

# WATER SAFETY

## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE



Please use this template to provide information on any Water Safety initiatives you are doing within your area. Please provide as much relevant information as possible.

if you require any assistance or support in completing this template please contact Bernadine Blair, Evaluation, Funding and Initiatives Officer: [Bernadine.blair@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:Bernadine.blair@firescotland.gov.uk)

### LSO AREA

ESDA City of Edinburgh

### Author and Contact Details (add a contact email or phone number),

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### If Public Event: Comms. [SFRS.communications@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:SFRS.communications@firescotland.gov.uk)

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December at 10.00 a.m.

### What is the Title of the Initiative?

Frozen Water Safety Multi-agency outdoor event at Harlaw reservoir Balerno.

### Summary

A multi-agency event was held on **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 10.00 a.m.** to raise awareness to members of the public of the dangers of frozen water. SFRS led on a media release and sent a photographer to capture images. This was not advertised due to COVID restrictions still being in place, but there would still be dog walkers and members of the public present in the area. The aims of the event were:

- Partner agencies collaborate to warn of the dangers of frozen water in winter
- Highlight the risk to pet owners/walkers/families/runners venturing outdoors in the Pentlands and across Scotland whether it's a reservoir, river, pond or canal.

### Need for Initiative

Numerous dog walkers as well as groups of young people continually endanger themselves due to a lack of awareness of cold-water shock. SFRS, working with partners, arranged an event to highlight the dangers of entering the water/ice to spread the message through practical demonstrations of the dangers of frozen water. This was also promoted via social media.



## Aims and Objectives

To deliver the following advice/messages:

Safety advice:

- Avoid going near frozen water when you are out with loved ones and pets
- While ice can look and feel solid, it can suddenly crack and cause a person or a dog to fall through and potentially become trapped under the ice
- Pets should be kept on leads and owners should avoid throwing objects onto the ice for them to retrieve
- If anyone does get into difficulty on the ice, do not attempt to go out onto the ice to rescue them
- Dial 999 and ask for the relevant emergency service
- **TALK** to the casualty, encourage them to keep calm and float
- **REACH** – use a long object or similar, you may be able to reach. **Do not go into the Water**
- **THROW** – There may be rescue equipment nearby such as throwlines or lifebelts. These may assist in getting a casualty back to land
- The low temperature of the water can also bring on cold-water shock, which can be potentially deadly
- Cold-water shock can cause breathing difficulties, blood vessels to close, the heart rate to increase and lead to a heart attack
- If someone can't climb out of the water, it is not advisable, as many people think to move about in the water to keep warm while waiting for help. Instead, they should conserve their energy by keeping as still as possible

For more information on Cold Water Shock please visit:

<https://watersafetyscotland.org.uk/information/cold-water-shock/>

Also, photographs would be captured from the event that could be used to promote the dangers of frozen water via social media, education platforms, future engagement with the public.

## Delivery/Activities

At the event:

- Marionville firefighters provided a demonstration of inflatables used in water related rescue incidents.
- The SFRS Community Action Team for Edinburgh safely engaged with the public
- Scottish Natural Heritage Park Rangers engaged with the public and arranged for signage on site at key entrances at Harlaw and Threipmuir. They will be deployed around reservoirs: Harlaw, Threipmuir, Bonaly, Clubbidean, Torduff, Glencorse
- All agencies engaged with visitors and delivered key information on frozen water safety.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

- Photographs were taken of two dogs Ruby and Phoenix – on their leads at all times – with Jonathan Honeyman from fire investigation and Scottish Natural Heritage Park Ranger with the reservoir in the background.
- A range of landscape and portrait images were taken for use across a variety of digital channels.
- Images of firefighters doing their demonstration were taken which could be shared for future education
- Socially distanced images were taken of partner agencies involved in the project

**Resources** (What resources does the project require? Does the project rely on any other resources, such as staff from other organisations or premises owned/managed by other organisations? What social media platforms were used to promote it?)

SFRS Swift water team from Marionville & CAT Edinburgh.  
SFRS Media Team Contact: Angeline Sneddon 07866189113  
Jonathan Honeyman Fire investigation and Phoenix the dog.

**Partner Agencies** (include contact details)

Jessica Morgado, Senior Natural Heritage Officer 07798505302  
Police Scotland  
Ranger from Pentland hills group along with his dog.

## **Successes and Challenges**

Successes – Collaborative working to deliver a strong safety message by utilising all available resources including partner agencies to achieve this.

Challenges - due to COVID staffing issues at Marionville, the event very nearly got cancelled as there was a possibility that the full SFRS water rescue team would not be available to lead the demonstration. This event highlighted that regardless of how much planning goes into it, there is a reliance on Operational staff who may well be needed elsewhere or simply not available on the day.

## Impact/Change/Outcomes

(has anything changed because of the project? What impact has the project had on participants, the wider community and your area? Have you produced anything as a result of the project (i.e. reports, guidance etc.)? Were there any unexpected outcomes?)

A number of photographs were taken at the event. As was the intention, these pictures are going to be used in a safety message on social media for a national campaign when timing is appropriate.

This event provided SFRS with the opportunity to work collaboratively with a number of partner agencies and received good 'buy in' from them. These contacts will be used for future events.

Around 40 people were engaged with at the event.

There has not yet been a social media post yet but this will be analysed/monitored once messages go out for future reference during freezing conditions.

Once the time is appropriate SFRS communications will run a media campaign using the photos from the day as the background.

Police Sergeant Keith Watson said:

*'As the Community Police Team, it's really important that we work closely with our partners in the other emergency services, local authority and beyond. After a tragic incident in the Pentland Hills Park in the summer of 2021, when our SFRS colleagues contacted us and asked us to take part in a water rescue public awareness initiative, we were really keen to take part. The demonstration of water rescue techniques and equipment was illuminating. SFRS had also arranged for a photographer to come to document the event which will make a joint media message much easier, relevant and informative in the future. It was great to put some faces to names in these days of limited face-to-face contact and will make joint working much easier. We have already seen benefits that a close link between SFRS colleagues in Community Police will have, as we tackle fire raising and associated ASB in our area'.*



## Reflections

In future it will be necessary, wherever possible to put things in place to try to avoid any potential cancellations. Although the event went ahead, it was very nearly cancelled at the last minute due to

COVID staffing shortages, so in future consideration would be given to try to put measures in place to accommodate any change in circumstances.

Personnel will continue to consider how to utilise all resources, working innovatively and with partners to ensure that we continue to educate members of the public on the dangers of water.

**Next steps** Will this project continue? What are the plans for the project in the future and what is needed for this to happen?

Local SFRS personnel will continue to consider ways in which to work with partners to promote water safety and deliver it in line with the current thematic action plan/appropriate time of the year. Guidance will also be sought from the National Water Safety Group on how services can be improved in the area.

**Additional Information** (include any other relevant information, such as links to other websites or reports)

**Date:** 01/03/2022

**Signed:** David Morrison