



# CIVIL DEFENCE

Cosaint Shibhialta



# 2020



[www.civildefence.ie](http://www.civildefence.ie)

# Foreword

2019 was another busy year in Civil Defence. Thankfully the country did not experience any major severe weather events unlike 2017 and 2018 with Storm Ophelia and Storm Emma. Nonetheless Civil Defence volunteers still undertook 2,135 operations. This includes support to both the Principal Response Agencies as well as a wide variety of community support activities covering sporting, cultural and charitable events.

The Government provided an additional €500,000 in funding to Civil Defence in 2019 from the Dormant Accounts fund. This was used to purchase 16 new four wheel drive vehicles to improve the organisation's capability and capacity. In late 2019, Civil Defence was awarded a further €1 million in Dormant Account funding in 2020. This money will be utilised in replacing older vehicles and procuring new additional vehicles to ensure Civil Defence can continue to fulfil its goal of supporting the Principal Response Agencies as set out in the 2015 Government White Paper on Defence.

2019 was notable for the retirements of a large number of our Civil Defence Officers. We send our best wishes to Ray Dunne (Roscommon), John Maunsell (Cork), Marian Davis (Sligo), Rose Doherty (Mayo), Seamus Egan (Sligo) and Jos Kirby (Limerick) who have each given many years' service to the organisation. We welcome Fergal Conroy as the new CDO in Roscommon. A number of other new CDOs will be taking up duty in the coming months.

I also welcome the appointment of an additional instructor at the Civil College in Roscrea. Tim O'Halloran who has been a long serving volunteer with Tipperary Civil Defence. Tim will further enhance the teaching capability of the College.

A major issue for Civil Defence in 2019 related to Civil Defence's PHECC (Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council) licence. The Department of Defence worked closely with local authorities and was able to resolve these issues. I appreciate it was an issue that exercised the minds of Civil Defence volunteers. The current licence runs until 31 August 2020 and work is ongoing between my Department and local authorities to ensure that Civil Defence will continue to meet the PHECC requirements into the future.

In 2018, I launched a review of the roles and responsibilities of Civil Defence. That work is nearing completion and the new policy document 'Towards 2030' will be published shortly. I want to thank all the stakeholders for their valuable and informed contributions to this review.

In 2019, Civil Defence was subject to a Spending Review undertaken jointly by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Defence. The final report of the Review was published in October 2019. The review made a number of recommendations including the need for a minimum training standard for Civil Defence volunteers and the need for better management information regarding Civil Defence activities. The process of implementing these recommendations has already commenced.

A number of Civil Defence units including Meath, Westmeath, Clare and Monaghan will be moving into new accommodation in the coming weeks. I want to thank these Local Authorities for making such significant investments in Civil Defence. This is a real statement of the respect and standing in which those local authorities hold Civil Defence. I am aware that a number of other local authorities are also upgrading their Civil Defence accommodation and my Department is supportive of these efforts.

Finally I want to thank all our volunteers for their dedicated service to their communities through Civil Defence. I wish you and your families all the best for 2020.

**Paul Kehoe T.D.**

Minister with Responsibility for Defence

# Contents

Foreword	2
New Vehicles	3
Our People	4
PHECC & Towards 2030	6
Boating	7
Search Dogs	8
Ploughing Championships	9
Training	10
Activities	14

## New Vehicles for Civil Defence

The Department of Defence made an application for funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund towards the cost of upgrading 4x4 vehicles in the Civil Defence fleet, based on work carried out during recent severe weather events to assist vulnerable people. Civil Defence was granted an allocation of €500,000 in 2019.

The following 16 Civil Defence Units each received a new Ford Ranger 4x4 vehicle under this scheme:

Cavan, Clare, Cork West, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kilkenny, Limerick, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Sligo and Wexford. The picture shows one of these vehicles being presented to Wexford Civil Defence by Paul Kehoe TD, Minister with responsibility for Defence.

The Department of Defence made a further application for Dormant Accounts Funding for 2020. This was approved and €1 million is being made available in 2020 to continue improving the Civil Defence fleet



# Our People

2019 was a year of great change in Civil Defence with the retirement of a number of long serving Civil Defence Officers. Ray Dunne retired after 18 years in Roscommon. John Maunsell retired after 31 years' service as CDO in Cork North. Jos Kirby retired after 14 years as CDO in Limerick. Marion Davis and Seamus Egan retired from their positions in Sligo Civil Defence after 18 and 3 years' service respectively. Finally, Rose Doherty retired from Mayo Civil Defence after 11 years' service.

We also welcomed some new staff into the organisation. Fergal Conroy took up the post of CDO in Roscommon. Fergal Conroy was replaced as the National Volunteer Representative by Shane Quinn of Meath Civil Defence.

Matt Peters was appointed as a temporary ACDO in Tipperary. Tim O'Halloran, a long serving volunteer in Tipperary Civil Defence, was appointed as an instructor at the Civil Defence College. We will also welcome a number of new CDOs in the coming months.

**Below:**  
**Seamus Egan**  
**and Marion Davis**



*Above: John Maunsell (left) receiving a presentation from Brian Sweeney on his retirement*

*Left: Ray Dunne*

*Below: Jos Kirby*





*Rose Doherty, Mayo CDO*



*Fergal Conroy*



*New National Volunteer Representative  
Shane Quinn*



*Tim O'Halloran (Instructor)*



*Matt Peters, Temporary Tipperary ACDO*



## PHECC

The Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) are the regulator for emergency medical services in Ireland, including those provided by Civil Defence. Civil Defence are licensed by PHECC until 31st August 2020. PHECC are now moving to a new system of licencing known as the Governance Validation Framework (GVF). The GVF is a quality assurance initiative which provides assurance to PHECC and the wider public of the standards in place within licenced providers. It also promotes quality improvement within the provider.



The Civil Defence Branch of the Department of Defence is working very closely with Local Authorities, including Civil Defence Officers, to submit Civil Defence's GVF before summer 2020. This important work will ensure that Civil Defence continues to provide an emergency medical service.

## Towards 2030

The Minister with responsibility for Defence, Paul Kehoe T.D. commenced a review of the roles and responsibilities of Civil Defence in September 2018. Following consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including volunteers and Civil Defence Officers/Assistant Civil Defence Officers, the policy document titled "Towards 2030" is now nearing completion.

Towards 2030 will replace the existing "Towards 2000" document which was drafted back in the

1990s. The organisation and society in general have changed immeasurably over that period.

Implementation of "Towards 2030" will naturally take a period of time. Once published, Civil Defence Branch will then strongly focus on ensuring appropriate training is in place to deliver the core services set out within "Towards 2030". In that context, a number of new training courses will commence during 2020 including but not limited to a Communications course and a Rescue course. In addition to training, Civil Defence Branch will ensure that volunteers are appropriately equipped to undertake these roles.

# New Boating Guidelines



Civil Defence operates a fleet of 100 boats. These are used for a variety of duties including searching for missing persons and providing safety boat cover at public events. 2019 saw the introduction of new Civil Defence boating guidelines. The updated guidelines introduced some new mandatory training for boat crews. One of the new courses required for boat crews is the Personal Survival Techniques (PST) course run by the National Maritime College, Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork.

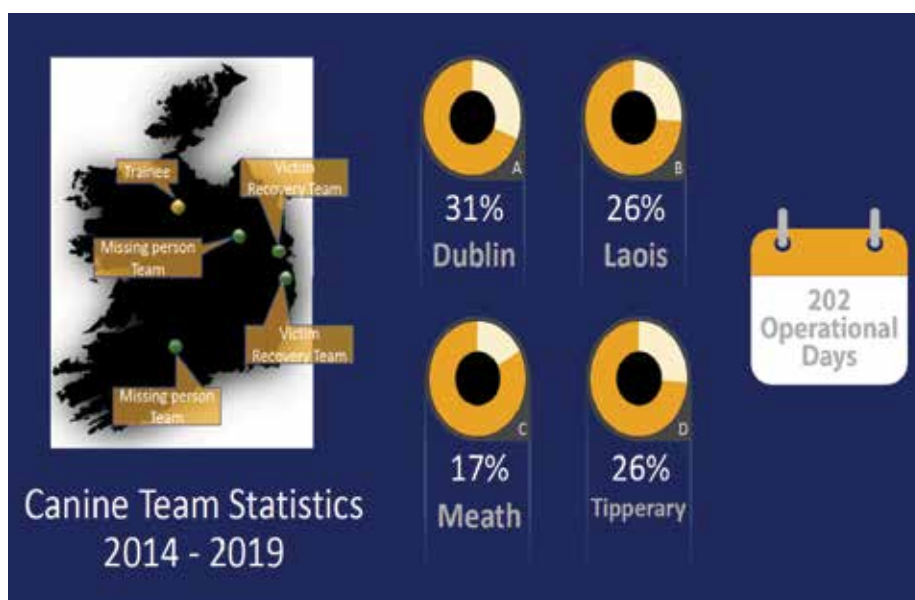
96 volunteers completed this PST course in 2019. In addition to the PST course, the crews are also required to complete Civil Defence specific training in RIB capsizing and righting. In 2020 a further 120 Civil Defence volunteers will complete this training.





# Civil Defence Search Dogs

Civil Defence has used search dogs since 2006. We currently have 4 search dog teams, with a fifth team in training. Civil Defence have trained and operated many breeds including German Shepherd, Collie, Retriever, Labrador and Spaniel. Civil Defence operate 2 disciplines of Canine Team. These are victim recovery canine teams and missing person canine teams. Canine teams operate in urban, semi-urban and rural environments. Our victim recovery canine teams can operate both on land and from boats.



Since 2015, Civil Defence has engaged an independent expert to provide oversight, advice and training for all our search dog teams. This trainer determines the capability of the Canine Team, both dog and handler, as well as their operational status. This status check includes, handler ability to maintain effective control of the dog off lead, dog obedience, stock testing and dog temperament.

Civil Defence search dog teams are licensed using the OSAC (SWGDOG) standards for detection dogs. Each team is required to attend assessment twice yearly over a two day period.



# National Ploughing Championships 2019

In 2019 Civil Defence had an exhibition stand at the National Ploughing Championships from Tuesday 17th September to Thursday 19th September. Glorious weather drew huge crowds to the Fenagh, Co Carlow site and an estimated 7,000 people visited the Civil Defence stand.

Civil Defence volunteers were on hand each day to showcase the wide array of vehicles and equipment including drones, radios and sonar.

The Civil Defence display area was located within the Government of Ireland Village. On the display were:

- A Communications Vehicle from Laois Civil Defence
- A Ford Ranger from Wexford Civil Defence
- A Whaly Boat from Carlow Civil Defence
- The Hagglund All-Terrain Vehicle and Transporter from Dublin Civil Defence
- A 4x4 Ambulance from Tipperary Civil Defence
- A display of the Drone Resources



In addition to the outside exhibition area, there was a small marquee on the exhibition area which attracted large numbers of younger visitors. Approximately 1,500 people were given hands-on training in CPR.

Our presence at the event allowed the public to see the excellent Civil Defence resources which are used to assist communities countrywide on an ongoing basis.



# Missing Persons Search Programme

Missing person searches continue to be the most frequent call outs for Civil Defence. While technology such as drones and resources such as search dogs and boats are very useful, the key resource Civil Defence offers An Garda Síochána during missing person searches are our well trained volunteers. 2019 saw the continued rollout of Civil Defences Missing Persons Search Programme. Programmes were hosted in Belvedere House & Gardens, Westmeath, Doneraile Park, Cork and Hazelwood Demesne, Sligo. Civil Defence Branch is very grateful to all Civil Defence Officers for their assistance and support with organising access to these sites and providing logistical support



throughout the programmes. Particular thanks to all thirty-six volunteers for their commitment and participation on this five day instructor course. To put those volunteers commitment in context,

they gave some 1,300 hours of their time to Civil Defence so that they can train and support fellow volunteers increase the likelihood of successful missing person outcomes.



# Launch of New Communications Syllabus

2020 will see the launch of an updated communications syllabus for local units as well as the introduction of new equipment into service.

In September 2019, Civil Defence Communication Instructors were invited to attend refresher training in Roscrea and the Phoenix Training Centre at Ratra House. Communications Instructors received an introduction to the new syllabus of local training, including new assessment and certification criteria, which are due to come into service in February 2020. Communications Instructors received information regarding revised voice procedures, updated casualty codes and the new system for prioritising tasking's. Instructors were also introduced to the new digital SDP 760 radios, portable UHF repeaters and received training in the deployment of Rola Tube integrated mast antenna systems.

Further upskilling will take place in 2020.



# Severe Weather Off-Road Driving (SWORD)



Civil Defence has a fleet of 179 4x4 vehicles. These vehicles have proven their worth many times in dealing with severe weather. For example, they have been used to get patients to hospital and to transport urgent medical supplies during recent heavy snowfalls.

Over the past 2 years, over 600 Civil Defence volunteers have completed a one day Severe Weather Off-Road Driving (SWORD) course. This course is designed to give our volunteers the skills to safely operate 4x4 vehicles during bad weather. Volunteers will be recalled every three years to update their training.



# New AFS Programme:

November 2019 saw the relaunch of the AFS programme within Civil Defence and the first AFS Instructor course since 2009. The course, effectively a Pump Operator Instructor programme, was run in conjunction with the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management, and was delivered in the Civil Defence College in Roscrea by senior Fire Service instructors.

In total, 11 existing AFS instructors completed the course from counties Kildare, Monaghan, Meath, Donegal, Westmeath, Offaly, Kerry, Waterford and Wexford. The upskilling they received will enable them to deliver the new 'AFS Responder' and 'Fire Safety Awareness' courses at local level.



Further AFS Instructor courses are being planned for 2020. Congratulations to our new AFS Instructors. A big word of thanks must go to our Fire Service colleagues, Barry Collins, Tim Coughlan and Tadhg O'Driscoll for their cooperation and expertise in assisting the College in delivering this course. Also, a special mention for the AFS Working Group, as well as the many volunteers and CDOs who offered considerable help and advice in getting the AFS programme back underway.

# Bringing Clive Home

Clive is a 40 year old man who lives in the Cope Foundation's residential centre in Cork. As Clive has high support needs, he requires ambulance assistance to travel. As a result, it had been many years since Clive had visited his home. Clive's Mum asked the staff if it would ever be possible for Clive to go home for a visit. Staff supporting Clive began to discuss how they could make this possible. One of the nurses asked Cork City Civil Defence if they could assist with bringing Clive to his home. They said yes, they were happy to help.

So, accompanied by his nursing staff and the Civil Defence ambulance team, Clive was ready



for his first visit to his family home in 25 years. At first, two nurses stayed with Clive and his family. Now, a nurse goes and settles him in, leaves, but is available if support is required. Over the past two and a half years Clive has had 14 home

visits. This initiative has provided Clive with the opportunity to be seen, heard and valued for the incredible person that he is. Cork City Civil Defence are delighted to be a part of this person-centred support for Clive.



## Clare Civil Defence Member's Heroic Life Saving Efforts

Whilst on a day out in Roscommon, Mario Miotto a member of Clare Civil Defence came across a 69 year old gentleman who was in Cardiac Arrest. Mario immediately began CPR and requested an ambulance and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) from a passer by. The passer by happened to be a Doctor who had an AED in his car.

Both Mario and the Doctor worked on the patient for approximately 8 minutes and after getting one shock into the patient they achieved Return of Spontaneous Circulation (ROSC). On arrival of the ambulance the patient had become alert and was talking to Mario and the Doctor. The patient was transported to a waiting helicopter and flown to University Hospital Galway.

Achieving ROSC on cardiac arrest patients is a rare occurrence. It is clear that the quick thinking and actions instilled in Mario through his training as a Civil Defence EMT saved the man's life. Mario, and of course the Doctor who assisted are commended for their actions.

## Liffey Swim



Dublin Civil Defence had a total of 54 Volunteers on duty for the Liffey Swim on Saturday 4th August. The unit provided Medical Cover, Rescue Boats and Safety Spotters on the bridges. There were also Volunteers in dry suits on the exit steps to assist swimmers out of the water.

In addition to the 54 Volunteers on duty, 4 Rescue Boats, 3 Ambulances and 1 Ambulance Support Vehicle were utilised during the course of the event.

## Dublin Civil Defence – Cold Weather Shelter

Dublin Civil Defence opened a Cold Weather Shelter for the Homeless during the week beginning 21st October 2019. The Shelter is scheduled to remain open until March 2020.

There are 20 beds in the facility which are offered through Dublin City Council Homeless Section.

Civil Defence volunteers help staff the shelter every night. Volunteers from Dublin, Cavan, Longford, Limerick and Westmeath have all assisted this winter.



## Reek Sunday, Croagh Patrick



Thousands of people took part in the annual pilgrimage on Croagh Patrick, Co Mayo on Sunday 28th July 2019.

Numbers were down on previous years, with rescue teams assisting just over 20 people for mostly minor injuries.

The Irish Air Corps airlifted a small number of people from the mountain, while Civil Defence teams patrolled the route together with colleagues from the Order of Malta and Mountain Rescue to cater for all incidents that arose.



*Graduation Ceremony, May 2019 Civil Defence College*

# Civil Defence in Numbers

**There were 3,307 active volunteers organised in 29 Civil Defence Units across Ireland.**

**Civil Defence volunteers were deployed to over 2,135 events/activities during the course of the year.**

**Activities included:**

- 70 Missing Person Searches
- 850 Sporting Events
- 1202 Community Events
- 13 Climatic/Severe Weather Relief Efforts



*Barretstown Mountain Challenge*

New Members are always welcome. Enrolment enquiries may be made through your local Civil Defence Officer. Contact details are on our website

[www.civildefence.ie](http://www.civildefence.ie)