

# Flood Operations for Emergency Planners and Workers

By Paul O'Sullivan

The flooding of summer 2007 has certainly highlighted that dealing with major flood events requires a multi agency response. Consequently, all those who are required to operate in and around floodwaters need to appreciate the risks as well as understand the equipment and working procedures required to operate in such an environment. As a company specialising in water and flood rescue training for the emergency services it was therefore with great interest that we received an enquiry from Emergency Planning Society Member Dean Trussler.

Dean had recently assumed responsibility for Flood Operations at Wokingham & District Council and was assessing the role of emergency planners and workers during flood events. He was concerned that emergency planners and workers could be required to work in flood water for operations such as sandbagging or assessing housing post-flooding, without having had appropriate training to remain safe during such operations.

Working closely with Dean we developed a pilot course which we delivered from our training centre in North Wales. The course was run over two days and focused on the knowledge, equipment and in-water skills required to operate in flood water. This was not so much training in 'rescues' as training in 'safe working procedures', although some basic swimming and throwline rescue skills were covered in the event of workers finding themselves or colleagues accidentally swimming in the flood water.

Floods by their very nature are hazardous material events and thus are not suitable locations for in-water training. By using risk assessed training sites on rivers with good quality water we replicated many of the water features found in flood waters without the additional in-water physical, chemical and biological hazards. The course began with underpinning knowledge on subjects such as flood theory and dynamics, moving water hydrology and hazards, personal protective equipment and safety considerations/risk management. In-water elements looked at defensive swimming and self-rescue as well as basic shout, reach and throwline rescues. Shallow water crossing techniques for flooding and waded use of boats for flood evacuation were also addressed.

The initial pilot course was run in August 2006 with excellent feedback from all involved. Students felt the content was very relevant for their job role and believed it was excellent preparation for future flood events. The course is now available both on an open enrolment or contracted delivery basis.

As emergency planners are all too aware floods are long term events and whilst the media may well focus on the initial rescue phase of floods it is often emergency planners and workers who are involved for the full duration of the event. Because of this they have a need for specialist training to ensure they are aware of the hazards and have the skills to operate throughout all phases of the flood event.

For further information on the Flood Operations for Emergency Planners and Workers course contact Rescue 3 (UK) on 01678 522035 or e-mail [info@rescue3.co.uk](mailto:info@rescue3.co.uk).



Rescue 3 (UK) are the country's leading swiftwater and flood rescue training provider, offering world-class training facilities and unequalled expertise in flood operations and rescue training.

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- Flood Operations for Emergency Planners & Workers
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**For more information please contact:**  
Rescue 3 (UK), National Whitewater Centre  
Frongoch, Bala, Gwynedd, LL23 7NU  
Tel: 01678 522035  
Fax: 01678 521158  
E-mail: [info@rescue3.co.uk](mailto:info@rescue3.co.uk)

