

**Keith Oliver
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG**

Tel: +44 (0)23 8032 9424
E-mail: futurecoastguard@mcga.gov.uk

Your ref:
Our ref:

18 May 2015

Dear Sir or Madam

I would like to take this opportunity to update you about some changes to the way we deliver maritime and coastal search and rescue coordination in the United Kingdom

In September 2014, a National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) in Fareham opened and assumed responsibility for a national network that will deliver search & rescue, marine counter pollution and vessel traffic monitoring, amongst other missions.

MRCC Thames is the next to station to close and their current area of responsibility will be transferred into the national network. This transfer commences on Monday 1st June and will be complete by Friday 5th June 2015.

While this is a change to the way we deliver search and rescue coordination; the availability of Coastguard Rescue Teams, lifeboats, search and rescue helicopters in your areas will be unaffected. You will notice no difference in the service you receive. 999 calls and distress broadcasts will be dealt with and search and rescue missions coordinated as they are now.

The introduction of a national network will enable the NMOC and 10 Coastguard Operation Centres (CGOC) to coordinate any incident around the UK coast. Incidents will continue to be managed locally but with a much better support network available nationally.



Emergency Calls:

To report a coastal or maritime emergency call 999 and ask for Coastguard and the operator will transfer the call to the appropriate Coastguard Operations Centre.

Contacting the Coastguard Directly by Phone:

Following the transfer of MRCC Thames responsibilities to the national network, the telephone numbers you currently use to make routine, x-directory and 999 calls will remain the same and should continue to be used.

As transition of MRCCs into the national network progresses around the country, a new national number will be introduced. We will publish this number separately at a later date.

Contacting the Coastguard by VHF / MF DSC and VHF / MF Radio:

Digital Selective Calling (DSC) is the preferred method of contacting UK Coastguard and all existing MMSI numbers will remain in use.

The marine VHF and MF radio coverage provided by HM Coastguard remains unchanged and you should continue to use the radio call sign '**Thames Coastguard**' when operating in the former Thames area.

Maritime Safety Information:

Maritime Safety Information including weather, gale warnings and navigational warnings will continue to be broadcast on the same schedule and frequencies as previously published. Go to www.gov.uk and search for Maritime Safety and Navigation for up to date information.

Time Expired Pyrotechnics:

Leisure sailors who need to dispose of time expired pyrotechnics should continue to phone their nearest operations centre for guidance, in this case CGOC Humber (see above - **Contacting the Coastguard Directly by Phone**).

If you have any other questions please get in touch.

Yours sincerely



Keith Oliver
Head of Maritime Operations

