

	SIDMOUTH LIFEBOAT AN INDEPENDENT CHARITY	Launch Authority / Deputy Launch Authority
1		Role Description & Notes

The role of DLA is:

1. Stand in for the LOM as required to initially authorise launch of the lifeboats with final agreement from both the Duty Helm and the Duty Tractor Driver, agreement being required from all three.
2. Stand in for the LOM / Coxswain to take charge of shore based activity while the boat is at sea. This includes maintaining an awareness of the boat's location, activities and status and keeping Solent CG informed of such in the event that the boat is not able to do so directly.
3. To stand in place of the LOM in working alongside the Coxswain to provide leadership and ensure that all operational activities are carried out to maintain the lifeboats and all associated equipment in a constant state of readiness for launching on service.

In all of the above, it is essential that the DLA is fully familiar with the organisation's Operational Procedures. Operational Procedures 1, 2, 3, 4, 32A, 45, 46 and 47 are particularly relevant to the role of the LA / DLA.

Sign to confirm the role of the DLA has been fully briefed and is understood:

Sig Name Date

LOM sign to confirm the above's competence as DLA:

Sig Name Date

Background Information:

Part of the reason for launch being authorised by someone other than the Duty Helm is that the LA/DLA should be better placed to stand back and take a “bigger picture” view of what is happening. This potentially results in a different input into the launch decision than that obtained from the Helm, who has a lot to think about and will often be under a lot of pressure prior to launch, particularly in marginal weather. The DLA is therefore, at least in part, a safety check.

When the pager goes, the helm is busy getting to the boathouse, taking charge of the crew and getting ready for launch. The DLA is responsible for dealing with anything else that crops up.

When the boat is at sea, the DLA takes charge of the boathouse, making sure the tractor driver gets the help they need, making sure crew ashore are given the tasks necessary such as road management, getting Speedy or the Ski to sea if required, and facilitating recovery of all craft.

Consider whether the boat may be usefully supported by Speedy or Ski when on task – e.g. shallow water operations – and inform the Helm at sea of options in this regard in the light of weather, available crew etc. Provide the same information to Solent if requested.

Solent need the DLA so that they can discuss the incident with someone with eyes-on locally on the phone rather than relying on VHF comms with the boat which are often busy, overspoken or unreliable. It gives them the choice.

The also wanted a DLA ashore so that in bad weather there is someone to talk to if comms are lost with the boat, otherwise they assume the worst and start a major operation to look for a capsized lifeboat when in reality the DLA can see that all the boat is operating normally.

Note that Solent generally call the boathouse landline during callouts, rather than a DLA mobile.

Someone should be monitoring VHF and landline at all times when the boat is at sea. When the boat is not in the immediate vicinity, this means the Base Set as hand helds have limited range for both transmission and reception. DLA to ensure this happens.

Consider whether the tasking is appropriate before authorising launch.

Launch Considerations: Some Factors to Consider:

- Capabilities of SAR assets available?
 - Risk vs benefit?
 - Is their risk to life?
 - Would another SAR asset be more appropriate (flanking stations, helicopter)?
 - Sea State?
 - Swell height?
 - Air temperature?
 - Likely duration of service?
 - Distance of casualty from station?*
 - Visibility?
 - Onset of darkness?
 - Crew availability?
 - Crew skills?
 - Helm experience – see Competency Sheets.
 - Tractor Driver experience – see Competency Sheets.
 - Weather conditions at casualty site?
 - Likely weather conditions on return?
 - Tides?
 - Can the SAR unit be recovered?

As a guide the operational limits of the Arctic, in fully developed onshore conditions are as follows:

Force 7 – daylight Significant Wave Height - 4m.
Force 5 – darkness

And for the Searider:

Force 4 – daylight Significant Wave Height – 0.3m
Force 3 - darkness

Note that these are gust strengths, not sustained wind speeds. A reliable source of this information is at <https://exmouthcoastwatch.co.uk/weather/> (hover mouse over wind speed gauge).

It is unlikely that these conditions will be launchable during easterly or south easterly conditions.

*e.g. a windsurfer in trouble 200m off of Sidmouth might be feasible in a south westerly gusting to 7; a casualty at Beer would not.