

Freedom of Information request: Reference number FOI2026/00597

Date of request: 27th May

Request:

I would like to request information regarding firefighter training for animal rescues, including:

1. What training firefighters receive in relation to animal and wildlife rescues
2. Whether there are specialist teams for such incidents
3. Any guidance, policies, or operational procedures used during animal rescue incidents

Response:

Thank you for your request, which we received on 27 May 2026.

1. What training firefighters receive in relation to animal and wildlife rescues

All front-line firefighters receive Animal Rescue Level 1 (AR1) training through a DAMOP e-learning package. The AR1 syllabus is designed to make personnel aware of the hazards, risks and control measures associated with attending incidents involving animals.

The Brigade also delivers Animal Rescue Level 2 (AR2) training. This course is aligned to national standards and is designed to train firefighters in advanced animal rescue techniques. Personnel trained to AR2 standard attend an annual instructor-led refresher course, in addition to local station-based training using horse manikins.

2. Whether there are specialist teams for such incidents

There are currently five Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) stations with personnel trained to AR2 standard. In addition, Technical Advisors to Rescue (TARs) are trained to AR2 standard and attend animal rescue incidents in that capacity.

3. Any guidance, policies, or operational procedures used during animal rescue incident

Relevant guidance, policies and operational procedures relating to animal rescue incidents are attached to this response. These comprise:

- PN0979d – Large Animal Rescue – Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
- PN0979g – Domestic Small Animal Rescue
- P0896 – Animal Rescue Equipment – Technical Information
- P1025 – Domestic Small Animal Oxygenation Equipment – Technical Information

I hope the information provided is helpful. We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For more information about this process, please see the guidance we publish about making a request on our website: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/transparency/request-information-from-us/>

Large animal rescue

Official

Hazards and risks

The hazards listed below are specific to working with large animals or generic to working with any animal. All animals that require rescue, should be as a general principle considered a hazard.

Working with animals

- Personnel must realise that the level of risk taken to rescue an animal should not be the same as that which might be taken to save a human life.
- The Brigade will only attempt to rescue live animals. The Brigade will not assist in the recovery or removal of dead animals.
- All animals that require rescue, should be considered a hazard. This will often be demonstrated by the animal struggling to remove itself from the environment restraining it.
- Crews should be aware that every time they approach an animal the risk of being bitten, kicked, butted, clawed or crushed is equal.
- The risk of viral or bacterial infections from either bite, claws or the environment that the animal is trapped in.
- Dealing with distressed owners or bystanders may present a hazard and should be considered when forming a risk assessment.

Control measures

- Maintain safe distances from animals trapped.
- Full PPE.
- Animal restraint equipment.
- Sedation of animal by a qualified vet.
- Initiate cordons.
- Minimum number of crews in cordons.
- Decontamination procedures.

SOPs

- Silent approach to animal rescue incidents where it is safe to do so.

- RVP-hard standing and identify an equipment dump not likely to be affected by release of animal or other animals.
- Identify owner or responsible person. Ensure this person has a vet on route to the incident.
- Access if the rescue of the animal is achievable and safe to do so.
- On site machinery may prove useful to lift or move the animal. This must only be carried out by competent operators under the guidance of LFB. Operators may not be used to working with emergency services detailed briefings should therefore take place prior to operations commencing. See NOG Fires in Waste Sites.
- Maintain distances from animal to prevent injury to crews.
- Limit the numbers of crews exposed to risks.
- Crews to only approach from safe side of animal, usually from spine side, clear of limbs.
- Safe and clear exit route for crews should be identified and maintained.
- Exit route for animal once released.



This Standard Operating Procedure should be read with:
PN979 – Rescue - NOG: Dated 18 March 2024

Domestic/small animal rescue

Official

Hazards and risks

The hazards listed below are specific to working with domestic/small animals or generic to working with any animal. All animals that require rescue, should be as a general principle considered a hazard.

Working with animals

- Personnel must realise that a lower level of risk should be taken to rescue an animal than that which would be taken to save a human life, and human life will remain the priority.
- The Brigade will only attempt to rescue live animals. The Brigade will not assist in the recovery or removal of dead animals.
- All animals that require rescue, should be considered a hazard. This will often be demonstrated by the animal struggling to remove itself from the environment restraining it.
- Crews should be aware that every time they approach an animal the risk of being bitten, kicked and clawed is equal.
- The risk of viral or bacterial infections from either bite, claws or the environment that the animal is trapped in.
- Dealing with distressed owners or bystanders may present a hazard and should be considered when forming a risk assessment.
- The transportation of animals by brigade vehicles must not occur and the animal should return to the care of a responsible person once rescue and treatment has concluded.

Domestic animal oxygen therapy

- Oxygen therapy must only be given to animals where the resource is not needed to treat humans and sufficient supplies of oxygen will remain in case of unexpected human casualties (e.g. when BA is in use).
- Oxygen therapy must only be carried out in locations where oxygen enrichment of the local environment does not present a hazard.
- Animal being treated for hypoxia will be disorientated while returning to full consciousness and may be aggressive. Suitable restraint and control measure should be put in place before treatment commences.

Control measures

- Maintain safe distances and control over animal to prevent injury to crews.
- Full PPE.

- Animal restraint and control equipment.
- Identify a safe and controlled environment.
- Minimum number of crews in cordons.
- Decontamination procedures.

SOPs

- Silent approach to animal rescue incidents where it is safe to do so.
- Access if the rescue of the animal is achievable and safe to do so.
- Identify a treatment area remote from the main scene of operations that is calm, quiet and controllable and not likely to be affected by release of animal or other animals.
- Identify owner or responsible person for ongoing animal welfare on resolution of the incident and advice veterinary follow up and care.
- Detailed briefings should take place prior to operations commencing.
- Maintain safe distances and control over animal to prevent injury to crews.
- Limit the numbers of crews exposed to risks.
- Safe and clear exit route for crews should be identified and maintained.
- Exit route for animal once released.



This Standard Operating Procedure should be read with:
PN979 - Rescue – NOG: Dated 26 August 2025

Animal rescue equipment – technical information

New policy number: **896**
Old instruction number:
Issue date: **28 September 2016**
Reviewed as current: **12 January 2026**
Owner: **Assistant Director, Property and TSS**
Responsible work team: **Fleet Liaison Engineering and Equipment Team**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy describes the Animal rescue equipment and explains its operation, maintenance and testing.
- 1.2 The animal rescue equipment is carried on all Hazmat FRU's.

2 Description

- 2.1 The Animal rescue equipment is made up of various items as described below:
- 2.2 **The Animal rescue quick release kit (comprises of the following component parts):**

- 2.3 **Spreader beam** complete, with:

- 2 x Sea catch quick release couplings.
- 2 x Sea catch release cords (red & green).
- 2 x Bow shackles.
- Chain sling complete with hooks.
- Weight (complete): 15.5kg

- 2.4 **Release lanyard** (2 x red and 2 x green)

- Fitted with a spring bolt clip at one end and loop at the other.
- Length: 3.8 metres.



LFB image id:579349

- 2.5 **Main lifting sling x 2**

- To enable the lifting of heavy domestic stock animals such as cattle and horses where a simple quick release rescue system is required.
- Sling type: B2 two layer sling with reinforced eyes.
- Manufactured from red polyester flat woven duplex.
- At each end sewn into the webbing loop is a 75mm steel bull ring with breaking force of 2 tonnes.
- Starting 750mm from each end 'D' rings are attached at 200mm intervals by 40mm blue webbing sewn onto the main sling. Each has a breaking force of 2 tonnes.
- The 'D' rings are specifically designed to provide an anchor point for the quick release straps (described below).
- Length: 3metres
- Width: 150mm
- Working load 5 tonne
- Safety factor 7:1
- BS EN 1492



LFB image id:579344

2.6 Front and rear quick release spill strap x 2



LFB image id:714955

- Designed to prevent an animal spilling either forwards or backwards out of the main lifting slings when necessary.
- The quick release straps are attached to the 'D' rings on the main lifting sling.
- Comprises an orange nylon webbing strap with a snap hook at each end and a buckle to allow the strap to be adjusted.
- Each strap is fitted with a quick release shackle fitted with a yellow lanyard.

2.7 The additional animal rescue equipment comprises the following:

2.8 Animal Rescue Harness



LFB image id:579352

- To enable a cow or horse to be lifted and suspended where a greater degree of support for the animal is required and/or veterinary treatment is needed.
- Constructed of synthetic webbing with stainless steel ring and snap hook attachments.
- The gross weight of the harness is 7 kg.
- Maximum safe working load is 1 tonne.
- Tested to 2 tonnes.
- Suitable for all breeds of cattle and horses up to 800kg with a guide height of 17 hands.
- Carried in its own dedicated bag.

2.9 Animal Rescue Harness Sling 1.5m

- Sling for use with the Animal Rescue Harness.
- Constructed of sewn synthetic webbing with a 'D' ring at each end.
- Length: 1.5 metres.
- See working load limits described on blue label.
- Working load limit (WLL): 1 tonne with sling in a straight line.



LFB image id:1570264

2.10 Flat Sling 9m

- General purpose sling, mainly used for the various skid type rescues
- Constructed of synthetic webbing with sewn in soft eye at each end.
- The centre of the sling has a red tab stitched on to denote the centre line.
- Maximum safe working load (SWL): 3 tonnes.
- Length: 9 metres
- Width: 75mm



LFB image id:774730

2.11 Hobble x 4

- To restrain large animals limbs during a rescue and to enable a large animal to be lifted by its limbs if necessary.
- Constructed from polyester webbing roved with an adjustable loop and fitted with a steel bull ring at the standing end.



LFB image id:712258

2.12 Animal slip path

- Constructed of duraskin plastic.
- Fitted with 10 x 'D' rings on each long side.
- 4.92 metres x 1.25 metres



LFB image id:579340

2.13 Heavy limb crook x2



LFB image id:579352

- To assist in controlling and herding livestock and to help lift and manoeuvre animals limbs from a safe distance.
- Constructed from aluminium alloy tube 1.45m x 25mm external diameter
- It has a plastic handle grip on the straight end and plastic bung in the crooked end.
- The crooked end is 180mm across its mouth to allow for large animal limb handling.

2.14 Carry sheet

- To assist in the lifting and removal of small animals
- Constructed of canvass 1.6m x 1.2m with four complete loops of polyester webbing stitched into the canvass giving four grab handles on each side.
- The sheet can be adjusted in size by folding the ends in to suit the size of the load.
- Tested to 3 tonnes.



LFB image id:579338

2.15 Strop guide (needle) x 2



LFB image id:579357

- Designed to enable the placing of strops and harnesses under a large animal in various configurations in a safe manner.
- Dimensions: Length 2160mm x width 40mm
- Constructed from 4mm thick steel.
- Incorporating a 'D' shaped handle at one end and a hook with steel ball at the other.
- Painted yellow so they can be identified easily in undergrowth.

2.16 **Lunge rein** x 1

- Polyester webbing strap of 8 metres (right)
- Fitted with a spring bolt clip at one end.



LFB image id:712081

2.17 **Lead rope** x 1 (above)

- Rope of 2 metres
- Fitted with a spring bolt clip at one end



LFB image id:712082

2.18 **Head collar**

- Constructed from terylene webbing
- Fitted with adjustable buckles and spring bolt clips



LFB image id:712080

3 Safety precautions

- 3.1 The appropriate level of PPE must be worn when deploying this equipment, including water rescue PPE when working near, on, or in water as per Policy number 581 – Water rescue and safety when working near, on or in water.
- 3.2 Nitrile gloves must be worn when dealing with animals or where there are large quantities of mud and excrement involved.
- 3.3 Electrical gloves should be considered if the animal is near or in contact with an electrical supply.
- 3.4 This equipment should only be operated by personnel who have received training in its specific use and have studied the relevant policies.
- 3.5 A dynamic risk assessment must be carried out prior to the use of this equipment to check its suitability for the task.
- 3.6 All appropriate safety and control measures must be put in place before commencement of operations as per Policy number 892 - Animal rescue.
- 3.7 All animals that require rescue, should as a general principle be considered a hazard.
- 3.8 Consider the use of shielding to protect against kicks from the animal.
- 3.9 The appropriate manual handling lifting techniques are to be used, in accordance with manual handling guidance notes.
- 3.10 The risk of viral and bacterial infections should be considered and appropriate measures taken.
- 3.11 Before leaving the incident, crews must wash their hands and any contaminated parts of their skin by using disinfectant gel (available on SAP – V3048A).
- 3.12 All equipment used should be washed down on site and disinfected using Anigene disinfectant where necessary and as instructed by the HMEPO.

4 Operating instructions

- 4.1 This equipment should only be deployed and operated by personnel who have completed the animal handling course.
- 4.2 This equipment is to be used/operated as per current training guidance and protocols.

After use:

- 4.3 The equipment should be cleaned as described below.
- 4.4 Once returned to station the equipment must be removed from the appliance inspected and tested as described below.

5 Maintenance and testing

- On acceptance.
- After use.
- Quarterly.
- 6 monthly (by the Vehicle & Equipment (V&E) contractor).

5.1 Visual inspection

- Carry out a visual inspection of each individual item of equipment.
- Check general condition of all items.
- Ensure free movement of all moving components, making sure each item operates correctly.

5.2 **Metal items**

5.3 This consists of all metal items including those metal items like rings, hooks, clips, etc permanently attached to fabric items ropes, lines and lanyards.

- Each item is to be thoroughly examined for serious abrasion, rust, cracks, burrs, or deformation.
- Any buckles, hooks, connectors, fittings etc attached to a fabric item are to be checked to ensure they are securely attached and operate correctly.
- Check any welds for signs of deterioration.
- Check condition of any paintwork.

5.4 **Fabric items**

5.5 This consists of all fabric items, including slings, straps, harnesses, sheets, etc.

- Each item is to be checked for cuts, fraying or damage caused by abrasion.
- Any stitching in a fabric item must be thoroughly checked. Particular attention should be paid to anchor point areas.

5.6 **Ropes, lines, lanyards**

- Each item is to be visually inspected along its entire length and checked for cuts, or damage from abrasion.
- Particular attention should be paid to any attachment points.
- Each end is to be checked for excessive wear.
- Any suspected damage is to be referred to the V&E contractor

5.7 **Cleaning**

- Any equipment used should be washed down on site with clean water and disinfectant.
- Disinfect equipment with Anigene disinfectant (available on SAP part no. V2486) as instructed by the HMEPO. Refer to Policy number 892 – Animal rescue.
- The Anigene should be mixed with water at a 1:50 ratio. This equates to 100ml of Anigene to 5 litres of water. The 1 litre bottle of Anigene has a measuring device on top to allow the right amount to be measured. This is then put in the 5 litre pressure spray unit with 5 litres of water.
- Policy number 707 - The control of infection and infectious diseases policy should be referred to if in doubt.
- Expert advice on cleaning heavily contaminated equipment can be sought from the HMEPO who will liaise with the scientific advisor if necessary.

5.8 On return to station ensure the equipment is inspected, ensuring that it is thoroughly clean and disinfected.

5.9 All items **must** be dried using a cloth or (if absorbent material) allowed to dry naturally and fully before being made up. The equipment should not be restowed until it is completely dry.

5.10 Tests are to be recorded on the standard test card F426.

6 Defects

6.1 The Animal rescue and ancillary equipment are Cat. B items under the V&E contract.

6.2 Defects should be reported via SAP. Part numbers as follows:

• Animal rescue, spreader beam (complete)	S8426
• Animal rescue, quick release spill strap	S8427
• Animal rescue, release lanyard (green)	S8428
• Animal rescue, release lanyard (red)	S8428A
• Animal rescue, main lifting sling	S8429
• Animal rescue, harness	S8430
• Animal rescue, harness bag	S8431
• Animal rescue, harness sling 1.5m	S8581
• Animal rescue, flat sling 9m	S8440
• Animal rescue, hobble	S8432
• Animal rescue, slip path	S8433
• Animal rescue, heavy limb crook	S8434
• Animal rescue, carry sheet	S8435
• Animal rescue, strop guide (needle)	S8436
• Animal rescue, lunge rein	S8437
• Animal rescue, lead rope	S8438
• Animal rescue, head collar	S8439
• Pressure spray unit (5 litre)	V4071
• Disinfectant, Anigene 1 litre	V2486

7 Associated material

7.1 To be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Policy number 129 – Tirfor TU16 coilamatic – lifting and pulling machine – technical information.
- Policy number 174 – Control of substances hazardous to health regulations.
- Policy number 540 – Manual handling.
- Policy number 581 – Water rescue and safety when working in, on or near water.
- Policy number 598 – Provision and use of work equipment.
- Policy number 707 – Control of infection and infectious diseases policy.
- Policy number 724 – Appliance inventories and operational readiness.
- Policy number 823 – Mud lance equipment – technical information.
- Policy number 892 – Animal rescue.
- Policy number 979 – Rescue – NOG.
- Policy number 985 – Operational safety management - knowledge skills and competence – NOG.
- Policy number 1024 – Site-specific risk information – knowledge, skills and competence – NOG.

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	22/12/22	SDIA	H - 28/09/16	HSWIA	05/06/18	RA	N/A
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Section 7 Appendix 1	Additional PN reference added to list. Appendix 1 removed as relates to old FRU which is no longer current.	22/12/2022
Para 2.9 & 6.2	New item of equipment (harness sling 1.5m) added to animal rescue equipment.	09/02/2023
Page 9, para 7.1	References to cancelled PN800 - Management of operational risk information replaced with PN1024 - Site specific risk information - knowledge skills and competence – NOG.	30/09/2025
Throughout	Reviewed as current. 'Fire Rescue Unit added to subject list, no further changes made.	12/01/2026

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Equipment - Operational	Equipment - Rescue
Technical information	Water rescue
Animal rescue	Fire Rescue Unit

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification

Domestic/small animal oxygenation equipment - technical information

New policy number: **1025**
Old instruction number:
Issue date: **9 September 2025**
Reviewed as current:
Owner: **Assistant Commissioner, Operational Policy**
Responsible work team: **Rescue & ISAR Policy**

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Domestic/small animal oxygen therapy kit

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy describes the domestic/small animal oxygenation equipment and explains its operation, maintenance and testing.
- 1.2 The animal oxygenation equipment is carried on all pumping appliances.
- 1.3 This technical note should be read in conjunction with the ZD cylinder technical note.

2 Description

- 2.1 The domestic/small animal oxygenation kit is carried on all frontline pumping appliances and is designed to allow the safe administration of oxygen to small animals to reverse hypoxia secondary to smoke inhalation.
- 2.2 The animal oxygenation mask is designed to be used on spontaneously breathing animals to correct hypoxia and reverse carbon monoxide poisoning. The animal oxygen equipment is made up of various items as described below:
 - 3 sizes of reusable pet oxygen therapy masks
 - 3 sets of tubing and connections that fit all regular medical oxygen cylinders.
 - 2 x sizes of basket style muzzles
 - 2 x mountain rope slip leads

In combination with clingfilm and blankets from the IEC Bag, sharps protection from the RTC equipment and domestic towels and blankets a comprehensive equipment range exists.

3 Method of use

- 3.1 Indicators for use of oxygen therapy for animals include unconsciousness, smoke inhalation, respiratory distress and trauma. Animals exposed to fire gases are physiologically more sensitive than humans. If an animal does not display respiratory distress but has been exposed to fire gases, oxygen administration is still indicated.
 - (a) Animals should be contained or restrained using the equipment provided to facilitate safe treatment and remove the chance of injury or escape. If an animal is already contained in a suitable and safe cage, it is preferable, if possible, to leave in situ and create an oxygen enriched environment using the clingfilm from the IEC pack.
 - (b) Risk assess the breed, size and demeanour of the dog.
 - (c) As part of your situational awareness consider the type of dog and living environment.
 - (d) As soon as practicable apply two opposing slip leads.
 - (e) Remove the dog to a treatment area.
 - (f) If safe to do so, check the face and airway.
 - (g) Fitting a muzzle is good practice. It will minimise the risk of injury and pre-empt any behavioural changes.
 - (h) Commence oxygen therapy for minimum 20 minutes. Refer to Aid memoir for flow rates and procedures.

- (i) Use appropriately sized masks over the basket muzzle or flow by if the animal does not tolerate the mask. The nitrile seal can be removed from the mask for greater sizing flexibility.
 - (j) Consider an oxygen enriched environment for dogs that are contained for convenience and safety.
 - (k) Advise the owner or responsible person to transfer to veterinary care.
- 3.2 Once resuscitation is complete and the animal has been returned to the care of a responsible person place the animal oxygenation kit in a disposable bag for return to station.
- (a) If possible, wash off equipment in water before return to station. During this process, try to avoid exposure to the water run-off.
 - (b) On return to station masks should be checked for damage, cleaned and re-stowed.
 - (c) Cleaning can be carried out with hot soapy water, rinsing and allowing to dry.
 - (d) If masks or tubing have been damaged, order replacements on SAP.

4 Oxygen supply and flow rates

- 4.1 The ZD oxygen cylinder from the IEC bag should be used as the oxygen source. At all times **human casualties take precedence** over animal casualties and if the incident is ongoing a dynamic risk assessment should be carried out to make sure sufficient oxygen supplies remain to treat unexpected casualties.
- 4.2 Animal oxygen flow rates:
- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • FELINE (small mask) | 1 - 3 Litres Per Minute |
| • SMALL CANINE (medium mask) | 3 - 5 Litres Per Minute |
| • LARGE CANINE (large mask) | 5 - 7 Litres Per Minute |
- 4.3 Flow by oxygen delivery may be used as an alternative to the masks with an open-ended tube place in front of the animal's nose and mouth at 15LPM.
- 4.4 Oxygen Tent = 15 LPM before introduction of animal to enrich environment, reducing to 4 LPM on introduction of animal for maintenance. This is achieved by partially sealing an animal cage with cling film leaving an opening high up in the cage for the insertion of the oxygen tube. Oxygen 1.1 times heavier than and will collect at the bottom of the cage.
- 4.5 Brachycephalic breeds (such as Pugs) have been bred specifically for infant like facial structures. These may be best served by flow by techniques or oxygen tent treatment in their cages rather than using the designated animal oxygen masks. **Warning: Most muzzles will not fit brachycephalic breeds.**

5 Preparing for use

- 5.1 On receipt of a new cylinder, it may be necessary to remove a "tamper evident hand wheel cover" (grey) in order to be able to turn on the cylinder using the easy on off wheel. AS PER POLICY.

6 Care, maintenance and cleaning

- 6.1 The animal oxygenation kit is multi use and not disposable. The equipment should be rinsed of at scene to remove gross contamination before being transported back to station.
- 6.2 On return to station masks should be checked for damage, have the nitrile seal removed, cleaned, dried, reassembled and re-stowed.

- 6.3 Cleaning can be carried out with hot soapy water, rinsing and allowing to dry.
- 6.4 If masks or tubing have been damaged, order replacements on SAP.

Document history

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EIA		SDIA		HSWIA		RA	
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Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Equipment – rescue	First aid
IEC	ZD cylinder
Medical	

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification