

Incident Debrief: Ferry Fire River Exe	
ECC Responders:	Grahame Forshaw & Harbour/canal Team
Date:	27/11/24
Time:	12:55 pm
Location:	Exe Estuary – off Starcross pier

Overview:

At approximately 12:55pm on 27/11/24, Exeter City Council (ECC) Harbour Master, supported by the Harbour team (two vessels and four staff), arrived on scene at a small privately owned commercial ferry fire. On arrival the Fire Department were already present with an incident commander in place. As per marine regulation, ECC Harbour Master took incident command of the scene having primacy in on water incidents.

Present on scene at varying times throughout the fires were the Fire Department, Coast Guard Agency, Commercial Mooring Organisation, and ECC Harbour team. Two members of the Canal team were on standby at Starcross with further spill kits.

The ferry was moored at the time of the incident, and there were no passengers aboard and no risk to life. The only risk of injury sat with the Harbour and emergency response personnel.

Initially, to limit immediate risk of injury to responders the Fire service wanted to leave the boat to burn out on water. However, to preserve marine navigation safety and prevent additional salvage operations and on water pollution that would have resulted when the boat inevitably sunk, the Harbour Master overruled the fire department incident command. The Fire service subsequently tackled the blaze from the safety of the Exeter Port Authority vessel.

The fire was fully extinguished by approximately 3:45pm.

The Harbour team then singularly carried out activities to secure the wreck making safe and preventing a water pollution incident. This was achieved by recovering the boat to ground and closing drainage bungs pending to prevent leakage pending disposal by the operator/ owner.

The boat had been secured/ made safe by 4.45pm and the incident closed for the day pending disposal and EA contact on the morning of the 28/11/24.

Organisations/ Bodies in attendance.

- Exeter Harbour Team – throughout
- Exeter Fire and Rescue service– until fire was extinguished.
- Maritime & Coastguard Agency - until fire was extinguished.
- Simon Turl -Private Mooring service

Incident lead:

- Exeter City Council Harbour Master

Actions:

- Post incident relevant organisations were informed of the incident, namely:

Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB)
Maritime and Coast Guard Agency
Devon County Emergency Response
Teignbridge District Council.

N.B. The vessel was not carrying passengers at the point of incident, so there is no duty to inform the HSE.

Further Actions:

- Teignmouth Marine Service have been instructed to dispose of the Wreck, by owner operator. This is pending action and details/ dates need to be confirmed.
- Harbour Master needs to inform the EA of the incident – to be actioned on the 28/11/24