



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) No 15

Improvised Explosive Devices

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INDEX

	PAGE
VERSION CONTROL	3
INTRODUCTION	4
1 - SECTION A:	
1.1 EN ROUTE	6
1.2 ON ARRIVAL	6
1.3 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE RESPONSE	7
1.4 ACTION TO BE TAKEN UPON DISCOVERING AN IED	8
1.5 EVALUATING THE RESPONSE	8
1.6 CLOSING THE INCIDENT	8
1.7 POST-INCIDENT	8
2 - SECTION B:	
2.1 HAZARD AWARENESS	9
2.2 INCIDENT RISK MANAGEMENT	10
2.3 NIFRS RESOURCE ATTENDANCE	12
2.4 PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE	14
2.5 INTER-AGENCY WORKING	19
3 - SECTION C:	
3.1 LEGISLATION	23
3.2 REFERENCE MATERIAL	23
3.3 INTER-AGENCY LIAISON	23
CONCLUSION	24

VERSION CONTROL

Version No	Page No	Issued (Date)	Amendment	Initiated By	Reason for Change
1	All	08/08/02	Initial issue of SOP	Group Commander (Operations Policy)	Initial SOP
2	All	15/12/10	Index and Version Control added SOP reviewed	Group Commander (Operations Policy)	Review of SOP
2	12	07/10/11	2.3.1 – Hazmat removed	Group Commander (Emergency Response)	Review
2	13	07/10/11	2.3.2 – Area Officer replaced by District Officer	Group Commander (Emergency Response)	Review
2	13	07/10/11	2.3.2 – 4 th bullet point moved to 2.3.3	Group Commander (Emergency Response)	Review
2	13	07/10/11	2.3.3 – PDA changed	Group Commander (Emergency Response)	Review
2	14	07/10/11	2.4.1 – "Available" replaced by "relevant"	Group Commander (Emergency Response)	Review

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE NO 15
IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES
INTRODUCTION

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been developed by the Operations Policy Unit (OPU) in line with the current Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) Corporate Plan and NIFRS's Annual Business Plan. This SOP should be read in conjunction with SOP No 15A - *Explosives*, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the procedures to be adopted at incidents involving explosives that NIFRS resources are likely to attend.

SOP No 15 deals specifically with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The primary aim of this SOP is to provide operational guidance for incidents involving suspect/confirmed/actuated devices, and to raise awareness of the possibility of secondary devices being present.

NIFRS has a catalogue of historical evidence that highlights its mobilisation and subsequent attendance to incidents involving IEDs, therefore, this SOP has been developed to ensure that all personnel have received information on how to adopt safe systems of working by ensuring that personnel can identify significant hazards and ensure appropriate management of the risk posed.

Although IEDs may be developed with various materials and can be made in various forms, this SOP provides a generic operational framework of actions to be taken by NIFRS personnel whilst they are in attendance at incidents involving IEDs.

SOP No 15 – "*Improvised Explosive Devices*", has been produced in the following format:

SECTION A

Safety-Critical Information

All personnel ***must*** have complete knowledge and understanding of this section to ensure maximum safety at incidents. Section A is designed to reflect the content in the relevant section of the Operational Aide-Mémoire.

SECTION B

Provides More Detailed Information on the Topics Covered in Section A

Personnel ***should*** have a good knowledge of information contained within this section. This includes:

- hazard awareness;
- incident risk management;
- NIFRS resource attendance;
- procedural guidance;
- inter-agency working.

SECTION C

Background and Reference Material

This section includes information which personnel ***could*** use for reference material.

It provides details of relevant legislation and reference material used during SOP development.

1 – SECTION A

Incidents involving IEDs (suspect/confirmed/actuated) must be coded "77".

1.1 EN ROUTE

- Gather incident/hazard information from all available sources.
- The Officer-in-Charge (OiC) is to brief crews on incident type/initial actions.
- The OiC must inform crews to be vigilant for secondary devices.

1.2 ON ARRIVAL

- Approach with caution, and park appliance away from possible locations of secondary devices (ie, cars, bins, etc) where possible.
- Maintain safe egress route(s).
- Establish NIFRS Control Point [relay location to the Regional Control Centre (RCC)] remotely from Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Control Point or at an agreed Rendezvous Point (RVP).
- Be aware of possible civil unrest (refer to SOP No 9 - *Incidents Resulting from Civil Disturbance*).
- Continually assess (visual only) immediate environment for secondary devices but never conduct security searches specifically aimed to uncover secondary devices.
- Liaise with other agencies [PSNI, Ammunition Technical Officer (ATO), Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS)] if in attendance.
- Gather incident information from other agencies or local sources.
- Gather information on significant hazards present.
- Determine level of resources required to resolve incident.
- Implement an appropriate Incident Command System (ICS) to ensure adequate command and control.
- Establish an appropriate initial Inner Cordon based upon information available to the Incident Commander (IC) at that time (if one is not already established).

Minimum Inner Cordon distances are:

- up to a suitcase size device - 100 m;
- suitcase - car size device - 200 m;
- van or lorry size device - 400 m.

1.3 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE RESPONSE

- The IC is to carry out a Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA) to assess the need for operational activity within the Inner Cordon, based upon life risk to the public and emergency responders. This must include liaison with the ATO (via PSNI Control Point) where possible.
- Should the IC's DRA recommend that no operational activity is required:
 - withdraw to NIFRS Control Point;
 - relay an "Informative" message to the RCC, including a Hazard update - Defensive Mode;
 - remain in contact with PSNI Control Point;
 - personnel are to make use of hard cover during ATO device disruption.
- Should the IC's DRA require operational activity to be conducted:
 - The IC must consult with PSNI and ATO via PSNI Control Point (if established) prior to the decision to deploy NIFRS resources within the Inner Cordon.
 - Never use TETRA radios within 25 m of a suspect/confirmed device.
 - Mobile phones are not to be carried within the Inner Cordon.
 - Any deployment within the Inner Cordon is working within the Hazardous Area.
 - Relay an "Informative" message to the RCC, including a Hazard update - Offensive Mode.
 - The IC is to prioritise operational objectives prior to implementing plan.
 - Assess effectiveness of the Inner Cordon to control access to the scene.
 - The IC must ensure that crews fully understand and comply with their operational brief.
 - Inform crews to be vigilant of secondary devices.

- The minimal number of personnel are to perform safety-critical tasks inside the Inner Cordon.
- The IC must stress that normal operational procedures (breathing apparatus (BA), use of jets, etc) must be used to deal effectively with the incident.

1.4 ACTION TO BE TAKEN UPON DISCOVERING AN IED

- Inform all personnel working within the Inner Cordon or the affected area.
- Withdraw immediately from the area of the device using hard cover, where available, to a place of relative safety, noting size and location of device if possible.
- Establish an Inner Cordon of 100/200/400 m.
- Inform/consult with PSNI and ATO.
- Follow sequence as per point **1.3**.

1.5 EVALUATING THE RESPONSE

- Re-assess operational objectives.
- Continual evaluation of significant hazards and risk management.
- Evaluate effectiveness of the operational response.
- Use of DRA flowchart.
- Is appropriate ICS in place for the IC to retain command and control?
- It is imperative that the IC adjusts and communicates the response plan when the DRA determines that the risk posed is not in proportion to the operational benefits.

1.6 CLOSING THE INCIDENT

- The IC should ensure the safe and effective end to NIFRS operations.
- Liaise with other agencies present to ensure that an appropriate cordon is maintained to control access to the scene

1.7 POST-INCIDENT

- The IC is to ensure crews receive an appropriate level of debrief.
- Any learning outcomes should be communicated to appropriate personnel via the chain of command.
- Consider welfare issues of personnel.

2 – SECTION B

2.1 HAZARD AWARENESS

2.1.1 DEFINITIONS

- "An IED is a bomb fabricated in an improvised manner, incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy or incapacitate personnel, property or vehicles. IEDs may be constructed from widely available components and may incorporate military, commercially sourced or home-made explosives."
- NIFRS refers to incidents involving IEDs using the code **"seven seven" (77)**, which is retained for speed of transmission of radio message, rather than secrecy. The following definitions remain in use:

Suspect 77

There is reasonable suspicion that a device is present.

Confirmed 77

PSNI/ATO confirm that there is definitely a device.

Actuated 77

The device has exploded.

Generally NIFRS shall only attend Actuated 77 incidents when a fire/life risk is caused by the detonation of an IED.

2.1.2 SECONDARY DEVICES

- NIFRS personnel must remain vigilant at all times whilst in attendance at incidents involving IEDs due to the possibility of a secondary device being present. These devices usually are placed with the intention of causing further harm and damage to responders to the initial incident and may contain a larger explosion risk than the initial device.
- It is important to remember that personnel should avoid, as far as reasonably practicable, possible locations of secondary devices, eg:
 - parking appliances in open spaces, not near cars or vans;
 - a single wheelie bin being left out on a day when no collections are being made.

In summation, personnel must remain vigilant for anything that looks suspicious or out of the ordinary whilst in attendance at IED incidents.

- It is not the responsibility of NIFRS to conduct security searches in order to ensure that an area is cleared for general public use, therefore, NIFRS personnel must never conduct security searches specifically aimed to uncover secondary devices, as this may place personnel in unnecessary danger.

2.1.3 COMMUNICATIONS

- Home Office guidance dictates distances for use of radios (measured in watts) in proximity to suspect/confirmed devices (measured in metres). NIFRS personnel must be aware of how the power output of any electronic transmitting device (radios or mobile phones) may impact upon detonators of IEDs.
- The following exclusion distances from suspect/confirmed IEDs must be adhered to for the use communications equipment:

TETRA Radios - never use within 25 m;

Mobile Phones - never carry within the Inner Cordon.

2.2 INCIDENT RISK MANAGEMENT

2.2.1 DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT

- To ensure effective risk management, ICs must carry out a DRA prior to formulating a Tactical Plan or deploying resources. In accordance with Occupational, Health, Safety & Welfare Bulletin No 20/2008 all operational personnel should have a personal issue of the DRA flowchart. It can also be referenced within the Operational Aide-Mémoire which is carried on each appliance. The DRA flowchart provides ICs with an on-going process of identifying significant hazards, identifying persons at risk and assessing the risk, in order to maintain an acceptable level of risk during operational activity.
- NIFRS personnel should note that because the IC must conduct a DRA for the incident, this does not absolve any responsibility for all NIFRS personnel to conduct a personal DRA, and to review the DRA when circumstances dictate on the incident ground. The process must be used to ensure safe progress is made during an incident, and should occur from when NIFRS personnel are in attendance until they leave the incident.

2.2.2 INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS)

The ICS provides a clear operational framework to assist the IC to organise and deploy available resources in a safe and efficient manner. The 3 main concepts of the ICS are:

- delegation;
- communication;
- supervision.

Delegation

Delegation of tasks, where appropriate, will ensure that the IC retains effective command and control of the incident. This may be facilitated by the use of Functional Officers, or by the IC delegating specific tasks to crew members. The purpose of delegation is primarily to ensure an adequate "span of control" for all NIFRS personnel. Specifically relating to IED incidents, it may be of benefit for the IC to appoint a Safety Officer in the early stages of the incident.

ICs must remain cognisant of the fact that delegation is not confined to specific roles under the ICS, eg, appointing a Safety Officer, but also applies to standard operational tasks (BA, use of jets/ladders etc).

Communication

At IED incidents it is crucial to ensure that effective communication takes place between all NIFRS personnel and other agencies where required. This shall ensure that all personnel understand briefings that they receive, and subsequently the role that they are expected to fulfil, therefore, compliance with briefings is essential to ensure that personnel do not act outside of their remit, or "freelance". Personnel must also report back (when necessary) as to what level of progress has been made.

Supervision

After specific roles have been delegated, and a full and comprehensive brief detailed, it is now necessary for the IC to ensure that appropriate operational tasks are supervised. Effective supervision ensures that tasks are completed to a competent standard, and thereby adds to the safety of personnel by ensuring that tasks being undertaken comply with the operational brief; this is particularly important at IED incidents.

For more information on Incident Command, please refer to SOP No 1 - *Incident Command*.

2.2.3 OPERATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MAXIM

All NIFRS personnel should remain cognisant of the Operational Health and Safety maxim:

"We may risk our lives a lot, in a highly calculated manner, to protect saveable lives.

We may risk our lives a little, in a highly calculated manner, to protect saveable property.

We will not risk our lives at all for lives or property that are already lost."

2.2.4 EXAMPLES OF INCIDENTS

The following examples are only intended to provide a generic overview of 2 IED incidents, and aim to highlight the requirement for operational activity measured against the operational benefits. For more detailed procedural guidance refer to point 2.4.

Actuated device - car on fire, no chance of fire-spread, and no rescues required:

- no action required;
- establish appropriate cordon;
- withdraw to NIFRS Control Point;
- remain vigilant for secondary devices.

Actuated device - persons trapped by structural collapse:

- liaise with other responders;
- IC to carryout DRA;
- fully brief crews;
- crews to work specifically within their remit as instructed by the IC;
- adopt normal operational procedures to ensure safe and effective resolution of the incident (BA, etc);
- remain vigilant for secondary devices.

2.3 NIFRS RESOURCE ATTENDANCE

2.3.1 MOBILISING

- For all incidents involving IEDs the *Nearest Officer* principle shall apply (in line with SOP No 2 - *ICS - Mobilising Arrangements*, Appendix "A"), and an Incident Log (SC70) will need to be completed when time and resources permit.

- NIFRS resource attendances for incidents involving IEDs will fall into 2 categories:
 - suspect/confirmed devices;
 - actuated devices.

2.3.2 SUSPECT/CONFIRMED DEVICES

- NIFRS resources shall only attend these incidents after liaison has occurred between the relevant District Officer (or Duty Headquarters' Officer) and PSNI. PSNI Control Room will inform NIFRS RCC of the following information:
 - exact location of the suspect/confirmed device;
 - approx size of device;
 - type of explosives involved;
 - type and amount of risk posed;
 - any other relevant information;
 - if PSNI/ATO are in attendance (or estimated time of arrival);
 - location of the PSNI Control Point or agreed RVP;
 - location of Silver/Gold Command (if established).
- The RCC Duty Officer shall then contact the relevant District Officer who in turn shall liaise with PSNI to mobilise to an agreed RVP in order to decide what level of resources (if any) is required to attend. However, if PSNI is not likely to be in attendance prior to the arrival of NIFRS, the District Officer shall contact PSNI Control Room who shall, in turn, ensure that a PSNI Officer from PSNI Area Control contacts the District Officer as soon as reasonably practicable.
- If a District Officer is unavailable, the RCC should then contact the Duty Area Officer who shall, in turn, follow the same process to determine if any NIFRS resources are required to attend. The information above shall then be relayed to all NIFRS resources which are subsequently mobilised to the incident.

2.3.3 ACTUATED DEVICES

- As previously stated, NIFRS resources shall only attend these incidents when requested to do so, after the Senior PSNI Officer on-scene has determined that there is sufficient life/fire risk posed by the detonation, or when the RCC receive a call for emergency assistance. The action to be taken by RCC upon receipt of a call of an actuated incident shall be to inform the Duty Area Officer and mobilise the following resources:

- *1 x Group Commander;
- *1 x Station Commander;
- 2 x Pumping Appliances;
- 1 x Rescue Vehicle.

** Minimum roles; Nearest Officer principle shall apply.*

- The pre-determined attendance above is the minimum amount of resources to be mobilised to an actuated IED incident to ensure that NIFRS personnel have appropriate resources and supervision available to resolve the incident safely. However, this attendance may be increased when the severity of the incident determines a greater level of resources required, eg, if following a detonation of an IED there are persons trapped by a structural collapse, further resources would need to be mobilised (Appliances, Urban Search and Rescue, etc) to ensure a safe and effective resolution of the incident. The amount of resources required to be mobilised will be dependent upon the resulting incident after detonation. All NIFRS personnel should focus upon dealing with the incident at hand, and deploy resources accordingly, whilst remaining vigilant of possible secondary devices.
- If any NIFRS personnel are informed that Silver/Gold Command is in operation, then the Duty Area Officer and IC must be informed. The IC shall then request for an appropriate NIFRS Inter-agency Liaison Officer (ILO) to be mobilised to the Command Room(s) location. For more information on the role and duties of an NIFRS ILO please refer to SOP No 1 - *Incident Command* (page 52).

2.4 PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE

2.4.1 EN ROUTE

- Where relevant, OiCs are to gather information from the RCC/ Mobile Data Terminal on:
 - suspect/confirmed/actuated device;
 - location of device;
 - size of device;
 - type of explosives involved;
 - type/amount of risk posed;
 - other agencies in attendance;
 - location of the PSNI Control Point or agreed RVP.
- OiCs must brief crew members on the type of incident and pass on all relevant information.

- OiCs must detail appropriate initial actions to crew members to carry out upon arrival. The default position should be for crew members to remain on the appliance until the IC makes an initial assessment.
- The OiC must inform crews to be vigilant for secondary devices at all times.

2.4.2 ON ARRIVAL

- Approach the scene of the incident slowly and with caution so that personnel may make an initial assessment of significant hazards that may be present. Park appliance away from possible locations of secondary devices.
- Assess route of arrival on approach and consider parking appliances facing away from incident to ensure a safe egress route(s).
- Be aware that 77 incidents may result from, or occur during, civil disturbance. Refer to SOP 9 -, *Incidents Resulting from Civil Disturbance*, for further information.
- Establish NIFRS Control Point remotely from PSNI Control Point (if established) and at an appropriate distance from the actuated device (see distances below). Relay location to the RCC to ensure that on-coming resources report to NIFRS Control Point.
- Continually assess (visual only) immediate environment for secondary devices from arrival until departure from the incident.
- Never conduct security searches specifically aimed to uncover secondary devices as this may place personnel in unnecessary danger.
- Liaise with other agencies (PSNI, ATO, NIAS) in attendance to gather all relevant incident and hazard information.
- Consider using information from local sources (eye witnesses) if appropriate.
- Determine the level of resources required to resolve the incident safely and effectively.
- Implement an appropriate ICS to ensure adequate command and control.

- Establish an appropriate initial Inner Cordon based upon information available to the IC at that time (if one is not already established).
- Send timely "informative"/"assistance" message(s) to the RCC to inform on-coming resources.

Minimum Inner Cordon Distances

- up to a suitcase size device - 100m;
- suitcase - car size device - 200m;
- van or lorry size device - 400m.

Planning and Implementing the Response

- The IC to carry out a DRA to assess the need for operational activity within the Inner Cordon based upon life risk to the public and emergency responders. This must include liaison with the ATO (via PSNI Control Point), where possible, as they will offer safety critical information on explosive safety.
- Personnel should refer to their personal issue of the DRA flowchart or the Operational Aide-Mémoire for further information on the elements of the DRA process.
- Should the IC's DRA recommend no operational activity is required then:
 - withdraw to NIFRS Control Point;
 - relay an "Informative" message to the RCC, including a Hazard update - Defensive Mode;
 - remain in contact with PSNI Control Point;
 - personnel are to make use of hard cover during ATO device disruption.
- Should the IC's DRA require operational activity to be conducted:
 - The IC must consult with PSNI and ATO via PSNI Control Point (if established) prior to the decision to deploy NIFRS resources within the Inner Cordon.
 - Never use TETRA radios within 25 m of a suspect/confirmed device.
 - Mobile phones are not to be carried within the Inner Cordon.
 - Any deployment within the Inner Cordon is working within the Hazardous Area.
 - Relay an "Informative" message to the RCC, including a Hazard update - Offensive Mode.

- The IC is to prioritise operational objectives (including life risk) prior to implementing plan.
- Assess effectiveness of the Inner Cordon to control access to the scene. This shall prevent unnecessary access by members of the public and non-essential agencies. It shall also provide NIFRS personnel a specific area to conduct operational activities.
- The minimal number of personnel are to perform safety-critical tasks inside the Inner Cordon to prevent unnecessary exposure to significant hazards.
- The IC must ensure that crews fully understand and comply with their operational brief. This shall prevent any "freelancing" by personnel.
- The IC must inform crews to be vigilant of secondary devices and of immediate action to be taken upon discovering a suspect device.
- The IC must stress that normal operational procedures (BA, use of jets etc) must be used to deal effectively with the incident.

Action to be Taken Upon Discovering an IED

If personnel discover a suspect device at an operational incident, then they should:

- Withdraw immediately from the area of the suspect device, using hard cover where available, making a mental note of the size and position of device.
- Establish an appropriate cordon, warn those present within that cordon, and prevent access to the scene if PSNI are not yet in attendance. Evacuation should begin nearest the danger and spread outwardly, and use must be made of available hard cover as shielding.
- Inform/consult with PSNI (via PSNI Control Point/the RCC).
- The IC will have to decide if ongoing rescue operations need to be suspended as a result of a DRA. Such a decision will depend on the size, location and type of suspect device. In all such circumstances the advice of the ATO and PSNI should be sought.

- Where the IC decides to continue with rescue operations, despite the threat of further devices, then only the minimum number of personnel should be used to carry out specific tasks following a comprehensive briefing and the application of the necessary control measures identified as part of the DRA process. Once all risk assessed rescues have been performed, crews should return to NIFRS Control Point/place of relative safety.
- The ATO may need to question personnel who have inadvertently approached or seen a suspect device and ICs should ensure that any such personnel are made available upon request.

Evaluating the Response

- Re-assess operational objectives when operational circumstances dictate.
- Continually evaluate significant hazards and the effectiveness of the risk management (control measures).
- Evaluate effectiveness of the operational response by ensuring that the prioritised operational objectives are being met.
- Refer to the DRA flowchart or Operational Aide-Mémoire.
- Assess effectiveness of the ICS currently in place so as to ensure an appropriate command and control structure of the incident.
- It is imperative that the IC adjusts and communicates the response plan when the DRA determines that the risk posed is not in proportion to the operational benefits.

Closing the Incident

- During the closing stages of an incident the possibility of personnel being injured or of a suspect device being present/discovered still remains, therefore, the IC should ensure the safe and effective end to NIFRS operations.
- Prior to leaving the incident, the IC must liaise with other agencies present to ensure that an appropriate cordon is maintained to control access to the scene.

Post Incident Management

Debrief

The IC shall ensure that all NIFRS personnel in attendance receive an adequate debrief of the incident in line with SOP No 30 - *Debrief*. The purpose of a debrief is to maintain and improve standards of individual performance, team working, and overall performance.

Applying a debrief process will:

- afford the opportunity to validate good practices and procedures;
- highlight areas where potential problems may exist with policies or procedures;
- allow for the observation of the limitations of equipment currently in use within the organisation;
- encourage the flow of communication across the organisation;
- allow people to input their perspective on the management of events;
- assist Line Managers/Assessors in determining the support of personnel;
- identify improvements in service delivery by influencing decisions on training, policy, process and equipment;
- provide support and encouragement for individual and team welfare.

Welfare Issues

ICs and/or OiCs must provide adequate welfare arrangements to minimise any impact upon personnel both during and after the incident. NIFRS Welfare procedures can be referenced in NIFRS Welfare Handbook.

2.5 INTER-AGENCY WORKING

2.5.1 INTER-AGENCY LIAISON OFFICER (ILO)

NIFRS IC may deem it necessary to introduce an ILO to the ICS to ensure an appropriate span of control when dealing with other agencies. eg, following a mass detonation, structural collapse of a building has trapped and injured numerous people. The ILO may be required to liaise with representatives of PSNI, ATO, NIAS and other external agencies at the incident, to ensure that the efforts of all services and agencies in attendance are carefully co-ordinated in order to safely and effectively meet their objectives. The ILO should, where possible, hold the minimum role of Station Commander. Detailed information on the duties of an ILO can be referenced in SOP No 1 - *Incident Command*, page 52.

2.5.2 ROLE OF NIFRS

The primary role of NIFRS in an emergency is to rescue people trapped by fire, wreckage or debris, and to prevent further escalation of an incident by controlling or extinguishing fires and taking other preventative measures. However, NIFRS personnel will have to work with partner agencies to ensure that common goals are achieved at incidents, especially those where IEDs are involved.

2.5.3 ROLE OF PSNI

PSNI will co-ordinate the activities of those responding at and around the scene of an emergency. The saving and protection of life is the priority, but as far as possible, the scene is to be preserved to safeguard evidence for subsequent investigations, therefore, NIFRS should take all reasonable efforts to ensure that evidence is preserved at the scene.

Other responsibilities include:

- establishing and maintaining cordons around the incident, in particular, an Outer Cordon to facilitate the work of other agencies;
- where terrorist action is suspected, assuming overall control of an incident;
- carrying out a search for secondary devices and performing an assessment of associated risks involving terrorist incidents;
- overseeing any criminal investigation, including the preservation and retrieval of evidence;
- processing information surrounding casualties and the identification and removal of fatalities on behalf of Her Majesty's Coroner;
- co-ordinating search activities on land following an event where it is possible that persons may not be located in the immediate vicinity of a disaster scene.

2.5.4 ROLE OF THE AMMUNITION TECHNICAL OFFICER (ATO)

- The ATO is a specialist role fulfilled by the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) Bomb Disposal Unit, and may be mobilised to incidents involving IEDs. ATOs are the only field experts in explosive safety of IEDs, therefore, they will provide safety-critical information that NIFRS personnel must utilise when conducting any risk assessment.

- NIFRS personnel should not operate in proximity to the ATO. If advice is necessary, this can be obtained remotely from the main scene of operations by contacting the Senior Police Officer on scene. Should it be necessary for the ATO to seek the advice or assistance of NIFRS IC, then this shall be arranged via the Senior Police Officer.

2.5.5 ROLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE (NIAS)

- The role of NIAS is to co-ordinate the on-site National Health Service response, and to determine to which hospital casualties are transported, depending on the types of injuries sustained. NIFRS liaison with NIAS is essential to ensure that effective emergency treatment is administered to all persons suffering injury.
- NIAS will also (in conjunction with a Medical Incident Officer):
 - endeavour to sustain life through effective emergency treatment at the scene;
 - determine the priority for release of trapped casualties and decontamination in conjunction with NIFRS;
 - transport the injured, in order of priority, to receiving hospitals.

2.5.6 MEDIA

- While the Media access will normally be carefully controlled during the incident, there may be a great deal of Press attention and enquiries as the incident progresses. Extreme caution should be exercised when dealing with Press enquiries, as PSNI have overall legal responsibility at incidents involving IEDs, therefore, it is better that NIFRS personnel do not give any interviews or statements and leave this to PSNI.
- If a PSNI spokesperson is not available at the incident ground, interviews should be confined to details regarding NIFRS attendance, rescue, firefighting efforts, and shall ***NOT*** include opinions as to the cause of fire, type of device, who was responsible or the reasons for the attack. ICs should reference NIFRS Media Handbook prior to releasing any Press statements. In addition, interviews should not refer to the role, or any criticism of, any other agency.

2.5.7 OTHER AGENCIES

NIFRS personnel should also be aware that other non-emergency agencies may also attend IED incidents. These agencies vary widely from utility companies to council employees, and efforts should be made to facilitate requests where appropriate. NIFRS may also request these agencies to attend to conduct a specific task or provide tactical advice in order to help resolve the incident. If the IC has requested any non-NIFRS personnel to enter the Inner Cordon to conduct a task specifically on behalf of NIFRS, then a full brief must be given at NIFRS Control Point. The brief will include information on:

- significant hazards present;
- task(s) to be performed;
- the minimum level of personal protective equipment required;
- the level of supervision required;
- evacuation signal.

This list is not exhaustive, but it shall be determined by the IC who shall confirm that the brief has been understood. The details of the brief shall be recorded within the Incident Log.

3 – SECTION C

This section shall provide personnel with reference material and background information that utilised in the development of this SOP.

3.1 LEGISLATION

The Explosives (Northern Ireland) Order 1972;

Explosives Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1981;

The Explosives (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1996;

The Explosives (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996;

The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

3.2 REFERENCE MATERIAL

Generic Risk Assessment 5.7 – *Explosives*, Part 1, Version 2 – August 2008;

NIFRS Occupational, Health, Safety & Welfare Bulletins – 2/2010, 28/2006, 27/2004;

NIFRS SOP No 1 – *Incident Command* – May 2010;

NIFRS SOP No 6 – *Generic Hazmat* – February 2002;

NIFRS SOP No 9 – *Incidents Resulting From Civil Disturbance* – March 2008;

NIFRS SOP No 15 – *Improvised Explosive Devices* – August 2002;

Draft Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser Operational Guidance – *Hazmats*;

A Guide to Operational Risk Management – Fire Service Guide, Volume 3;

DRA flowchart.

3.3 INTER-AGENCY LIAISON

NIFRS'S OPU has liaised with the MoD and PSNI to ensure that methods of best practice were incorporated within this SOP during the development process.

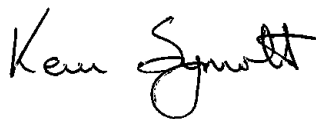
CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, the primary aim of this SOP is to provide operational guidance at incidents involving suspect/confirmed/actuated devices, and to raise awareness of the possibility of secondary devices being present. Essentially, personnel should carry out normal operational procedures by dealing with the resulting incident after detonation of an IED, whilst remaining vigilant for secondary devices at all times.

This SOP has been developed through a process of consultation that has utilised the experience of NIFRS personnel and methods of best practice from PSNI and MoD.

The SOP is supported by:

- NIFRS Training Notes, produced by NIFRS Training Centre, which provide specific details of the training elements of IED incidents;
- NIFRS SOP No 15 Validation Exercise. This shall assess the level of knowledge and understanding amongst operational personnel against the safety-critical information contained within Section A.



Kevin Synnott
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Operations Policy Unit

GC/RS

15 December 2010