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Police Search

This Service Instruction outlines Police Service of Northern Ireland specific search guidance in support of that provided in Authorised Professional Practice Search and relevant Codes of Practice



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1. Introduction

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) search policy is governed by Service Policy 1316. Authorised Professional Practice (APP) Search provides the systematic procedures and appropriate detection techniques. The PSNI has adopted APP Search. Personnel involved in police search should, where applicable, substitute England and Wales specific legislation contained in APP with the relevant Northern Ireland (NI) version.

In addition, personnel involved in police search should take cognizance of the following PSNI specific guidance.

2. Procedures for Search Trained officers

The criteria outlined below offer a graduated response which takes into consideration training, health and safety issues and a professional response to evidence gathering. Officers requiring a search to be conducted should be guided by the following procedures.

Search Aware Trained Officers
Officers who have not been search aware trained should not participate in any searches.

Search aware officers will carry out:

- Person.
- Vehicle.

- Area.
- Scene.
- Occupied building searches.
- Low risk counter-terrorist searches (CTS).

Searches of unoccupied buildings and searches requiring search equipment (excluding [Ampel Probe](#)) are considered above the training of search aware officers. These types of searches should be brought to the attention of the Duty Sergeant or Inspector who will request a search team. (Before commencing the search the officer-in-charge of the investigation and requesting the search should check if Police Search Adviser (POLSA) consultation is required. ([See POLSA Consultation below](#)))

Conflicts between the officer requesting and the officer-in-charge of the search team should be referred to a POLSA.

Search aware training provides for the option of forming search aware officers into pairs for the duration of the search. Search teams can be tasked through the TSG Coordinators' Office. POLSA can be contacted at - TSGs Coordinators' Office/UCMC.

Search Teams

Officers who have not been search team trained or who have not maintained their qualification to search¹ should not participate in any searches requiring search team skills.

Search teams can carry out:

- Person.
- Vehicle.
- Area.
- Scene.
- Occupied.
- Unoccupied building searches

Before any search involving search team members, team leaders should ensure that officers have maintained their qualification to search.

Before commencing the search the officer-in-charge of the investigation and requesting the search should check if POLSA consultation is required.

[\(See POLSA Consultation\)](#)

Search teams will operate when searches require search equipment, for all low risk unoccupied buildings/low risk CTS or when requested by a POLSA.

Search teams can be tasked through the TSG Coordinators' Offices. The PSNI Search and Rescue Team/Contracted

Police Dive Team should only be tasked for search team duties when the search is beyond the capabilities of a TSG Search Team and a TSG Search Team is in attendance.

POLSA Consultation

POLSA consultation is not required for person or vehicle searches. (Unless special circumstances exist as outlined below). Consultation with a POLSA must take place:

- If the views of the officer requesting the search and the officer-in-charge of a search team are conflicting.
- If seven or more search aware officers are required.
- If two or more search teams are required.

For searches connected with the following, irrespective of number of search aware officers or search teams required. It is at the discretion of the POLSA to attend the search:

- Serious Crime Investigations.
- Defensive Venue.
- Major Incidents.
- High Risk Missing Person(s).
- If special circumstances exist such as health and safety issues or other difficulties associated with the search.

¹ 1Qualification to search - four searches per year and no period of search inactivity greater than six months.

- When circumstances give rise to the possibility that the search area falls into the category of a confined space. ([See Appendix C](#))

POLSA can be contacted through the following locations:

- TSG Coordinators' Office/UCMC.

If the search does not require POLSA consultation for any of the reasons outlined above, then the search can be conducted in compliance with current instructions, legislation and relevant Codes of Practice.

These procedures only refer to the response level required for actual searching. Those organising a search should take into consideration other matters connected to the search requiring additional personnel, such as method of entry, controlling occupants and public order.

Search Coordinator (POLSC)

POLSC should be deployed when two or more POLSAs are involved in a search. They coordinate all major or significant search operations where the requirement of the coordinating role exists.

The POLSC within the PSNI is the POLSA coordinator within Operational Support Department who will maintain records of all

search activity so that individual qualifications can be properly monitored.

3. Threat Assessment/Risk

Threat assessment

Threat level assessments for defensive venue searches will be sought through D/Superintendent C3 Intelligence Branch who will undertake to liaise as required with any outside agencies, including the Security Services.

Risk

CTS Operations are classified into one of two levels of risk:

- **Low Risk** - when there is no special reason to believe that a bomb or booby trap (explosive or otherwise) is present.
- **High Risk** - when there is either known to be, or special reason to believe, that a bomb or booby trap (explosive or otherwise) is present.

These definitions are contained within the relevant Home Office Circular and are intended as a guide for police officers.

There can be occasions when consideration may need to be given to the deployment of police officers under some circumstances, which fall outside the pure definitions of high and low risk. Under such circumstances the decision to deploy police officers in search operations which may be construed as 'high risk' should be

confirmed by a National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) ranking officer.

Search team personnel must be made aware that the search is potentially 'High Risk' and given the option whether to search or not. Such circumstances where a search is required would be where life is in danger and military resources are not available and delay to the search may result in loss of life.

POLSA are made aware of the circumstances at which point they should seek, through their line management, military assistance as outlined in current Service Instruction.

Whilst the generic term 'High Risk' relates to the above definition, it must be considered there may be a high risk relevant to the actual search teams, particularly where the risk is afforded through environmental conditions.

4. Searching Children

Stop and search powers do not specifically rule out searches of children of any age, however there are obvious public confidence issues involved. If an officer has strong grounds to suspect that a child has had a relevant item placed in their clothing etc by an adult then the search of that child is an option that needs to be considered.

5. Securing Dwellings

In accordance with PACE Codes of Practice B6.13, police officers must ensure that if a dwelling has been entered by force, then before they leave the dwelling they must satisfy themselves that it is secure, either by arranging for the occupier or his/her agent to be present or by other appropriate means.

The officer should ensure that when the premises have been secured that the Command and Control entry and Form 29 Search Record have been updated accordingly.

6. Search Forms, Records and Logs

Defensive Venue Search Records

- DVS 1 Defensive Venue Search Record.
- DVS 2 Defensive Venue Tasking Sheet.
- DVS 3 Defensive Venue Seal Register.

The above forms are intended for use in addition to any search records required by the Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989 or other relevant legislation. Whilst the completion of all search forms is self-explanatory, the following guidance notes may assist in the systematic completion of these records and logs.

Form 29

This form will be completed in respect of all searches except in relation to:

- Person Search.
- Primary and Secondary Search of Vehicles.
- Defensive Venue Search.

In addition, Form 29 will be subject to all requirements and provisions of the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996 in respect of disclosure. Care must therefore be taken to ensure that what is recorded is accurate and reflects relevant statements of evidence. It should not be given an exhibit number by the completing officer. Form 29 can only be produced in court by the officer/s that completed it. It is therefore imperative that individual searchers make their own notes.

The original must be delivered to the relevant Co-ordination and Tasking Centre (CTC) where the search took place. It must not be copied or distributed prior to being delivered. **FORM 29 IS CLASSIFIED AS OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE (CRIMINAL JUSTICE PARTNERS)**. PSNI Manual of Protective Security refers to handling and transmission.

On receipt of a completed Form 29, the CTC will ensure that it is recorded on a Search Register and that a CTC reference number is added. The CTC should also inform the Compensation Agency in writing

if necessary. The CTC will retain the original Form 29 and be responsible for scanning it onto NICHE, dissemination, and secure storage.

The security of information contained in Form 29 is of paramount importance and all members concerned should be familiar with the notes for guidance on the front of this form.

PACE 1/TA

A PACE 1/TA will be completed on the Mobile Data Device on all occasions where a statutory power to stop/search a person/vehicle exists and the power is actually used.

The officer completing the PACE 1/TA must record the date and the Stop and Search reference number on the Stop and Search Information Card which must be handed to the person searched.

It is used as follows:

- Where any person or persons' vehicle is stopped and searched.

NB: If person is in vehicle and both are searched and the object of the grounds of the search is the same only one record need be kept.

- Where unattended vehicles are searched (a record should be left on windscreen for example).
- To account for any breakage or damage caused.

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- To record details of documents examined or seized, or other articles seized. (Stop and search person/vehicle).

Where a technical issue prevents an officer from recording a stop/search onto a Mobile Data Device then the details must be recorded in the officer's police issue notebook for transfer onto the Mobile Data Device when the technical issue has been resolved. In such circumstances the person stopped/searched must still be issued with the Stop and Search Information Card with sufficient information to enable the details of the stop/search to be retrieved, if required, at a later date.

An aide-memoire is available on the Mobile Data Device Izone to assist recording details in notebooks should the STOPS applicable be unavailable. The aide-memoire also contains notes for guidance for all officers regardless of which recording method is used.

PACE 1A

PACE 1A will be completed on all occasions when any premises are searched and on all occasions when a Form 29 is completed it is used as follows:

- Notification to occupier of premises or other place searched under Section 24 and Schedule 3(2) of the Justice and Security (NI) Act 2007, search warrant or under any Article under PACE (NI) Order 1989.

- To account for any breakages or damage caused.
- To record details of any documents examined or seized, or articles seized.

PACE 1A should be completed at the time under the above and a copy should be given to the owner/occupier at the time or left in a prominent position. The original is filed with the completed Form 29.

Search Warrant

The warrant should state precisely the items to be searched for and a copy must be served on the owner/occupier or left in a prominent position by the search team leader prior to the start of the search, along with a copy of the Notice of Powers and Rights. The endorsed copies should be returned to the officer who requested the warrant's issue.

Warrants either executed or unexecuted after three months should be returned to the Clerk of Petty Sessions for the County Court Division in which they were issued.

PACE 20 Notice of Powers and Rights

(Not required for searches under Section 24 and Schedule 3(2) of the Justice and Security (NI) Act 2007)

To be served on owner/occupier or left in a prominent position of premises to be searched, along with a copy of the warrant by the search team leader, at the beginning of the search.

To be completed in duplicate and a certified copy given to the owner/occupier or left in a prominent position. Original to be endorsed accordingly and attached to the legal search documents.

PACE 20 also incorporates Consent to Search and Inspector's authorisation. Consent to Search to be completed and signed by the owner/occupier where premises are to be searched with consent, (i.e. no warrant or legal authority in use).

It must be remembered that where there is legal authority it must be used.

NB: Consent when a person is in custody is not required. Juveniles or persons who appear mentally vulnerable cannot give consent.

Form SNB/LNB1 (Short Notebook/Long Notebook)

POLSA involved in MIT searches will use Form SNB/LNB1 as directed by the Senior Investigating Officer. POLSA will use Form SNB/LNB1 in all other searches where they provide their expertise and it is considered that the search will continue and another POLSA will require information of all previous search activity. The Form when completed is to be left with the investigating officer. In all cases the use of the SNB/LNB1 should be recorded in the officer's official notebook.

Searcher Qualification Record

Records of completed searches will be recorded in the search team members' logbook supplied by COT.

The 'qualification' searches can be either terrorist or crime related operations, however, they must be search operations conducted under these guidelines. The searchers' logbook assists the POLSA in monitoring the training and operational activity of each searcher.

Search team members receive a searchers' logbook on successful completion of the five- day course at COT Gough. The Searcher's Logbook must be produced to COT search trainers by officers attending Search training immediately prior to training participation to facilitate qualification ratification.

Form HES 1 (Hazardous Environment Search)

Used for controlling entry and as a record of a safe system of work when working in a confined space.

7. Training

For all search training contact should be made with Combined Operational Training (COT).

Appendix A Guide to the Equipment Required for General Use by a Search Team

Search Team Members' Equipment

The equipment requirements of search team members cover four categories:

- 1) Individual officer's issue.
- 2) Search Teams' Issue

- 3) Regional Issue. (Only available to TSGs)
- 4) TSG Issue. (Only available to TSGs)

(T COT) indicates training required by COT before use.

Individual Officers Issue	Search Teams' Issue		Regional Issue Item
Search Overalls x 2	Intrinsically Safe torch	Stanley Knife	Security Archways
Site Helmet x1	Tap Wrench	Telescopic Assault Ladder	Rapiscan (Training organised by Operations Branch)
Safety Goggles x 1	Claw hammer	Socket Set	Hydraulic Manhole Cover Lifter
Search Kit Bag (Public Order) x 1	Junior Hacksaw	Car Door Panel Remover	Fibre Optics
Kevlar Gloves x 1 Pair	Pair of Pliers	Various Socket Sets	Petrol Drive Brushes
Rubber Boots (Steel Mid-Toe) x 1 Pair	Insulated Screwdriver	Allen Key Set	Chainsaws (Training organised by Operations Branch)
Wet Weather Suit with Hood x 1 (Dark Green)	Small Crowbar	Ratchet/Angular/Bar	High Output Halogen Lamps and Stands
Knee Pads x 1 Pair	Metric Spanner Set	Makita Drill and Case	Generator
	Screwdriver Bit Set	Case (Peli) for items listed	Screens
	Tape measure	Mole Grips	Tents
	Screwdriver Socket Set	Adjustable Spanners	
	Adjustable Spanners	Adjustable Hand-Held Mirror	

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TSG Issue	Garden Tools	Metal Detectors
<p>Wire/Stud/Pipe Detectors</p> <p>Sledgehammers</p> <p>Bolt Cutters Bolster</p> <p>Roof Space Creeper Boards</p> <p>Vehicle Inspection Trolleys</p> <p>Dragon Max (2) Torches</p> <p>Electrical Extension Cable</p> <p>Extending Mirrors</p> <p>Gully Scoops</p> <p>Utility Meter Inspection Keys</p> <p>Probes (Metal or Substitute) (T COT)</p> <p>Portable Hazardous Gas Detector</p> <p>Ampel Probes (T COT)</p> <p>Sea Searcher Magnets</p> <p>Instruments for removal of Flags and Emblems – See Generic Risk Assessment 37</p>	<p>Slashers (T COT)</p> <p>Spades (T COT)</p> <p>Forks (T COT)</p> <p>Rakes (T COT)</p> <p>Shovels (T COT)</p> <p>Garden Trowels (T COT)</p> <p>Riddles/Sieves (T COT)</p> <p>Pickaxes (T COT)</p> <p>NB – As Ballykinler is deemed to be an area of special scientific interest cutting or digging with these implements for training purposes is not permitted.</p>	<p>Metal Detectors (T COT) – not custody</p> <p>Driftway/Reek (Cable Detectors)</p> <p>Hand-Held Metal Detectors (Training as per manufacturer’s instructions and use)</p>

The following will also be issued to TSGs/Crime Teams approved by ACC Ops Support and should be re-ordered from PSNI Central Stores on a quarterly basis

<p>Blue Disposable Search Suits (Full Body including feet) Assorted Sizes</p> <p>Anti-Bacterial Hand Gel (For areas where food is prepared/handled)</p> <p>Gloves Latex/Vinyl</p>	<p>Face Masks (Disposable)</p> <p>Sack Truck (Steps) Assorted Screws/Clasps and Padlocks (Securing Premises)</p>	<p>Cordon Tape Rolls Various</p> <p>Gauntlet Gloves</p> <p>Security Seals</p>
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Search aware trained officers**Ampel Probe**

The Ampel Probe is a hand held search and retrieval tool and is intended primarily to provide officers involved in searching premises, persons, vehicles and areas for drugs or other materials with real protection against the risk of sharps. [See also Ampel Probe.](#)

Ampel Probes and ancillary equipment (latex tips and disinfectant) will be issued from Supplies Branch as follows:

- District Commanders' nominees: sufficient equipment for District Mobile Patrols (DMP) and Reactive Organised Crime (ROC) vehicles, designated custody suites and Crime Scene Investigators (CSI).
- Tactical Support Group (TSG) inspector nominees: 10 probes.
- Head of C1 Reactive and Organised Crime nominees; 10 probes.
- Regional Head of Road Policing Unit nominees: sufficient equipment for Roads Policing vehicles.
- All Ampel Probes and ancillary equipment will be received on behalf of the authorising signatory.

Locally Manufactured or Procured Items

It is often necessary to manufacture or procure items locally to assist in CTS operations. These may be one-off items required for a specific operation or purpose, (e.g. an archway metal detector or handles for opening a particular type of access or drain cover), or simple items with a more general use which it is more expedient to manufacture on the spot.

Many companies manufacture and advertise CTS equipment. All have their strengths and weaknesses. It is important to select the equipment which best meets the needs for which it is being procured.

With the exception of items purchased locally for individual searches, any suggested additions to the above search list must be forwarded to Operations Branch so that the appropriate technical research can be carried out.

Details of locally purchased items that are considered appropriate for use in other searches should also be forwarded to Operational Policy and Support Branch for technical research.

Appendix B Other Search Related Guidance

OTHER GUIDANCE

Dealing with bomb warnings

Generic Risk Assessment (GRA) 44 – Search

Generic Risk Assessment (GRA) 43 – Bomb warnings

Other service policies and instructions may also refer to search matters and officers should appraise themselves accordingly.

Appendix C Confined Space Search

Confined Spaces

These instructions, detailing the process for working within confined spaces arising out of the undertaking of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), have been developed to assure compliance with the Health and Safety Policy for the PSNI. It should be read in conjunction with NPIA document - Guidance on the Minimum standards/competencies required for Confined Space entry and search.

Confined Space Entry & Search

Search trained officers' conduct searches on a daily basis and indeed patrols also respond to many different situations, which require an initial search. Some of these searches may be hazardous because of the potential danger associated with confined spaces. There are, unfortunately, numerous examples where there has been loss of life when people have entered hazardous confined spaces unwittingly.

The danger of entrapment in mines or grain silos is an obvious one but most would not think of a vehicle as being a confined space. A number of these incidents occur annually and the importance of avoiding such situations or minimising risks cannot be overstressed. **A very important fact is that statistically, one third-of all victims are those who have entered confined spaces to affect a rescue.**

The PSNI acknowledges its moral and legal responsibility, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees and all others affected by our work. To this end, we will comply fully with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978, the Confined Spaces Regulations (NI) 1999 and other relevant statutory provisions and recognised codes of practice.

The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 provides a legislative framework to promote, stimulate and encourage high standards of health and safety at work. This is further developed by Regulations made under the Order. Health and Safety legislation was extended to police officers through the introduction of the Police (Health and Safety) (NI) Order 1997.

You must carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks for all work activities for the purpose of deciding what measures are necessary for safety (**The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2000, Regulation 3**). For work in confined spaces this means identifying the hazards present, assessing the risks and determining what precautions to take. Written safe systems of work need to be completed for every search - Form HES 1

What is a Confined Space?

Confined Spaces Regulations (NI) 1999

“confined space” means any place, including any chamber, tank, vat, silo, pit, trench, pipe, sewer, flue, well or other similar space in which, by virtue of its enclosed nature, there arises a reasonably foreseeable specified risk.

The main consideration is that entry into, or working in a confined space has a high potential for death or serious injury from explosion, drowning, fire, exposure to toxic substances or suffocation due to lack of oxygen.

There are two further hazards common to certain types of confined space:

- Engulfment by small grained, free flowing material e.g. grain, sawdust or sand (grain silos, hoppers etc.).
- Entrapment (e.g. passages etc. where it is possible to be cut off from the entrance/exit).

Many of these lethal hazards give no warning to alert an individual to danger i.e. **it may not be possible to see, hear or smell anything untoward.** Other more conventional hazards may also be encountered and the risks associated with these may be increased as a result of being in a confined space e.g.:

- Electrical - poor wiring, damp conditions or use of battery operated or electrical equipment not specifically designed for use in hazardous areas can increase the risk of electric shock, explosion or fire (e.g. sources of static charge - high pressure water jetters and steam cleaners).
- Mechanical - the accidental starting of power driven equipment can lead to entrapment or entanglement in equipment and serious injury.
- Chemical - the presence of toxic, corrosive or irritant substances such as toxic gases, solvents, caustic substances, asbestos etc. can lead to burns, poisoning and other serious health effects.
- Biological - diseases such as tetanus, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) (from needle punctures), Weil’s disease (through contact with water or slime contaminated by the urine of infected rats, cattle etc. must be considered).
- General - poor visibility, obstacles or slippery conditions can result in trips, slips and falls. There may also be risks from falling debris or collapsing structures.

Examples of a Confined Space:

- Manholes, tunnels etc. - these can partially fill with carbon dioxide gas, forcing out the breathable air.
- Manholes etc. in or near contaminated ground can collect poisonous or flammable gases e.g. old gasworks, ground near underground petrol tanks or old refuse tips.
- Manholes, pits or trenches connected even temporarily to sewers can present risks due to built-up of flammable gases and/or insufficient oxygen in the air to breathe.
- Tanks, pits etc. may contain sludge and other residues which, if disturbed, may partially fill the confined space with dangerous gases e.g. slurry pits or cattle houses with slatted floors.
- Enclosed areas where there is rotten vegetation, rusting metalwork (e.g. tanks, holds of ships etc.) and other similar natural processes which may consume so much oxygen that there is not enough left to breathe causing suffocation.

These are only examples and other confined spaces and other areas may fall within the definition of a confined space. **If in doubt consult a Police Search Adviser (POLSA).**

Searching Confined Spaces

Searches in confined spaces must only be undertaken by persons who are trained and equipped for this type of search. In order for police to enter a confined space a permit to work (HES1) must be issued by an Authorised Person. This can either be the suitably qualified designated Authorised Person for the premises/area being searched or a member of the PSNI qualified to Authorised Person level.

Emergency Procedures

Arrangements for emergency rescue will depend on the nature of the confined space, the risks identified and the likely nature of an emergency rescue. Account needs to be taken not only of accidents arising from a specified risk, but also any other accident in which a person needs to be recovered from a confined space e.g. incapacitation following a fall within a confined space. To be suitable and sufficient the arrangements for rescue and resuscitation should include consideration of:

Rescue Equipment - Rescue equipment must be available commensurate with likely emergencies identified in the risk assessment. If resuscitation has been identified then provision will need to be made for appropriate training to enable resuscitation procedures to be carried out. If however resuscitation is required as a result of exposure to toxic gases, oral

methods could put the rescuer at risk. In these circumstances equipment for artificial respiration is appropriate.

Raising the Alarm - There should be measures to enable those searching in the confined space to communicate with those on the outside of the confined space who can initiate rescue procedures or summon additional help.

In addition to the searchers, there should always be sufficient personnel to ensure that someone can remain in attendance in a safe position close to the entry point while keeping both searchers in view at all times.

Safeguarding the Rescuers - Multiple fatalities have occurred when rescuers have been overcome by the same conditions that have affected the people they have tried to rescue. It is essential therefore that those assigned a rescue role are themselves protected against the cause of the emergency. The precautions necessary to protect the rescuers should be considered during the risk assessment, and adequate provisions made when preparing suitable and sufficient emergency arrangements.

Access to Confined Spaces - Experience has shown that the minimum size of an opening to allow access with full rescue facilities including self-contained breathing

apparatus is 575mm diameter. This size should normally be used for new plant.

Older plant may have narrower openings and it will therefore be necessary to check that a person wearing suitable equipment can safely and readily pass through such openings. Choice of air-line breathing apparatus in such cases offers a more compact alternative to bulkier self-contained apparatus.

Examples of plant where there are narrower openings include rail tank wagons and tank containers where an opening of 500mm diameter is common, and in road tankers where the recognised size is 410mm. Even smaller openings can be found in the highly specialised nature of access to certain parts of aircraft, such as fuel tanks in the wings. Precautions need to be taken of such special cases.

The size and number of access and egress points should be assessed individually dependent upon the activities being carried out and the number of people involved.

Large scale evacuations may need larger routes and openings to prevent them becoming bottlenecks. Top openings to vessels, tanks etc. should be avoided due to difficulty of access rescue. Bottom or low manholes are preferable and may need access platforms.

There may be occasions when access and egress is so tortuous, for example, in the double bottom of a ship, that temporary openings may be needed. Different criteria apply when the critical entry dimensions extend over a significant length or height, as in the case of sewers, pipes, culverts, small tunnels and shafts. For example, it is recommended that people should not normally enter sewers of dimensions smaller than 0.9m high by 0.6m wide. Even this “minimum size” may in certain circumstances be too small for reliance on a safe system of work alone.

Additional measures may be needed, for example if there is a long distance between access points or the siting of the sewer invert, structural alterations may be appropriate to improve access. In the case of a shaft containing a ladder or step irons, 900mm clear space is recommended between the ladder/steps and the back of the shaft. The spacing of manholes on sewers, or in the case of large gas mains etc., the absence of such access over considerable lengths may affect both the degree of natural ventilation and the ease with which people can be rescued.

Fire Safety - Where there is a risk of fire, appropriate fire extinguishers may need to be kept in the confined space at the entry point. In the event of a fire, the local fire service should be called. Care is needed when deciding if any ventilation systems

should be kept working or switched off because either course may affect the chances of escape or rescue. Continued use of the ventilation system may also affect the development of the fire, because forced air may fan the flames.

Control of Plant - There may be a need to shutdown adjacent plant before attempting an emergency rescue either because the plan could be the cause of the emergency or safe entry cannot be gained without the plan being shut down.

First Aid - Appropriate first aid equipment should be provided and available to enable first aid to be provided until professional help arrives.

Public Emergency Services - In some circumstances, e.g. where there are prolonged operations in confined spaces and where the risks justify it, there may be advantage in prior notification to the local emergency services [e.g. Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) and Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS)] before the work is undertaken. In all cases, however, arrangements must be in place for the rapid notification of the emergency services should an accident occur.

Training - Those likely to be involved in any rescue should be trained for that purpose and refresher training organised

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and available on a regular basis, for example annually. Training should include the following where appropriate:

- The likely cause of an emergency.
- The use of rescue equipment, e.g. breathing apparatus, lifelines etc.
- The check procedures to be followed when donning and using apparatus.
- The checking of correct functioning and/or testing of emergency equipment.
- Identifying defects and dealing with malfunctions and failures of equipment during use.
- Works, site or other local emergency procedures including the initiation of an emergency response.
- Instruction on how to shut down relevant process plant as appropriate.
- Resuscitation procedures and, where appropriate, the correct use of relevant ancillary equipment and any resuscitation equipment provided.
- Emergency first aid and the use of the first aid equipment provided.
- Use of fire-fighting equipment.
- Liaison with local emergency services in the event of an incident.

- Rescue techniques, including regular and periodic rehearsals/exercises which should relate to practice and familiarity with equipment.

If the searchers cannot be kept in view due to internal distances or obstruction, a satisfactory method of communication must be planned and established. Subject to the environment, radios may need to be intrinsically safe.

If one of the searchers is seen to collapse or show signs of distress, the other searcher may be able to render assistance and should inform the attendant accordingly. The attendant must remain in a safe position at all times and raise the alarm if necessary.

If it is not possible to communicate with either of the searchers, the attendant should remain in a safe position and immediately seek assistance from the NIFRS. **Under no circumstances should they or any other person enter to investigate as this could result in further casualties.**

Other Areas

There may be other areas e.g. basements, attics or ceiling voids in dwelling houses, outhouses or farm outbuildings which may

be searched regularly by search teams but where the possibility of build-up of flammable or suffocating gases or fumes cannot be ruled out.

When planning searches of such areas, prior consideration must be given to the risks likely to be encountered and a safe system of work developed to provide for the health and safety of searchers. **If in doubt consult a POLSA.** The protective measures employed should include the following arrangements for the safety of the searchers and must be identified in the specific risk assessment for the search:

- Provision of appropriate protective clothing and equipment e.g. protective gloves, boots, overalls, bump caps, dust masks/respirators etc., the selection of which will depend on the conditions and risks likely to be encountered.
- Provision of information and instruction to all personnel involved regarding possible risks and appropriate safety measures e.g. proper use of protective equipment.
- Ensure that there is adequate lighting and that any portable lighting used e.g. torches, arc lighting is intrinsically safe and suitable for the purpose e.g. where flammable or potentially explosive atmospheres may be present.
- It is essential that the main entrance to any such area is extremely well illuminated as it is possible for persons to get into difficulty if they cannot find/identify their exit route.
- Exclude static discharges, and all sources of possible ignition e.g. mobile phones and airlines should be bonded and effectively earthed.
- If possible, pre-ventilate the area by opening doors, windows, hatches etc.; this will significantly reduce any existing risks.
- Personnel should not search an enclosed area alone. Current police search instructions require that searchers should always work in pairs.

Appendix D Contact Us

Branch Email

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