

# Improving data for water-related emergencies

Each year between 420 and 560 people drown in the UK with drowning being the fourth or fifth highest cause of accidental death for adults and the third highest for children. Although we think that the foot and mouth epidemic would have reduced exposure to inland water sites significantly, the last available figures for 2000, a total of 423, are the lowest for many years

by Peter Cornall

**Compared with** an average of 300 people per year who have drowned around the coast of Great Britain and Ireland between 1997 and 1999, an average of 270 people have drowned every year in lakes, reservoirs, rivers, streams and canals across Great Britain in the last 13 years.

Aiming to reduce the high death toll from inland drownings, the RNLI and RoSPA is currently addressing improving inland data and data collection through a jointly funded project. Phase 2 of INREM, a three-year research study, is a natural extension of the RNLI's and RoSPA's intelligence-gathering work, which will provide a central point of information relating to inland water incidents. The main objectives of creating a single picture of inland water incidents are to improve the analysis of causes and trends. The identification of problem areas will enable both the RNLI and RoSPA to progress the targeting and promotion of water safety campaigns aimed at educating people about inland waters.

The study examines the scope and feasibility of establishing an INREM database in 2003/2004. The pilot study sample completed earlier this year included almost 20 per cent of the emergency services and also included the relevant owners, operators, voluntary services, Government agencies and National Governing bodies. ●

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## Why we are here

Barry Dixon, QFSM, MIFireE, County Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Greater Manchester County Fire Service, will give a presentation on the tragic death of SubO Paul Metcalf while trying to rescue Reyaz Ali, and the far reaching ramifications of the incident

Born in Bury in 1951, he joined the City of Manchester Fire Brigade as a Junior Fireman in 1967 aged 16 years. Following five years' operational service at city centre stations, he was promoted to Leading Fireman in 1974 in the Greater Manchester County Fire Service. Progressing through the ranks, he has spent much of his career in the Rochdale, Oldham and Bury areas of the County. In 1995 he was appointed Assistant County Fire Officer (Operations), Deputy County Fire Officer in 2000 and in March 2002, became County Fire Officer.



Peter Cornall is Head of Water and Leisure safety for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). His paper will focus on the current drowning problem and developments in improving data collection