



Irish Water Safety

Sábháilteacht Uisce na hÉireann

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND RUNNING OF A **COMMUNITY RESCUE BOAT SERVICE.**

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Contents –

1	Introduction	4
2	Community Rescue Boat Service	5
3	Station Management Committee	
6		
3.1	Management Structure.	6
3.2	Responsibility and Accountability of the Station Management Committee.....	6
3.3	Membership of the Station Management Committee	6
3.4	Constitution for Managing the Rescue Boat Service.....	6
3.5	CRB Safety Management System.	7
4.1	SMC. (Station Management Committee) The SMC is elected at the AGM.	8
4.2	Appointment of Manager (LOM) and Deputy LOMs (DLOM)	8
4.3	Duties of Honorary Secretary	9
4.4	Absence of LOM and Deputy Launch Authority	9
4.5	Launching Authorities not to Embark for Service Calls.	9
4.6	Duties of Honorary Treasurer.	9
4.7	Appointment of Honorary Medical Adviser.	9
4.8	Duties of Honorary Medical Adviser.....	9
4.9	Duties of Station Honorary Press Officer.	10
4.10	Appointment and Duties of the Training Officer.	10
4.11	Appointment and Duties of the Maintenance Officer.....	11
4.12	Appointment and Duties of the Health, Safety and Welfare Officer/Risk Assessment Officer.....	11
5.1	Enrolment of IRB Crews.	12
5.2	Minimum Age.....	12
5.3	Maximum Age.	12
5.4	Child Protection Policy	12
6.1	Helmsmen.	13
6.2	Duties of Helmsmen.	13
6.3	Helmsmen are in charge.	13
6.4	Wearing of Lifejackets and Personal Protective Equipment.....	13
6.5	General Responsibilities.....	13
6.6	General Prohibition. -Sickness	13

7.1 Merchandise in Rescue Boats.	14
7.2 Preparation for Launching.	14
7.3 Cleaning Rescue Boat and Gear.	14
7.4 Reports of Launches or Assemblies.	15
8.1 Discretion as to Launch.	15
9.1 General.	16
9.2 CRB Operations and Exercises with Helicopters.	16
9.3 Capsizes and Major Damage.	16
9.4 Primary Duty of Helmsmen on the Water.	17
9.5 Wearing of Lifejackets.	17
9.6 Wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).	17
9.7 Reports of Service.	17
9.8 Smoking Prohibition.	17
9.9 Publicity Launches.	17
10.1 VAT Refund Scheme.	18
10.2 Irish Water Safety VAT Refund Information Memorandum.	19
10.3 Irish Water Safety Advice, Information and Assistance.	22
S.I. No. 249 of 2013 VALUE-ADDED TAX (REFUND OF TAX) (RESCUE BOATS AND RELATED EQUIPMENT) ORDER 2013.	27

Introduction



1.1 The Community Rescue Boats Service is a nationwide group of independent voluntary rescue boats of less than 15 Tons, whose training and administration is coordinated by IWS. Community Rescue Boats (CRB) on foot of an undertaking with the Coast Guard are categorised as a “Declared Resource”, enabling them to be tasked to respond to emergencies by Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Centres. Selection as a declared resource is a matter for the Irish Coast Guard who determines the requirements for such resources nationwide. IWS are the designated body for administering the VAT refund scheme. Many CRB teams can trace their origins to drowning tragedies in their communities

1.2 These guidelines aim to assist any Community considering establishing a Rescue Boat Service in their locality.

However, it has to be stressed that while the general principles and requirements concerning the administration of a station are standard, on the operational side each locality has to be looked at and examined individually with regard to casualty potential, topography, launch area, etc. Certain areas may require additional procedures or specific equipment to meet their particular demands when providing a Rescue Boat Service and ensuring the safety of their crews. For example, a “D Class” inflatable boat driven by a 40 hp engine may be unsuitable for one area, but a RIB or other suitable craft may present a more viable option.

Careful consideration should always be given to local knowledge of the Rescue Boat’s Operational Area and extensive advice and research sought from Irish Water Safety and other sources prior to the establishment of the Rescue Boat Service or the purchase of any boat. If necessary trials with different boats should be undertaken before any commitment is made. When purchasing a boat the Rescue Boat Service should confirm with the builder or seller whether the boat is compliant with the Draft Code of Practice for Open Rescue Boats of less than 15 meters in length. This is recommended for all new and pre owned boats entering service or boats undertaking a change in operational role within a service. Existing Rescue Boat Services could also ask the same question from the providers of their boats.

One of the most important considerations when establishing a Rescue Boat Service is the availability of personnel to operate the service throughout the year. The provision

of any Rescue Boat Service is expensive. The initial and on-going costs of purchasing the boat, engine, housing, protective clothing, running costs, continuous training, replacement and maintenance etc., must be considered and provided for. On average, from the time the decision made to investigate the establishment of a service to actually providing the service could take a considerable time. It has to be fully appreciated that these are general guidelines and there may be operational matters and practices which are not included. Therefore it is incumbent on a Station Management Committee to formulate their own operational and callout procedures using these Guidelines, best practice and local marine environmental conditions.

2 Community Rescue Boat Service

2.1 All Community Rescue Boat Services should be established in the spirit of the International Convention, which deals with Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). Under the terms of the Convention, Ireland as a signatory, contracts that “on receiving information that any person is or appears to be in distress at sea, the responsible authorities shall take urgent steps to ensure that the necessary assistance is provided. Assistance shall be provided to any person in distress at sea regardless of nationality or status of such person or the circumstances in which that person is found”. The Irish Coast Guard (IRCG) is the competent authority in Ireland tasked with coordinating Marine Search and Rescue. Community Rescue Boat Services (CRB) that are declared services by IRCG are a component of the Irish Search and Rescue Organisation operating in conjunction with other declared resources principally RNLI and IRCG boats, supported by State Organisations, principally the Naval Service and Air Corps.

2.2 Community Rescue Boat Services are established to assist persons in distress on any waters of Ireland. Body recovery is ancillary to rescuing persons. The Service shall be provided throughout the year and shall operate only on waters within the designated limitations of the declared boat(s). A local Management Committee shall manage the station, its operations and crews. Designated Launching Authorities (DLAs), referred to as Launch Operations Managers (LOM) with responsibility for all emergency callouts, shall be appointed and their contact details shall be provided to relevant IRCG Rescue Coordination Centre. The callout system shall be such that crews are available for assembly as soon as reasonably practical. All crew members shall be qualified for their respective roles and shall participate in continuous planned operational training. The training shall be to a recognised national standard such as ISA for general boating qualifications or as set by Irish Water Safety for rescue boat operations including search and rescue operations.

Only experienced crewmembers should be considered for appointment as helmsmen. All crew members shall be medically fit to carry out their respective roles.

The equipment, which includes the boat and engine, shall be stored in a building, which gives easy access to the water. Rescue equipment shall not be used for any purpose other than for rescue, maintenance and training. All equipment shall be of a standard set by IWS to ensure the safety of the crew. The boat shall be fitted with a licensed VHF marine radio and crews shall be appropriately licensed.



Note on Property/Salvage

Any property salvaged shall be handed over to the “Receiver of Wrecks”, Customs & Excise and shall be reported to an Garda Siochana



3 Station Management Committee. (SMC)

3.1 Management Structure.

On establishment of a CRB station, a Station Management Committee (SMC) shall be elected from the local community who are the founding members of the local CRB organisation.

3.2 Responsibility and Accountability of the Station Management Committee.

The SMC shall be responsible and accountable for the management of the CRB Station and facilities. They shall be responsible for fundraising, the on-going financing of the service and record keeping. They may establish a separate fundraising sub-committee if considered appropriate.

3.3 Membership of the Station Management Committee

The Management Committee should consist of a Launch Operations Manager (LOM) and authorised Deputies; Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Press Officer, Hon. Medical Adviser, Training Officer, Maintenance Officer, Health, Safety and Welfare/Risk Assessment Officer and others as required. A President may be appointed at the AGM. Operational crew members may only hold the Training, Health, Safety and Welfare/Risk Assessment and Maintenance Officer Posts. The Honorary Treasurer shall have delegated responsibility and accountability for all station finances.

3.4 Constitution for Managing the Rescue Boat Service.

The unit shall adopt and retain a Constitution which can only be adopted or amended at an AGM. The SMC shall maintain a set of rules and procedures setting out the duties and operating procedures for the station.

3.5 CRB Safety Management System.

The Management Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of the Unit's Safety Management System (SMS). The aims of the SMS should be:

- To ensure that the Unit is operating within acceptable levels of risk to personnel, equipment and the environment

Rescue Boat operations are inherently risky, therefore the following objectives are appropriate for inclusion in the Safety Management System:

- A unit Safety Statement.
- That all potential operations both training and rescue are risk assessed and a record of Risk assessments is maintained.
- That a pre-launch risk assessment procedure is laid down and carried out

That a pre-launch triple lock system is applied i.e. (all 3 elements must approve the launch)

- RCC (Rescue Coordination Centre)
- Unit level Launch authority (LOM)
- Boat Cox/Helm (i.e. the person designated as in charge of the craft)
- Ensuring that equipment is appropriate to intended tasks.
- That any equipment modifications are approved by a competent person or authority.
- Ensuring that equipment is appropriately constructed and maintained in a safe condition.
- Ensuring that personnel are appropriately trained to the required level of competency and experience, and that training is reinforced at appropriate intervals. (See 2.2 above)
- Ensuring that equipment is operated within parameters of agreed procedures.
- Ensuring that afloat and onshore emergency procedures are developed and applied.
- Ensuring that a competent body inspects equipment requiring statutory and/or regular inspection.
- Ensuring that appropriate safety and inspection certificates are retained.

The Unit SMC should have records pertaining to the following:

- Constitution
- Safety Management System
- Safety Statement & Risk Assessments Register
- Equipment
- Training
- Maintenance
- Operational Area

- Operations – Standard Operations Procedures (SOPs) and Rescue Boat Emergency Operations Procedures should be detailed in a standalone document for ease of access and amendment.
- Interfaces with other Agencies
- Insurance
- Financial records
- Annual Audited accounts
- Annual return of service



4 Duties of SMC

4.1 SMC. (Station Management Committee) The SMC is elected at the AGM.

At each Rescue Boat Station the Management Committee shall appoint the following officials.

1. Lifeboat Operations Manager
2. Honorary Secretary
3. Honorary Treasurer
4. Two Deputy Launching Authorities
5. Honorary Medical Adviser
6. Training Officer
7. Maintenance Officer
8. Health, Safety and Welfare/
Risk Assessment Officer



In addition a Station Administrative Officer may be appointed.

4.2 Appointment of Manager (LOM) and Deputy LOMs (DLOM)

The LOM and DLOM shall be appointed by the SMC. The SMC shall put arrangements in place to have designated launch authorities in place to act as temporary LOM in the absence of the LOM or DLOM. The LOM is the designated launching authority for the unit. Where information is received by the unit concerning an emergency the LOM should first inform the IRCG Rescue Coordination Centre in order that other emergency response assets can be activated if practicable at that time.

The LOM is also responsible for the day to day running of the unit and is the senior appointment holder. By way of example his duties can be equated to that of a CEO.

LOM and Deputy LOMs shall not be crewmembers. However, it is desirable that they have a marine background or a good knowledge of boating and be familiar with the risks and conditions in the CRB operational area. They should reside locally and have their normal place of work reasonably adjacent to the CRB Station in order to deal effectively with any emergency that may arise.

The retirement age for LOM and DLOMs shall be sixty five years.

4.3 Duties of Honorary Secretary

The Hon Secretary is responsible for unit administration and management of all correspondence both electronic and paper based.

4.4 Absence of LOM and Deputy Launch Authority

Should the LOM and the Deputy Launching Authorities be absent or unavailable, the SMC shall delegate on a temporary basis an acting shore-based launching authority that must be thoroughly conversant with the launch Standard Operations Procedures.

4.5 Launching Authorities not to Embark for Service Calls.

Neither the LOM nor a Deputy Launching Authority should go afloat on operational service. Lifesaving interests are best served by the LOM/DLOM remaining on shore to coordinate the operation including communications, and provision of other essential support while the boat is on service.

4.6 Duties of Honorary Treasurer.

The Hon. Treasurer shall have full responsibility and accountability for all station finances and shall operate a bank account in the name of the station. All cheques issued on behalf of the station shall have two signatures on them, the Chairman and the Hon. Treasurer. Appropriate controls for EFT (electronic payments) shall be in place and will ensure that at least two authorised members have responsibility for and visibility of all transactions. An independent audit will be carried out once a year and the accounts will be presented to the Annual General Meeting. These accounts shall be available to any Authorised Officer of Irish Water Safety for inspection, where “Vat Refund” is received from the State.

4.7 Appointment of Honorary Medical Adviser.

A Hon. Medical Adviser should be appointed at each CRB Station. The SMC will consider a suitable candidate for this appointment from medical Doctors who reside in the area. The Hon. Medical Adviser shall be a member of the SMC and have the right to attend all SMC meetings.

4.8 Duties of Honorary Medical Adviser

The duties of the Hon. Medical Adviser are:

- To give the LOM or Helmsmen any advice of a medical nature that may assist the efficient working of the unit.
- To give or arrange first aid training for members of the unit to an approved standard.

- To carry out medical examinations of potential crewmembers and medical examinations of existing crew following injury or illness before returning to duty

4.9 Duties of Station Honorary Press Officer.

The Hon. Press Officer shall maintain and develop relationships with relevant media. The Hon. Press Officer should inform representatives of the media when the rescue boat is launched and should act as the link with the media during and immediately after a service. He/she is accountable to the LOM and should work closely with the LOM and relieve him/her of the duties and responsibilities for media liaison. The press officer should liaise closely with the Rescue Coordination Centre during an operation in order to ensure that conflicting messages are not presented to the media. This particularly applies if there is more than one service involved in a response.

In deciding what information to impart, the Hon. Press Officers should consult and be guided by the LOM. Information should be factual and confined to the role of the CRB unit. Comment on other bodies or organisations should be avoided other than to acknowledge their participation in an operation.

4.10 Appointment and Duties of the Training Officer.

The SMC shall appoint the Training Officer. He/She shall be responsible for the development of the CRB Station Training Plan. Following the approval of the Training Plan by the SMC, the Officer shall be responsible to the Committee for its implementation and for continually assessing, planning and ensuring that training within the Rescue Boat Station for all Station personnel is kept up to date, recorded, and that all certification is valid. The Training Officer shall also sign-off on individual crew training logbooks.

Training is a continuous process for all Station personnel. Even those launch and boats' crews that receive regular call out must still be kept familiar with emergency or irregular operations, such as on-board Rescue Boat emergencies, Helmsman falling overboard, boarding a stranded vessel, launching in poor weather conditions etc.



4.11 Appointment and Duties of the Maintenance Officer.

The Management Committee shall appoint the Maintenance Officer This Officer shall be responsible to the Committee for the preventative (lifed items), routine (regular checks and general application of lubricants etc.) and corrective (repair or replacement) maintenance of all Rescue Boat Station equipment. The Officer should establish:

- A maintenance schedule taking into account the equipment manufactures' recommendations, as well as locally developed requirements
- A dedicated maintenance log book to record all maintenance
- A Defect Log to record what and when any remedial action is taken, and
- A post boat recovery maintenance schedule for after each launch
- Records of safety certificates including servicing certificates

4.12 Appointment and Duties of the Health, Safety and Welfare Officer/Risk Assessment Officer.

The Management Committee shall appoint the Health, Safety and Welfare/Risk Assessment Officer. A serving or ex senior Helmsman might be suitable. This Officer shall be responsible for the preparation of the Rescue Boat Station Health, Safety and Welfare/Risk Assessment policies. Following approval of the policies of the SMC, the Officer shall be responsible to the Committee for the on-going implementation of the policies and future recommendations.

These policies shall include:

- Safety Statement
- Risk assessments to include risk in station, road trailing, launch operations, on water operations, recovery/return to station or mooring. This risk would include all equipment (rescue boat, launch and recovery, propulsion, towing gear, pyrotechnics, fire fighting, electrical, communications, navigation), hazardous substances (fuel etc.), medical equipment (stretchers, defibrillator, oxygen and

entonox, splints etc.), manual handling, personal protective equipment and inspection (see Annex C Draft Code of Practice for Open Rescue Boats Less than 15 meters in length) ,

The Officer shall ensure that all Station personnel are aware of any risks affecting them in Station operations and ensuring that appropriate measures are taken to mitigate them, through training and improved procedures or equipment where necessary.

The Officer shall develop, for approval by the SMC, a means of assessment of the hazards which should include the following:

- Risk Assessments.
- Care of Substances Hazardous to Health Assessments.
- Manual Handling Assessments.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Assessments.
- PPE Inspection Records.
- Equipment Inspection Records.

5 Crew Enrolment.

5.1 Enrolment of IRB Crews.

The SMC shall be responsible for selection of new members. Potential crew members should be invited to fill out an application form for membership. The application form should identify relevant criteria to facilitate the decision-making process.

The application shall be forwarded to Hon. Secretary who shall bring it before the SMC for their consideration. The Management Committee, giving consideration to the Hon. Secretary's report, will accept or not the applicant subject to an examination by the Hon. Medical Officer. The Hon. Medical Officer shall approve the applicant as fit or unfit for Rescue Boat Service.

Unit rules should specify a probationary period of at least one year for all newly enrolled members. Prior to enrolment the new member should be given a copy of the rules pertaining to membership.

5.2 Minimum Age.

The minimum age for joining the service shall be 18 years.

5.3 Maximum Age.

The maximum recommended age shall be 45 years of age for operational duties afloat. This age limit may be extended to a maximum age of 55 and is subject to craft type, operational area and conditions. It is also subject to a yearly medical assessment and the approval of the SMC.

5.4 Child Protection Policy

CRB members shall conform to all national laws and guidelines pertaining to child protection and should operate a child protection vetting policy as administered by an Garda Síochána.

6 Helmsmen and General Responsibilities and Duties

6.1 Helmsmen.

The Helmsmen shall be appointed by the SMC from experienced crewmembers. It is desirable that crewmembers so appointed shall have successfully completed a recognised course in Rescue Boats, as well as ISA Advanced Power Boat Certificate. They shall be competent in the use of radio, have a Short Range Certificate as issued by the Department of Transport, have completed a Day Skipper certificate, a suitable First Aid Course and a casualty handling course.

6.2 Duties of Helmsmen.

The Helmsmen shall comply with the SMCs Standard Operations Procedures for Helmsmen at all times. A unit should have at least four members qualified to act as Helm. Qualified Helmsmen are expected to conduct training exercises in conjunction with the Training Officer on an on-going basis.

6.3 Helmsmen are in charge.

The designated Helmsman shall be in charge of all operations connected with the launching, recovery and housing of the Rescue Boat. He/she will be in command of the boat when afloat and may not, unless incapacitated, hand over the command to any other person. However being in control of the boat does not require the helmsman to be at the controls at all times afloat, and while safe to do so the helmsman should encourage all crew to gain experience of driving the boat

6.4 Wearing of Lifejackets and Personal Protective Equipment.

The Helmsman shall not permit any person to go afloat either on service or on exercise unless that person is wearing a properly serviced lifejacket supplied by the unit and suitable PPE as approved by the SMC.

6.5 General Responsibilities.

The Helmsman will launch on the instructions of the LOM or one of the DLOMs subject to adherence with the triple lock safety check. (RCC, LOM, Helm) The Helmsman shall be responsible to the SMC through the LOM for: -

- The efficient operation of the CRB and its associated equipment.
- Ensuring that the boat shall be ready for service after return to station.
- Reporting all damage and defects to the LOM.
- Ensuring that the boat's equipment is not improperly used or used by unauthorised persons when afloat.
- Ensuring that the boat carries the correct crew number for service, exercises and engine runs.
- Ensuring, while leaving the location of the boathouse on service, the boat travels at a speed commensurate to the locality and taking due regard for other vessels moored or moving within the harbour. This is usually about 8 knots.
- Ensuring that passengers are never embarked.

6.6 General Prohibition. -Sickness

No person shall go afloat on a CRB, if they have consumed alcohol, are under the care of a medical doctor or under the influence of medication or drugs. No person shall go afloat, if he/she considers himself/herself to be unwell or unfit. He/she shall inform the LOM if unwell or unfit. Any member who is on unable to work due to sickness or is certified sick from work shall not participate in CRB boat operations or training. Individual crew are responsible for informing the LOM if they have concerns about their well-being with regard to assigned duties.



7 Operations.

7.1 Merchandise in Rescue Boats.

The Helmsman shall not permit any goods or equipment to be embarked on the CRB that are not required for SAR operations.

7.2 Preparation for Launching.

On return from service or exercise the rescue boat shall be made ready (in all respects) for the next launch on service. The Helmsman shall be responsible to ensure that this is done with as little delay as possible.

This shall include refuelling, charging batteries, and any outstanding maintenance that has come to notice during service or exercise.

7.3 Cleaning Rescue Boat and Gear.

The crew, under the supervision of the Helmsman, shall clean down with fresh detergent wash the engine, carriage, trailer, tractor, all gear including cordage and boathouse.

7.4 Reports of Launches or Assemblies.

After every launch of the CRB on service or assembly of the crew or failure to launch when required, the Helmsman shall complete an incident log for the LOM or acting LOM



8 Limitations of Rescue Boats.

8.1 Discretion as to Launch.

It is necessary that all unit members understand the limitations of the station's community rescue boat. The authority to launch shall be at the absolute discretion of the LOM having regard to safety check mechanism or DLOM, who should not hesitate to refuse to allow the boat to be launched on either exercise or service if conditions are in his/her opinion, unduly hazardous. When deciding on the request to launch the community rescue boat, LOM should take into consideration the environmental factors together with their effect on the crew to include; sea state, local conditions, sea area forecast, air temperature, likely duration of service, distance of casualty from rescue station, visibility, onset of darkness etc.

Once launched, it shall be at the absolute discretion of the Helmsman, if necessary in consultation with the crew, whether to continue with the tasking or to terminate and return to station or to an alternative recovery point if it is considered unsafe to return to the station.

9 Operating Guidelines for Community Rescue Boats.

9.1 General.

Community Rescue Boats shall report their position and intended movements to the Rescue Coordination Centre at intervals not exceeding 15 minutes.

CRBs when launching on exercise or service shall operate under their SOP for day and night operations

9.2 CRB Operations and Exercises with Helicopters.

Operations and exercises with IRCG SAR and Air Corps helicopters are to be conducted in accordance with Standard Operations Procedures. Prior consultation with the Irish Coast Guard or Air Corps on this matter is required. Operations procedures vary for different types of rescue helicopter, as for different types of rescue boats, therefore in exercise situations, a pre-briefing session shall be essential between all those involved. Furthermore, communication between the helicopter crew and the boat crew during exercise or actual rescue operations shall be essential. The SMC is directed to Annex C Draft Code of Practice for Open Rescue Boats Less than 15 meters in length

9.3 Capsizes and Major Damage.

In the event of a Community Rescue Boat capsizing or suffering major damage with or without loss of life or injury, the facts shall be reported as soon as possible to the LOM, who shall notify the Irish Coast Guard and CEO Irish Water Safety including other appropriate authorities that the boat is off station and shall initiate an incident investigation. In capsize situations where the engine is submerged in water, thus making it unserviceable, it should not be used even if re-instated. The engine must be returned to a service centre for total strip down and service.



9.4 Primary Duty of Helmsmen on the Water.

The Helmsman in command of a rescue boat shall, at all times when on service, use the utmost endeavours to safeguard and rescue the lives of those in danger. The Helmsman shall not allow; considerations of property salvage to influence decisions or actions when lives are in danger and shall terminate any rescue if the crew is in danger beyond what is considered an acceptable level of safety.

9.5 Wearing of Lifejackets.

SMC supplied Lifejackets are to be worn by the crews when launching or going afloat – see section 6.4. The responsibility to ensure that lifejackets are correctly fitting, adjusted and secure rests primarily on the crewmember. Lifejackets must be of an approved standard and fitted with a crotch strap. Automatic lifejackets that have been tampered with by the removal of the automatic mechanism thus stopping them from inflating on contact with water should under no circumstances be used. Lifejackets, should have the appropriate built in buoyancy to support a body in the event of the automatic mechanism failing. Life jackets should be serviced by a competent authority in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines.

9.6 Wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

It shall be the responsibility of each crew member to ensure that the SMC supplied PPE is worn when launching or going afloat – see section 6.4. These items shall be correctly fitting and suitably adjusted for security and comfort. There shall be a personal responsibility on the Helmsman to ensure that the crews are properly attired and lifejackets suitably adjusted. It has to be remembered, that rushing to launch with light clothing on a summer's evening, will not be adequate if the service becomes protracted, lasting late into the evening, or if weather conditions change. In such circumstances, crew become a liability, with the possibility of them suffering from hypothermia, thus affecting the efficiency of the service. It shall be the absolute responsibility of the Helmsman to ensure that this requirement is enforced without exception. CRBs should carry a stock of survivor Life Jackets. Helmets shall be worn by crews on all occasions.

9.7 Reports of Service.

After every launch on service, assembly of the crew, or failure to launch when required, the helmsman must give a complete account of the circumstances to the LOM as soon as possible.

9.8 Smoking Prohibition.

Smoking is forbidden in all rescue boats at all times and also in the boathouses. This restriction also applies when handling fuels or inflammables externally near the boat, tractor-unit or boathouse.

9.9 Publicity Launches.

The launching of Community Rescue Boats for publicity purposes shall be permitted only under the following conditions: -

1. Permission is first obtained from the Management Committee.
2. LOM approves the launch in accordance with triple lock safety check
3. The boat is not removed from the station's operational area.
4. That the boat is available on service in the general area of the demonstration.
5. Maroons or rockets are not to be fired without warning the Irish Coast Guard and other local authorities such as the Garda Siochana. Distress signals are never to be discharged on exercises.

Passengers shall only be carried on Community Rescue Boats that have a Passenger License issued by the Department of Transport. N.B. Survivors are not passengers.



10 Government & Other Assistance.

10.1 VAT Refund Scheme.

Application is made on Form (WS1) for a VAT Refund Inspection. On receipt of the Application form, Irish Water Safety shall carry out the inspection for the purpose of certification in order to obtain a VAT Refund Certificate. The service will be to a standard as determined by Irish Water Safety. That is, it must be a bona fide Community Rescue Boat Station as defined in section 2 of these Guidelines. For example, a temporary boathouse will be accepted for a limited period but a permanent one must be provided within a reasonable time frame. Once inspected and approved for Vat Refund, revalidation is necessary on an annual basis. When a service is accepted by Irish Water Safety as being to an acceptable standard, a certificate shall be issued to the Revenue Commissioners, Department of Finance and copied to the applicant and the Irish Coast Guard.

Qualification for VAT exemption does not imply that the unit is categorised as a 'declared resource' to the IRCG.

This is a separate process that includes an IRCG review of the rescue coverage already in place. If the IRCG deem a need for the CRB station to become a Declared Resource", a separate operational readiness inspection will be carried out by the IRCG.

IRCG shall invite the Declared Resource to agree a formal liaison agreement setting out the duties and commitments of both parties.



10.2 Irish Water Safety VAT Refund Information Memorandum.

Under the terms of the Value Added Tax (Refund of Tax) (No 18) Order 1985 made by the Minister For Finance on 1 July 1985, the Revenue Commissioners may refund the VAT content of expenditure incurred in the purchase of Sea Rescue Boats of gross tonnage of 15 tons or less, equipment and buildings to qualified bodies.

This Act was updated by

S.I. No. 249 of 2013 VALUE-ADDED TAX (REFUND OF TAX) (RESCUE BOATS AND RELATED EQUIPMENT) ORDER 2013

Irish Water Safety is responsible for certifying to the Revenue Commissioners that the rescue service meets their requirements in relation to organisation and functioning and will be subject to an on-site inspection.

These requirements are as follows:

- a) The Service must operate throughout the year (365 days).
- b) It must be manned by local people and managed by a local committee.
- c) Three persons, (which includes the Hon. Secretary) must be appointed as Designated Launching Authority (DLA) with responsibility for all emergency call-outs.
- d) The alarm system must be such that the boat can be launched within the reasonable response time to save life and provide assistance
- e) Crew personnel must undergo regular recorded training.
- f) Helmsmen must be appointed from the most experienced crew.
- g) The boat and its equipment must be stored with easy access to the sea and capable of being launched quickly in cases of emergency.
- h) Equipment must not be used for any other purpose other than sea rescue and training for sea rescue.
- i) The boat and equipment must be of a standard to ensure the safety of the crew. The standard must be acceptable to Irish Water Safety.

- j) The boat must be fitted with a VHF marine radio and the crew licensed to operate it by the appropriate Government Department.



Sea Rescue Services wishing to claim a refund of VAT must apply to the Revenue Commissioners by completing the specified application form (see section 5). In order to qualify the Rescue Service must:

- a) Satisfy the revenue commissioners that it has paid the VAT on purchases.
- b) Provide documentary evidence to the Revenue Commissioners that the expenditure was in respect of a boat, equipment or building provided in conjunction with a sea rescue service.
- c) Provide invoices, receipts, etc. for the tax paid and importation documents, where appropriate.
- d) Satisfy the revenue Commissioners that its sea rescue service meets the requirements of Irish Water Safety.
- e) Satisfy the Revenue Commissioners that the boat, equipment or buildings are only used for sea rescue or sea rescue training.

Claims for Refund of VAT will normally be in respect of expenditure incurred within a 12 month period.

Applicants for a Refund of VAT must complete the VAT claim form No VAT 70 and submit it with the required documentation to the Revenue Commissioners, 3rd Floor, Charlottes Quay, Limerick City.

The application must be accompanied by a statement from Irish Water Safety that the nature and extent of the rescue service provided by the applicant body meets their requirements in relation to organisation and functioning as set out in paragraph 2 of this memorandum.

In order to apply for Refund of VAT the applicant body must complete form WS1 available from Irish Water Safety, The Long walk, Galway City. Telephone 091-564400.





10.3 Irish Water Safety Advice, Information and Assistance.

The Office of the Chief Executive Officer, Irish Water Safety, The Long Walk, Galway provides advice, assistance and information to existing Community Rescue Boat Services and any Community considering establishing such a service.



History of Community Rescue Boats in Ireland

As a result of a tragic canoe accident off the beach in Tramore in 1962 in which three youths lost their lives, a Committee was established under the auspices of the Irish Red Cross “Water Safety Service” to investigate the possibility of placing a Community Rescue Boat on station.

At that time, the R.N.L.I. was researching a new prototype lifeboat for rescue purposes. This was in fact, the forerunner to the well-known “RNLI D Class” Inshore lifeboat. These fast inflatable boats proved very successful and the first one to be stationed in Ireland as a Community Rescue Boat was stationed at Tramore in 1963.

This was followed by the establishment of an R.N.L.I. Inshore Lifeboat Service in Tramore one-year later in 1964, which was the very first RNLI inshore station in Ireland.

Tramore is the only town in the British Isles and the Republic of Ireland that has both an R.N.L.I. and a Community Rescue Boat, of the same class on station.

In the following years, with the help of IWS & Tramore Sea Rescue and particularly along the west coast of Ireland several Community Rescue Services were established.

In order to assist these services the Government agreed that value added taxation (vat) relief could be granted through the Department of Finance. Relief was granted on condition that the Service met an acceptable standard set by Irish Water Safety. Irish Water Safety administers this Statutory Instrument

In 1972, a Committee of the Irish Water Safety Association, albeit on an ad hoc basis, looked after the interests of the Community Rescue Services in Ireland. This Committee assisted in training and the provision of surplus equipment for those who needed help, aided by the generosity of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution & Irish Coast Guard.

It was not until the establishment of the Irish Marine Emergency Service in 1990 (now the Irish Coast Guard) that a formal group was put in place to give advice and assistance to Community Rescue Services nationwide.

The rescue commission has continued to provide training courses and technical advice to the community stations over the years with the aid of IRCG & RNLI.

The number of services nationwide that may apply for Vat relief status is 17: -

Tramore

Bonmahon

Banna

Ballybunion

Cahore

Derrynane

Bantry

Carna

Waterford City River Rescue

Ballyheigue

Schull

Mallow Search & Rescue

Corrib / Mask Rescue

Waterford Marine Search & Rescue

Ballinskelligs

Limerick Marine Search & Rescue

Boynes Fishermans Rescue & Recovery

Training at Limerick Marine SAR new pontoon in Limerick.

Acknowledgement

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CEO IWS

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Appendix 1

S.I. No. 249 of 2013 VALUE-ADDED TAX (REFUND OF TAX) (RESCUE BOATS AND RELATED EQUIPMENT) ORDER 2013

I, MICHAEL NOONAN, Minister for Finance, in exercise of the powers conferred on me by [section 103](#) of the [Value-Added Tax Consolidation Act 2010](#) (No. 31 of 2010) and having regard to the purposes referred to in subsection (2A) of that section, hereby order as follows:

1. This Order may be cited as the Value-Added Tax (Refund of Tax) (Rescue Boats and Related Equipment) Order 2013.

2. In this Order—

“Act” means Value-Added Tax Consolidation Act 2010 (No. 31 of 2010);

“Irish Water Safety” means the body continued in being under Article 3(2) of the Irish Water Safety (Establishment) Order 2006 ([S.I. No. 389 of 2006](#)).

3. A body of persons which establishes to the satisfaction of the Revenue Commissioners that it has borne or paid tax in relation to—

(a) the supply or hire to it,

(b) the intra-Community acquisition or importation by it, or

(c) the repair, modification or maintenance for it,

of a boat or similar craft of a gross tonnage of 15 tons or less, designed and constructed, or adapted, for the purpose of rescue or assistance at sea or on inland waterways, of equipment for use in or in conjunction with any such boat or craft, or of a building or structure for housing or operating such boat, craft or equipment, and which fulfils to the satisfaction of the Revenue Commissioners the conditions specified in Article 5 shall be entitled to be repaid such tax.

4. A body of persons which is an accountable person in respect of tax chargeable on—

(a) the intra-Community acquisition of a boat or similar craft or equipment, of a kind referred to in Article 3, or

(b) the hire of a boat or similar craft or equipment, of a kind referred to in Article 3, may, in lieu of claiming repayment under Article 3, elect to deduct the tax chargeable in respect of that acquisition or hire in the return which that person is obliged to furnish concerning that acquisition or hire, in accordance with section 76 or 77 of the Act, but any amount of tax deducted in accordance with this Article will be deemed to be tax refunded.

5. The conditions to be fulfilled by a body of persons referred to in Article 3 are the following:

(a) it shall claim a refund of the tax by completing such form as may be provided for the purpose by the Revenue Commissioners and shall certify the particulars shown on such form to be correct;

(b) it shall, by the production of documentary evidence, establish that the outlay in relation to which the claim for a refund of tax arises was incurred in respect of the supply or hire to it, the intra-Community acquisition or importation by it or the repair, modification or maintenance for it of a boat or similar craft of a gross tonnage of 15 tons or less designed and constructed, or adapted, for the purpose of rescue or assistance at sea or on inland waterways, of equipment for use in or in conjunction with such boat or craft, or of a building or structure for housing or operating such boat, craft or equipment;

(c) it shall, by the production of invoices or other documents provided in accordance with Chapter 2 of Part 9 of the Act, or by the production of a receipt for tax paid on importation, establish the amount of tax borne or paid in relation to the outlay referred to in paragraph (b);

(d) subject to Article 6, it shall, by the production of documentary evidence from Irish Water Safety, establish to the satisfaction of the Revenue Commissioners that it provides services of rescue or assistance at sea or on inland waterways and that the nature and extent of such services meet the requirements of Irish Water Safety in relation to the organisation and functioning of bodies of persons providing services of rescue or assistance at sea or on inland waterways;

(e) it shall establish to the satisfaction of the Revenue Commissioners that—

- (i) any boat or craft,
- (ii) any equipment, or
- (iii) any building or structure,

specified in Article 3, is not used for any purpose other than in relation to rescue or assistance at sea or on inland waterways or the training of persons in connection therewith;

(f) it shall establish that it is not a person who is registered in the register maintained under section 65 of the Act, nor a person required under that section to furnish the particulars specified for registration (other than for the purpose of accounting for value-added tax on intra-Community acquisition of goods or on services received from abroad);

(g) except where the Revenue Commissioners otherwise allow, the claim for a refund of tax shall be made only in respect of outlay incurred within a period of 12 months or more.

6. This Order, other than Article 5(d), shall apply to claims for refund of tax made by Irish Water Safety.

7. The secretary, or other officer for the time being acting as secretary, of a body of persons which makes a claim for refund of tax under this Order shall be answerable in addition to the body for doing all such acts as are required to be done by the body in relation to the making of such a claim.

8. The Value-Added Tax (Refund of Tax) (No. 18) Order 1985 ([S.I. No. 192 of 1985](#)) is revoked.

GIVEN under my Official Seal, 10 July 2013. MICHAEL NOONAN Minister for Finance.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Instrument and does not purport to be a legal interpretation.)

This Order replaces [S.I. No. 192 of 1985](#) . It retains the scheme provided in that Order which enables VAT to be repaid, subject to certain conditions, in respect of small rescue craft, ancillary equipment and special boat buildings, to Irish Water Safety or to qualifying groups who provide a sufficient standard of rescue and assistance services at sea. This Order extends that scheme to include rescue craft used on inland waterways and related equipment and buildings.