

# GWO TRAINING INCIDENT REPORT

10 March 2021

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To: All GWO Training Providers  
From: GWO Secretariat  
Cc: GWO Audit & Compliance Committee  
Subject: Incident at GWO certified training provider during Sea Survival training

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## Introduction:

GWO Training Providers are being encouraged to consider a range of immediate and long-term corrective actions which have been identified following a recent incident and investigation at a certified training centre. While the incident took place during a GWO Sea Survival training, several of the corrective actions proposed have broader applications during all types of training and have been approved by the GWO Audit & Compliance Committee following review of the incident report.

It is every GWO training provider's duty to consider these instructions carefully when planning and delivering training, with a particular emphasis on identifying all potential hazards that could risk injury to instructors or participants.

## Background:

During Sea survival training which took place in the harbor close to the training provider's facilities using a two-story platform, an instructor was hit in the head with a life raft being launched from the second level of the platform.

## Incident:

The training team consisted of 3 instructors and 12 course participants. Following the safety briefing, the instructors and participants walked to the upper level of the platform, where the life raft to be used in the exercises was located.

The Instructor roles for the training were allocated as follows:

- Instructor A (IA): lead Instructor supervising the exercises on the upper platform.
- Instructor B (IB): on the lower platform, step-off into water and turn life raft.
- Instructor C (IP): in the water, receiving the life raft and demonstrating entry into the life raft.

The instructor (IP) climbed into the water and stood on the seabed 3 meters from the platform. Participants were briefed by (IA) on how to launch the life raft (dropping it over edge of the platform). Both (IP) and (IB) gave verbal "clear" sign and two participants launched the life raft. Instead of rolling the life raft over the side of the platform, the participants gave the life raft a swing before letting go, which extended the expected landing area to the area where (IP) was placed.



(IA) noticed that (IP) laid unconscious on his back in the water. (IP) had been struck on his head by the life raft. (IA) alerted (IB), who attempted initial rescue but had to abandon the attempt owing to their feet becoming stuck in the muddy seabed. Finally, both instructors and several participants conducted rescue/first aid, lifting (IP) onto the vessel, and from there to the platform where (IP) was placed on a spine board.

Meanwhile, (IA) requested a participant to call the emergency services as he did not have a phone with him. The participant placing the emergency call was unaware that the emergency procedure required a call to the Harbor Office to unblock the security gate, which caused delay to the ambulance's arrival. Paramedics continued to apply first aid to (IP) in the ambulance, heading towards hospital, where (IP) was placed in a medically induced coma in critical but stable condition.

#### **Immediate corrections:**

Instructor on upper deck must receive verbal confirmation from instructor on lower deck before launch. Life raft must be tipped/rolled and not thrown into the water. No persons in the water during launch of life raft. Instructor cannot enter the water until after the life raft have been launched.

#### **Corrective actions:**

- Risk Blindness – Review of practices that were in place to ensure that no other potential hazards are overlooked.
- Activity overview – develop a launch mechanism for one instructor to launch the life raft without the involvement of participants.
- Risk assessments - review of risk assessments by a cross-functional team as a dropped object hazard has been overlooked. Including risk to all people at the location such as instructors, visitors etc.
- Emergency response – Update to the readiness plan so safety briefings make course participants aware of their role in an emergency if an instructor should be incapacitated. Furthermore to include a rescue device to extract injured person's feet from the muddy seabed and incident management procedure to be reviewed to include a section of psychological first aid for those involved in a traumatic incident.