Blade" and Cromer's RNLI lifeboat

The vessel's crew had closed the compartment and discharged the ship's fixed firefighting system into the compartment.

The Operational Commander on board the vessel carried out boundary cooling and set up a procedure to monitor the temperature in the compartment.

Lincolnshire MIRG teams remained on standby until the vessel was taken under tow at around 1700. The vessel was then towed to the port of Lowestoft arriving at approximately 0230 hours the following morning where Suffolk FRS carried out an examination of the compartment and subsequently closed the incident.

The incident presented a valuable opportunity to further test the MIRG Mobilising, Communications and Command and Control procedures as well as the interaction with MRCC staff.

The Fire Liaison Manager, Suffolk Lead Officer and MCA Duty Area Officer are delighted with the commitment and professionalism shown by Fire and Rescue Service, SAR flight and Coastguard personnel in bringing the incident to a satisfactory conclusion.

Fall arrest!

FOLLOWING TRIALS AND EVALUATIONS on different types of “fall arrest” devices for ship to ship transfer of personnel, the MCA invited a number of companies to tender for the contract to supply the MIRG teams. The company awarded that tender is the CHECKMATE GROUP (www.checkmateuk.com) and 23 sets have been ordered at a cost of around £23000. Each team and the 6 IASST training providers, who train the 15 MIRG teams in sea survival and helicopter underwater escape training (HUET), will be provided with one Fall Arrest Block with 15m of self retracting steel cable, two harnesses, one short (max. 3m) work restraint device, a number of strops, lanyards and karabiners.

The fall arrest equipment is designed to allow MIRG personnel to ascend and descend a pilot ladder whilst wearing full Personal Protective Equipment or Transportation Protective Equipment.

It allows unhindered movement during climbing, whilst preventing the individual from dropping further than around 30cm (1ft) in the event of a fall.



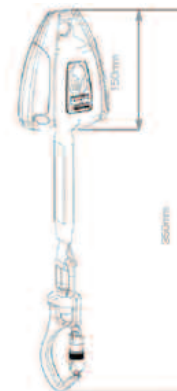
• MIRG “Fall Arrest” equipment in use (during evaluation at Humberside)

Work restraint device

IN ADDITION TO THE FALL ARREST DEVICE for climbing ladders etc, the MCA have also supplied all MIRG teams with a “work restraint device”. The work restraint device is designed to be used by MIRG personnel, not engaged in climbing but working at or near the head of a pilot ladder. It allows freedom of movement but will either prevent the wearer from coming too close to the edge of the deck or arrest a fall if it should happen.



• MIRG “Work Restraint” device in use (during trials in Hampshire)



• MIRG “Work Restraint” block (Checkmate Xcalibre)

2007 CFOA Marine Operations Group Seminar

THE ANNUAL CFOA MARINE OPERATIONS GROUP (MOG) seminar was held in partnership with Lloyds list events at Excel London on the 24th and 25th of April this year. Despite several attempts to engage with colleagues in coastal Fire and Rescue Services, attendance levels at the event were not all that they could have been. Of those coastal FRS that did attend only one submitted an agenda item.

It is clear that the original terms of reference of the MOG have now been addressed by the successful conclusion of the Sea of Change Project. In order to encourage further dialogue regarding the future direction and possible review of the MOG terms of reference DCFO Mazen Khuri the CFOA Lead Officer for Marine Operations will arrange a meeting with all coastal FRS CFO later in the year.



New addition to MIRG Support

The MCA has demonstrated continued support for the national strategy and in addition to the administrative support provided by Caroline Raeburn have in May this year appointed a new member of staff to the MIRG admin support team.

The successful candidate was Joshua Billinge.

Josh attended the MIRG Training Officers' meeting held at the Fire Service College in June and as part of his induction accompanied our Training Officer Nigel Bruty on a MIRG1 course held at Warsash.

Nigel was taking part in the course (as a member of Hampshire's MIRG team) and Josh attended as an observer, however it was soon established that additional capacity was available and in the best traditions of the Fire and Rescue Service Josh was invited/encouraged to participate in the course.

Following some initial reticence Josh successfully completed all parts of the course and is now qualified to MIRG standard in Helicopter underwater escape training and sea survival.



STOP PRESS!! STOP PRESS!! STOP PRESS!!

Northumberland MIRG team goes live!

NORTHUMBERLAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE announced on the 2nd July 2007 that their MIRG team was formally declaring availability to attend incidents at sea on behalf of the MCA. This brings the total number of teams operationally ready to 14. The 15th and final team has indicated to the MCA that it hopes to "go live" in the next few weeks on completion of a number of planned proving exercises.