



Rope Rescue Challenge Programme 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Welcome to the Rope Rescue Challenge 2023.
- 1.2. To some, the development of the Challenge appears to be just a competition, but far more than that it is a learning platform, matching talents, and skills through assessment.
- 1.3. The UK Rope Rescue Challenge is open to all UK Fire and Rescue Services.
- 1.4. The aim is to bring together teams of rope rescue personnel who are committed, not only to displaying their ability, but also to expanding their practical skills by learning from and teaching others involved in the same discipline.
- 1.5. The experiences teams will be exposed to during the event will fuel their own development and be taken back with them to enrich their service's procedures. It is necessary to study current rope rescue philosophy and techniques, search out new developments and innovative new ideas if we wish to perfect our skills.
- 1.6. The emphasis in the Rope Rescue Challenge is to develop and promote good practice. The ethos is not primarily to win, but to use what is learnt at these events to save those whom we serve, as well as protecting ourselves, the rescuers.

2. The Mission

- 2.1. To provide an arena for rope rescue personnel from across the UK to come together, in order to stimulate and develop proficiency levels in all areas of rope rescue and rope access, but specifically in:
 - Incident Command
 - Safety
 - General Techniques
 - Pre-Hospital Medical Care
 - Selection and Use of Equipment
- 2.2. To accelerate the natural learning curve of our teams/services to meet the demands made by modern rope rescue emergencies by providing a realistic education platform for rescuers.
- 2.3. To focus the event on personal development, by allowing rope rescue practitioners to meet, exchange and share knowledge, develop skills, and stimulate ingenuity, the teams will achieve a higher level of professionalism to the advantage of those we serve.
- 2.4. To encourage participants to make hard and critical examination of their own command, decision making and risk assessment skills, as well as the practical application of techniques and equipment available to them.

- 2.5. To identify 'good practice' through review of the training techniques/practices implemented by participating teams and transfer that knowledge into the workplace.

3. The Objectives

- 3.1. To promote rope rescue training.
- 3.2. To emphasise scene and casualty safety and develop a safety-first attitude amongst all rescuers.
- 3.3. To encourage and develop risk analysis skills that result in effective command solutions.
- 3.4. To develop and promote methods and protocols for efficient, safer rope rescue response.
- 3.5. To encourage higher, more proficient levels of casualty care among rope rescue practitioners.
- 3.6. To foster the trial and testing of a wider range of rope rescue techniques and equipment.
- 3.7. To stimulate ingenuity in terms of skill, practices and equipment to advance the best safe concept.
- 3.8. To allow teams to observe other teams at work and learn from them.
- 3.9. To allow teams and operators from diverse areas to meet and exchange knowledge and information.

4. The Challenge

- 4.1. The Challenge will be run over two days. All teams will take part in all evolutions which will consist of Scenarios and Technical Skills tests.
- 4.2. Scenarios will be assessed, using common criteria, by a team of up to 3 assessors who will score one or more of the following areas:
 - Incident command and control (Command)
 - Physical rescue and general techniques (Technical)
 - Pre-hospital care (Medical).
- 4.3. Each evolution will involve elements of raising, lowering and technical rope work where a casualty is to be accessed, packaged and transported to the indicated level over some height difference. Teams are able to utilise the full range of approved equipment and materials to affect the rescue (unless an equipment restriction is in force).
- 4.4. Each scenario and Technical Skills Test will have a time limit.
- 4.5. The Team Leader and Medic must remain in role throughout the Challenge as Awards are given for these roles. Teams may have up to two substitutes that may be used to replace the other team members during two-day Challenge.

- 4.6. Each team will be given a hot debrief immediately following their run off. It must be noted that the assessors' decision is final, and all participants are asked to respect that decision.
- 4.7. Information regarding the team's performance will be forwarded post event.
- 4.8. The UKRO uses live casualties. They are all medically trained and will have an input into the medical rescue assessment.
- 4.9. A copy of the scoring sheets which are used by the UKRO assessors will be available to every team via the web.

5. The Rules

- 5.1. No team will participate without the written authorisation from a senior manager of their Fire and Rescue Service.
- 5.2. A team will consist of **5 personnel**.

Team composition:

1. Team Leader
2. Medic
3. Team member
4. Team member
5. Team member

Team Leaders and Medics must remain in role throughout the Challenge. We feel a team of 5 is more realistic and may also help some teams to attend.

- 5.3. All participants must wear suitable PPE approved by their own organisation and appropriate to the task.
- 5.4. Each team will be assessed in three primary areas during their Scenario evolutions:
 - Incident command and control
 - Technical rescue and general techniques
 - Pre-hospital care of the patient.

Plus, the urgency in which the whole evolution is undertaken will also be considered as part of the assessment.

- 5.5. Live casualties will be used in the Challenge, and marks will be awarded for correct casualty handling.
- 5.6. Basic packaging of the patient will be evaluated using the ABC and S protocols, with care and safety being of prime importance.

Note:

A = Airway Management

B = Breathing & Resuscitation

C = Circulation

S = Spinal Care

- 5.7. Each evolution will have allocated up to 3 assessors who will be working under the direction of the UKRO Rope Rescue Lead.
- 5.8. All scoring information will remain the property of the UKRO and shall remain confidential.
- 5.9. The decision of the UKRO Rope Rescue Lead concerning any assessment or conduct will be deemed to be final.
- 5.10. Assessors will supervise each evolution with authority to halt any action deemed to be in breach of safe working practice. Such a breach shall not on the first occasion incur time penalties, however subsequent breaches will incur penalties.
- 5.11. At the start of each scenario the Command Assessor will read the brief to the Team Leader and answer any questions. Once the scenario has commenced there is to be no more communications with the assessors other than safety critical, any attempt to question assessors during the evolution will be met with silence.
- 5.12. Teams may use radio communications. Teams doing so must supply an additional radio to the Command Assessor. Radios must not interfere with host service's communications.
- 5.13. Teams may be required to produce valid inspection records.
- 5.14. Teams will have to provide all their own personal safety and emergency medical equipment.
- 5.15. Access to the 'Team Holding' area will be unavailable once the scenario starts. Pre-rigging of equipment will be allowed.
- 5.16. Teams may loan equipment to other teams ensuring any safety features are fully understood by the recipient.
- 5.17. Teams will present themselves to the 'Team Holding' area as specified during Team Leaders' briefing.

Note: failure to do so may result in elimination of the Team.

- 5.18. There will be a Team Leaders' briefing immediately **before** the Opening Ceremony.

Note: it is mandatory that all Team Leaders attend this briefing.

- 5.19. UKRO and the Host will not be responsible for any damage or loss of any equipment as a result of participating in this event.

- 5.20. Staff compensation, insurance etc. for the protection of the team members shall be the sole responsibility of the participants in the event. The Host shall supply 3rd party liability insurance.
- 5.21. All Rope Access and Rope Rescue systems must be used within the equipment safely limitations, and as per manufacture instruction.
- 5.22. System Redundancy is required at all times when participants and rescue loads are in suspension or at risk of a fall.
- 5.23. System Redundancy
- (a) By definition, a redundant element of a rope system is one that is not needed for the system to be successfully used to achieve its intended action. Redundant elements will prevent a catastrophic event in the event of a failure in another part of the system.
 - (b) As such, a system with complete redundancy is one that will not catastrophically fail as a consequence of the failure of any single component, or the action (or inaction) of any single person.
 - (c) To maintain redundancy a double system must be provided whenever a failure would potentially result in injuries, uncontrolled movement or fall or damage to equipment. All openable components with the potential for operator error must be backed up.
 - (d) The general aim is to have rope systems with no single point or person of failure.
- 5.24. Redundancy Exceptions (Single Critical Points)

The following are considered to be Single Critical Points:

- An Anchor of sufficient strength and stability – unquestionably reliable either by obvious characteristics or engineered rating.
- Harness – Conformity EN361 or EN813.
- Stretcher (when training with live casualties, a second attachment point to the casualty's body harness is required).
- Rigging plates – A single anchor component - however complete system failure would require multi-point failure of the rigging plate.

Note: small rigging plates with the potential for a single route of failure should be backed up.

- BFK – A large single knot that brings together multi-strands of rope to create a directional and force distributing focal point.

Note: When used critical points must be double checked by a second operator whenever possible.

6. Code of Conduct

- 6.1. All participants are reminded that they are not only representatives of their own Service, but also the firefighting profession as a whole and are requested to conduct themselves accordingly.
- 6.2. Both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies are formal functions and teams are expected to present themselves in their Service's shirt sleeve order. Caps are not to be worn.
- 6.3. Participants are expected to be smartly dressed whilst at the Challenge venue, it is preferred that working rig be worn to tour the site, however this can be relaxed to casual wear, so long as it is smart and approved by the team manager.
- 6.4. Full protective clothing will be worn in the pit and service area, this may be relaxed during 'make up' at the discretion of the senior assessor and when weather conditions demand.
- 6.5. It is accepted that the evenings' events perform an important part of the socialising aspect of the Challenge, but participants are again reminded to behave in a manner befitting their Service and have due regard to non-service persons who may share the same facilities.
- 6.6. Fair play and good sportsmanship is respected and valued. It is expected from all participants and their teams during their scenarios and as spectators to other teams.
- 6.7. Participants are not to canvass any assessor(s) or official(s).
- 6.8. Team Leaders will be held accountable for their respective teams.

7. Tools of Equipment

- 7.1. All rescue equipment supplied by teams must meet all EN or international standards. Any equipment outside these specifications (e.g. lightweight personal mechanical advantage systems, "homemade" gear, etc) must be presented for scrutiny. Use of an unapproved device/equipment not meeting the specifications will result in disqualification of the team from the event.

8. Health and Safety

- 8.1. A risk assessment will be conducted prior to each evolution by an assessor to ensure the safety of both participants and spectators. Dynamic risk assessment will occur throughout the evolution, not only by the team involved but also by the assessors.
- 8.2. Any unsafe or potentially unsafe practice will be stopped immediately and put right (see Rule 5.10).
- 8.3. All activities within the Challenge site fall under the control of designated staff who have been tasked by the UKRO to maintain high standards of health and safety principals. Teams must play their part in upholding those standards.
- 8.4. No team will be allowed to commence their task without direct approval of the Lead Assessor, subject in all cases, to the following:

- All team members are properly attired in approved personal protective equipment.
 - All non-proprietary equipment is accompanied by the relevant documentation.
 - The assessor has 'cleared' the scenario.
- 8.5. An official acting on behalf of the UKRO, who observes a potential or existing danger, will immediately halt the assessment by a long whistle blast. Any activity carried out after the blowing of the whistle, other than to ensure safety, will be penalised at the discretion of the Senior Assessor present.
- 8.6. A member of a participating team who notices an existing or potential danger must call a halt to any activity by shouting 'Still'. Any activity carried out after the calling of 'Still', except to make safe, will be penalised at the discretion of the Senior Assessor present.
- 8.7. All scenario activities will halt immediately at the audible signal (Acme Thunderer Whistle) indicating the end of the allocated time. The event assessor(s) will allow a team to complete a specific action to ensure a safe environment is maintained.
- 8.8. The casualty's safety critical PPE must be maintained at all times. Failure to do so may result in loss of points or possible disqualification.
- 8.9. An operator suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the event will be disqualified.

9. Assessing and Scoring

- 9.1. During scenarios each team will be assessed in the following areas by a panel of three assessors and are equally important in the overall scenario marking scheme:
- Incident Command and Control (Command)
 - Physical Rescue and General Techniques (Technical)
 - Pre-Hospital care (Medical)
- 9.2. The Technical Skills Test will contribute to the overall score based on the team's ability to safely and efficiently complete a prescribed task (see Appendix).
- 9.3. Copies of all the assessment sheets in use each year will be available to download via the UKRO website (www.ukro.org).
- 9.4. Basic packaging of the casualty will be evaluated using the ABC and S Protocols, with care and safety being of prime importance.

Note:

- *A = Airway Management*
- *B = Breathing and Resuscitation*
- *C = Circulation*
- *S = Spinal Care*

- 9.5. On the scenario sheets points awarded per sub-section will be totalled and each sub-section added together to give an overall score for that particular category.
- 9.6. The total points awarded in each category will be added together towards an overall award for that scenario.
- 9.7. The time penalties system will be:
- Any perceived breach of the standards within this document will cause the scenario/ test and the clock to be halted, with no activities by any team member.
 - If the explanation/action by the team is satisfactory to the assessor, the clock will start again, and the scenario/test finish time will be altered to allow the team the full period of working.
 - If the assessor deems that the explanation is not satisfactory the time the explanation took will be deducted from the overall scenario time and the team will be required to modify their plan.
 - Any further breaches will potentially lead to disqualification
- 9.8. The above system will ensure that any miss-perception of team's actions by assessors will not result in unnecessary penalties.
- 9.9. All teams will cycle through all the Challenge scenarios over the two day event..
- 9.10. Teams will be afforded receive a UKRO assessor 'Hot Debrief' immediately following each scenario or skills test.
- 9.11. It must be noted that the assessors' decision is final, and all participants are asked to respect that decision.
- 9.12. Assessors have the authority to suspend any scenario when, in the assessor's opinion, their commands (or those of another assessor) have been blatantly ignored or misrepresented and may result in a time penalty.
- 9.13. In the event of any dispute with an assessor's decision concerning any assessment or breach of conduct, the UKRO Rope Lead Assessor will arbitrate.
- 9.14. In the interests of good order and the promotion of a professional appearance of all teams a code of conduct has been prepared. Disregarding the Code of Conduct by any participant or team can, at the discretion of the UKRO Rope Lead Assessor, lead to the disqualification of the respective team and/or the suspension of the team from the Challenge.

10. Awards

- 10.1. At each National UKRO Challenge, recognition is given for the performances of the team and team's members in the form of awards. The effort and dedication that has been put in by participants for this Challenge over many months culminates in a formal award ceremony at a prestigious venue, where the following achievements are acknowledged.
- 10.2. Awards are made for:

- 1st Team

- 2nd Team
- 3rd Team
- 1st Incident Commander
- 1st Medic
- 1st Technical Team

10.3. First, second and third placed teams will be decided by the overall scores achieved over both Challenge days.

10.4. The Best Team Leader will be awarded to the highest accumulative score.

10.5. The Best Medic will be awarded to the highest accumulative score.

10.6. The Best Technical Team will be awarded to the highest accumulative score.

11. Entry for the Challenge

11.1. Registration is via the UKRO Academy site and a link will be provided prior to registration opening.

11.2. Registration will be open from 1 May 2023 until 12 June 2023.

11.3. In order to register a team you will need to have the Team Captain's name, email address and mobile phone number.

11.4. Ideally, you should also have the names and email addresses for each Team member. You will not be able to add these later but if not supplied at registration they should be emailed to ggoodman@ukro.org. Any changes should also be emailed. It is important that we have the correct names and email addresses for those attending the Challenge so that information can be directly send to attendees.

11.5. Payment will again only be made via invoice and so you will need a Purchase Order from your Fire Service to enter. If you have this available at the time of registration you should add this into the PO box. If not, then it should be supplied as soon as possible after registration to ggoodman@ukro.org.

11.6. If you have any problems with completing registration you should contact imarritt@ukro.org.

11.7. Registration will automatically close when the 12th team has entered. If this occurs please contact ggoodman@ukro.org in order to be put on the reserve list.

11.8. Terms and Conditions of Registration

1. If for any reason a team is not accepted as a valid entrant to the competition all entry fees will be refunded in full.
2. All entry fees, once teams have been entered, are non-refundable unless the event is cancelled by UKRO.
3. In the event of cancellation the liability of UKRO shall not extend beyond the value of the entry fees paid.

4. Invoices must be paid with 14 days of being sent by UKRO by e mail.

12. Copyright

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APPENDIX - TECHNICAL SKILL TESTS RULES

Rope Rescue Teams may be expected to demonstrate any or all the following personal skills:

1. Work restraint systems
2. Work positioning systems
3. Fall arrest systems
4. Creating suitable anchor systems
5. Access ropes - ascending & descending
6. Passing mid-rope obstructions
7. Passing a mid-rope deviation
8. Effective protection of ropes and equipment
9. Negotiating an intermediate anchor
10. Negotiating an edge obstruction
11. Traversing whilst in suspension
12. Transfer between ropes and anchors
13. Building and Implementing lowering/hauling systems
14. Passing Knots though lowering/hauling
15. Intervention (access & pick off) rescues

The Technical Skill Tests will have the following conditions:

- Each technical skill test will have a time limit for completion - teams will be informed of this limit during the skill test briefing.
- Some tests may not have marks awarded for command or medical components - teams will be informed if this is the case during the skill test briefing.
- Marks will be awarded as follows:
 - The team with the quickest time will be awarded 240 points.
 - Teams finishing after that time will be awarded a reduced number of points: the reduction being calculated at 1 point for every 6 seconds longer than the quickest team (i.e. if a team finishes 60 seconds after the quickest team, they will be awarded 10 points)

less than the 240 awarded to the quickest time, that being 230 marks).

- No points will be awarded to any team finishing 24 minutes or more after the quickest team.
- All systems must be operated in such a way that the movement of each individual is controlled at all times. Actions that may permit any uncontrolled movement of an individual will be considered unsafe.
- If any team member undertakes any action that, in the opinion of the assessors is unsafe, the Challenge will be halted (with no time loss to the team) to allow the assessor to confirm the situation. If the action is proved to be unsafe, the team will be required to rectify the situation before continuing. Timing will continue whilst these actions are undertaken. If the action proves to be safe, the Challenge will continue with no loss of time to the team.
- A repeated example of an unsafe practice will result in the team member being stopped in order to correct the problem before continuing with the skill test.
- Penalties - To promote safety and best practice a Penalty Point will be issued every time a minor safety fault is committed. Each Penalty Points accumulated during the skills test will result in 20 seconds being added to the team's final time.
- All team members must operate safely at all times. Failing to do so will constitute a major safety fault. Any individual committing a single major safety fault will result in that Individual being disqualified and 1/6 of the team's final point score for that test being lost.
- Minor safety faults - the following is a non-exhaustive list of minor safety faults:
 - Descender not locked off or no control of the tail rope connectors not secured.
 - Poor management of back-up device/safety attachment (major fault if safety critical).
 - Slack rope between tooth ascender and anchor point (major fault if safety critical).
 - Small out-of-control swing.
 - No additional friction when required.
 - Minor safety issue as defined by an assessor.
- All team members must operate safely at all times. Failing to do so will constitute a major safety fault. Any individual committing a single major safety fault will result in that Individual being disqualified and 1/6 of the team's final point score for that test being lost.

To allow the team to finish the test, all team members will be allowed to continue to completion of the Challenge or until time runs out (including any that have been disqualified).

All team members (including any that have already been disqualified) will remain liable to disqualification with the maximum number of disqualifications being 6. If this number is reached, the team will be directed to stop the test, safely de-rig and move to the ground.

- Major safety critical faults - the following is a non-exhaustive list of Major safety critical faults:
 - Not being attached when at risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury.
 - 1 point of safety attachment when suspended.
 - Inappropriate or ineffective rope protection.
 - No protection to protect against a potential swing that could cause injury or damage to equipment.
 - Uncontrolled movement.
 - Safety critical misuse of Personal Protective Equipment.
 - Safety critical issue as defined by an assessor.
- The Challenge will finish when all the conditions of the skill test have been completed.
- In situations where the allotted time for the Challenge has elapsed and this time is still within 24 minutes of the time of the fastest team, points will be available to those teams that do not fully complete the Challenge as follows:
 - The team score will be calculated by reducing their score by 1 point every 6 seconds longer than the quickest team.
 - 1/3 of this score will be awarded for the completion of every two team members that did complete the Challenge within the allotted time.
 - This resultant score will still be subject to any reduction due to any disqualifications that the team
- Unless specifically stated, the skill tests are designed to be undertaken using only the equipment normally carried by a rope rescue technician. All equipment used by teams in the skills tests will be examined by the assessing team with each FRS's Standard Operating Procedures being required to prove that all equipment carried by each individual complies with their own service policy.
- Once a Challenge has started no further equipment may be sourced by the teams.
- The UKRO Rope Lead Assessor has the final decision over the items of equipment that may be used by the team and will make final judgments on any assessment issues.