



Water Safety & Rescue Training



Maritime and
Coastguard Agency





Water Safety / Rescue training courses delivered by Birmingham & Midland Marine Services Ltd.

All DEFRA compliant water safety & rescue training delivered by BMMS Ltd is run to the exacting and high standards set out in the December 2025 revision of the 'Flood Rescue Concept of Operations' framework. (Also known as FRCO, or Con-Ops)

DEFRA is the **Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs** and is a UK government department responsible for environmental protection, food safety, farming, fisheries, and rural communities in England.

Not all sectors require 'Con-Ops' compliant training, both the HSE and the CDM Regulations 2015 have requirements too:

In layman's terms: This sector can be a 'minefield' – Let's try and make it easier!

There are four 'general' options, before it gets technical:

Option A)

DEFRA Module 1) Annex G – Water and Flood Non-Rescue Support Operations Training Module, a 1-day course.

Note: *The Annex 'G' qualification supersedes the Annex 'H' syllabus, which was in place between November 2019 and the first week of December 2025.*

This DEFRA Module 1. Annex 'G' syllabus course is that which 90% of our commercial and industrial clientele opt for as it is specifically designed to give personnel outside the 'Blue-Light' sector a grounding in practical in-water operations, (to wading depth) including 'co-worker' and 'self-rescue' techniques.

Option B)

DEFRA Module 2. Water and Flood First Responder training module. This is higher level training, 2-days in duration, aimed at 'Blue-Light' responders but is used by industry to increase exposure to potentially severe conditions and increase the level of rescue capability for their personnel.



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Option C)

DEFRA Module 1 – Water and Flood Awareness training module. A very basic course with no planned entry to the water. Delivered as a half-day training course.

Note: *BMMS have been advised that this version is not accepted by the Environment Agency for contractors on their sites with planned entry to the water.*

Option D) - Non-DEFRA training - HSE / CDM / MCGA compliant.

For companies and organisations working ‘outside’ the remit of the DEFRA ‘Flood Rescue Concept of Operations’ framework, there are other course options via British Marine which provide HSE and CDM Regulations compliance.

IWSMC

The Inland Water Safety Management Course is a non-tidal environment, 1-day course, designed for individuals and organisations operating near rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, non-tidally affected boatyards and marinas.

MWSMC

The Marina Water Safety Management (Coastal / Tidal) Course is tailored for those working in and around coastal or tidally affected marinas, harbours, and waterfront infrastructure.

Commercial Vessel Water Safety Training is available to view on our website via the link below and is both Accredited & Audited by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency - GOV.UK

Click or tap to view more information on
Occupational Water Safety & Rescue Training [↗](#)





Option A) DEFRA Module 1) Annex G – Water and Flood Non-Rescue Support Operations Training Module, a 1-day course.

The Annex 'G' 'Water Safety / Rescue Awareness', one-day course run by Birmingham & Midland Marine Services, complies with the DEFRA 'Flood Rescue Concept of Operations' scheme (December 2025 revision) at DEFRA Annex G – Water and flood non-rescue support operations training module.

Note: *Annex 'H' was superseded by Annex 'G' in December 2025.*

December 2025 saw the most recent update to the 'Con-Ops', to sit between the DEFRA Module 1. 'Water Awareness' and Module 2. 'Water Rescue First Responder' courses. It is now a 'stand-alone' module.

This training module was originally aimed at workers and volunteers who work in support of flood response but do not come from rescue organisations as it covers general water safety awareness training and basic self-rescue techniques.

Environment Agency utilised and this module is now the 'Industry Standard' benchmark, for water safety training across much of the wider 'working waterside' sector.

Covering 'open water', 'still water', 'rivers', 'lifejacket-user', 'self-rescue', 'co-worker rescues', 'cold-water', hydrology, and medical considerations, amongst other highly practical skills for personnel working on, near or above the water, and 'in-water working' to wading depth; whilst ensuring that successful candidates have clearly demonstrated their ability to both 'self-rescue' themselves, and 'co-worker rescue' a colleague following an accidental immersion.

Our DEFRA FRCO water safety & rescue courses are HSE, CDM Regulations DEFRA Con-Ops Framework compliant.

Candidates can expect a mix of classroom and shore-based theory and practical training followed by an afternoon in the river in full aquatic PPE to emergency services standard.

Note: *Buoyancy Aids rather than Lifejackets in the river for the practical session; – Lifejacket*



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deployment is a bolt-on, please contact us for details.

‘Annex G’ training is the benchmark one day water safety / rescue training for EA / non 999 personnel and unlike a standard DEFRA Module 1) course that lasts for one year, the Annex ‘G’ qualification has a period of three years before expiry.

Note: *Logged CPD must be maintained to keep the qualification current.*

Full aquatic PPE hire included for the Annex ‘G’ course.

Aim

To enable students to understand the issues and hazards associated in working on, near and in water and to undertake a suitable rescue response from the bank.

We advise undertaking training outside the mid-June to mid-September period due to low water levels and benign, warm conditions. Higher grade venue available year-round at ‘Open Course’ surcharge rate.

Group size

Group bookings and individual places can be accommodated, across ‘closed’. and ‘open’ courses: BMMS Ltd training differs from many other training providers, in that we restrict attendees to a maximum of x8 candidates per course in order to give more 1:1 time in the water to our candidates.

Bear in mind that we ‘could’, under the DEFRA Framework guidelines, run training with x12 candidates per course with two lower level qualified Module 2 instructors: we don’t...

Here, we ensure that the Lead instructor is a time served Module 3 instructor, the second instructor ‘generally’ being a second Module 3 instructor too, or, a Module 2 instructor working towards his Module 3 instructor assessment.

Our ratio is never higher than 2:8, two instructors to a maximum of x8 candidates and full medical trauma kit including AED and Medical Oxygen are present at the practical venue. Our instructors all hold advanced medical qualifications.

The higher level knowledge and experience of our Lead instructors comes



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through on our courses and feedback has been excellent.

This smaller group size policy gives us a 1:4 instructor to candidate ratio for life critical training in a live and often hostile environment, and actual 1:1 capability for ensuring techniques and in-water exercises at the required level, thus enabling us to spend the time working with those less able candidates.

- It also ensures that we can be certain that everyone has hit the required level to pass the course to our satisfaction.
- By operating like this, we have maintained a 'clean slate' in terms of incidents, accidents, or near-misses, at our live river venue.
- We couldn't do this with a 'sausage machine' approach to running courses; 2:12 which is how many training providers operate.

Cost per candidate (Including hire of rescue grade aquatic PPE)

From March 2026 BMMS Ltd will be operating a 'progressive' pricing system for Annex 'G' courses, based upon the economies of scale / administration required.

This translates to a staggered course cost which creates a customer saving on larger group bookings.

Staggered course fees overview:

Course place costs depend on how many candidates you are booking at the same time.

- Considerably less administration is required to process large group 'closed course' bookings of **12+** and as a company you have flexibility to confirm dates and assign staff to courses. Once we have received your confirmed booking, we can take your candidates in batches of 6-8 over a period of eight weeks. Our most cost-effective booking method which works well for the likes of the big Water Companies, PLC's, and so on.
- The next option is a 'closed course' of 6-8 candidates, the same rate as we charged in 2025, despite rising costs in hosting courses.
- Individual or small group bookings of less than x6 candidates are taken on 'Open Courses', which generates additional administrative processing time, which we have reflected the 'Small Cohort / Open Course' rate.



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Large group bookings: 12-24+ candidates (Multiple 'Closed Courses')

Bookings of between 12-24 candidates on x1 PO Number, with x1 invoice, and x1 point of contact.

We can be flexible on dates and when the training is delivered, but it must be taken within eight weeks of booking.

Groups sent must be between 6-8 candidates on a course, and payment is required in full at least ten working days before your first cohort attends their course.

Cost per candidate: Please contact the office for details

Standard group bookings: 6-8 candidates ('Closed Courses')

Bookings of between 6-8 candidates on x1 PO Number, with x1 invoice, and x1 point of contact. Candidates attending on the same day / course and payment is required in full at least ten working days before your cohort attends their course.

Cost per candidate: Please contact the office for details


Individual or small group bookings: less than 6-candidates ('Open Courses')

Bookings of less than 6 candidates requires one or often two more sets of course processing needs to be undertaken by the office, hence we offset the additional administrative costs against the course places. Payment is required in full at least ten working days before your cohort attends their course.

Cost per candidate: Please contact the office for details

Syllabus

To view the Annex 'G' Syllabus, please follow the link to our website here:

Click or tap to view the
Water Safety & Rescue Awareness Annex 'G' Syllabus 

Summary

Candidates do enter the water, therefore a basic swimming ability is required for this course. This is the Environment Agencies' basic level requirement.

A 1-day training course. The qualification lasts for 3-years if CPD is maintained.



Option B) DEFRA Module 2) ‘Water Rescue First Responder’.

This course was designed for the Emergency Services responding to wider area flooding events, ‘Water Rescue First Responders’ rather than industry, and also widely used by Lowland / Search and Rescue personnel.

This training gives the candidates greater exposure to a high-grade water, more experience, and the skills to ‘support’ Water Rescue Technicians (DEFRA Mod 3 personnel) undertaking their role and is not advised for poor to average swimmers.

Where companies (outside a blue-light remit) feel the need for more in-depth training for their personnel; where and more technical equipment is to be used, this two-day course covers searches, rescue sleds, strainer drills, introduction to rescues from vehicles, tethered wades and sleds, in addition to the content covered in the Annex ‘G’ course above.

Venue

Day-1 is run at our principal training centre in Gailey, Staffordshire. ‘In-water’ practical training is delivered on day-2 in Llangollen, North Wales.

Summary

A 2-day training course. Candidates do enter the water.

A competent level of swimming ability and good level of physical fitness is required for this course.

This course is usually above and beyond the requirement for non-blue-light personnel if delivered correctly to current DEFRA guidance and industry standard.

The qualification lasts for 3-years if CPD is maintained.

Note: *Module 2. was the ‘go-to choice’ for personnel working in-water prior to the revised DEFRA guidance first issued in November 2019, now superseded by Annex ‘G’ from the December ‘25 Con-Ops revision.*

Group Size

Bookings accepted for six to seven candidates as ‘closed courses’ only if using BMMS logistical support.



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'Closed courses' of 10-12 candidates can be accommodated should the client supply the inter-venue travel logistics.

Cost per candidate

Please contact the office for details

Syllabus

To view the DEFRA Module 2 syllabus and learn more about the course, please visit the link here

Click or tap for more information on and syllabus for DEFRA Training Module 2 – Water and Flood First Responder training module [↗](#)

Option C) Shorebased – ‘Standard’ DEFRA Module 1) ‘Water Safety Awareness’.

Aim

Highlight the dangers of working near water

Scope

This basic DEFRA training module is designed to make responders who may, as part of their role, work near water aware of the hazards associated with water and the flooded environment.

The dangers of working near water are explained and basic safety measures are introduced. The session includes awareness of water related hazards, water hydrology, typical water and flood search and rescue scene organisation, principles of water safety, varying rescue options including low to high risk options, and introduction to basic water safety.

Summary

Candidates do not enter the water, so no swimming ability is required for this course.

For personnel working in a shorebased position in the wider flood resilience support sector.

Note: *This version of the courses covers the basics for canalside working under current Canal & River Trust guidelines*



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A ½ day training course.

Qualification lasts for 1-year.

Group size

Bookings accepted on a minimum of SIX candidates. Max 12 per course.

Cost per candidate

A minimum fee for up to x6 candidates applies, with a per-candidate fee for additional candidates (max x12 in total). Please contact the office for details.

Option D) Non-DEFRA training - with HSE / CDM / MCGA compliance.

For companies and organisations working ‘outside’ the remit of the DEFRA ‘Flood Rescue Concept of Operations’ framework, there are other course options via British Marine which provide HSE and CDM Regulations compliance.

IWSMC - a British Marine course, accredited by InSTR - the Institute of Search and Technical Rescue

The **Inland Water Safety Management Course** is a non-tidal environment, 1-day course, designed for individuals and organisations operating near rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, non-tidally affected boatyards and marinas.

The full course covers the generic elements, boat and waterside or riverbank safe working. Candidates who do not work with boats, but do work waterside, have the option of the sitting the ‘Bank’ version of this modular suite of courses.

Focusing on risk identification, site-specific safety planning, and practical emergency response techniques tailored to inland, non-tidal environments. The course equips participants with the competence to assess dynamic water conditions and implement effective safety measures in both routine and high-risk situations.




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MWSMC - a British Marine course, accredited by InSTR - the Institute of Search and Technical Rescue

The **Marina Water Safety Management (Coastal / Tidal) Course** is tailored for those working in and around coastal or tidally affected marinas, harbours, and waterfront infrastructure. It addresses the unique risks associated with tidal influence, vessel movement, confined walkways, and public access. Participants will gain the skills to manage safety in busy marine environments, respond to incidents involving accidental immersion, and apply rescue techniques specific to marina and harbour settings.

Click or tap to view more information on Occupational Water Safety & Rescue Training 

Specialist Commercial Vessel Courses


Maritime & CoastGuard Agency (MCA) BoatMaster Ancillary Training

For 'Passenger Operations' (capacity of 12 plus) 'Workboat' & 'Towing or Pushing' entitlements

MCA BoatMaster Ancillary 'Water Safety & Personal Survival' (Restricted)
MCA BoatMaster Ancillary 'Boat Fire Safety' (Restricted)
MCA / Accredited First Aid - with Category 'C' stores appendix

The above courses need to be undertaken along with your 'underpinning knowledge' of MCA regulations prior to sitting a BoatMaster's exam.

Commercial Vessel Water Safety Training is available to view on our website via the link below and is both Accredited & Audited by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

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DEFRA Water Safety & Rescue training courses with Birmingham & Midland Marine Services Ltd are DEFRA Con-Ops / FRCO 2025, HSE, and CDM Regulations 2015 compliant, and delivered by our specialist rescue instructors from both Lowland Rescue and Fire and Rescue Services backgrounds.

Our instructor qualifications far exceed the DEFRA Con-Ops standards, our emergency response systems are fully audited for our client's peace of mind.

DEFRA compliant courses are accredited, certificated and audited by Outreach Rescue and the Institute of Search and Technical Rescue (InSTR).

BMMS Ltd is an Accredited Centre under both bodies.

British Marine InSTR accredited courses are delivered by a bank of highly qualified instructors, experienced in commercial vessel operations and safety around the water.

Maritime and Coast Guard Agency courses are both delivered and assessed by fully vetted MCGA approved instructors, a highly professional team delivering bespoke content to our clientele.





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