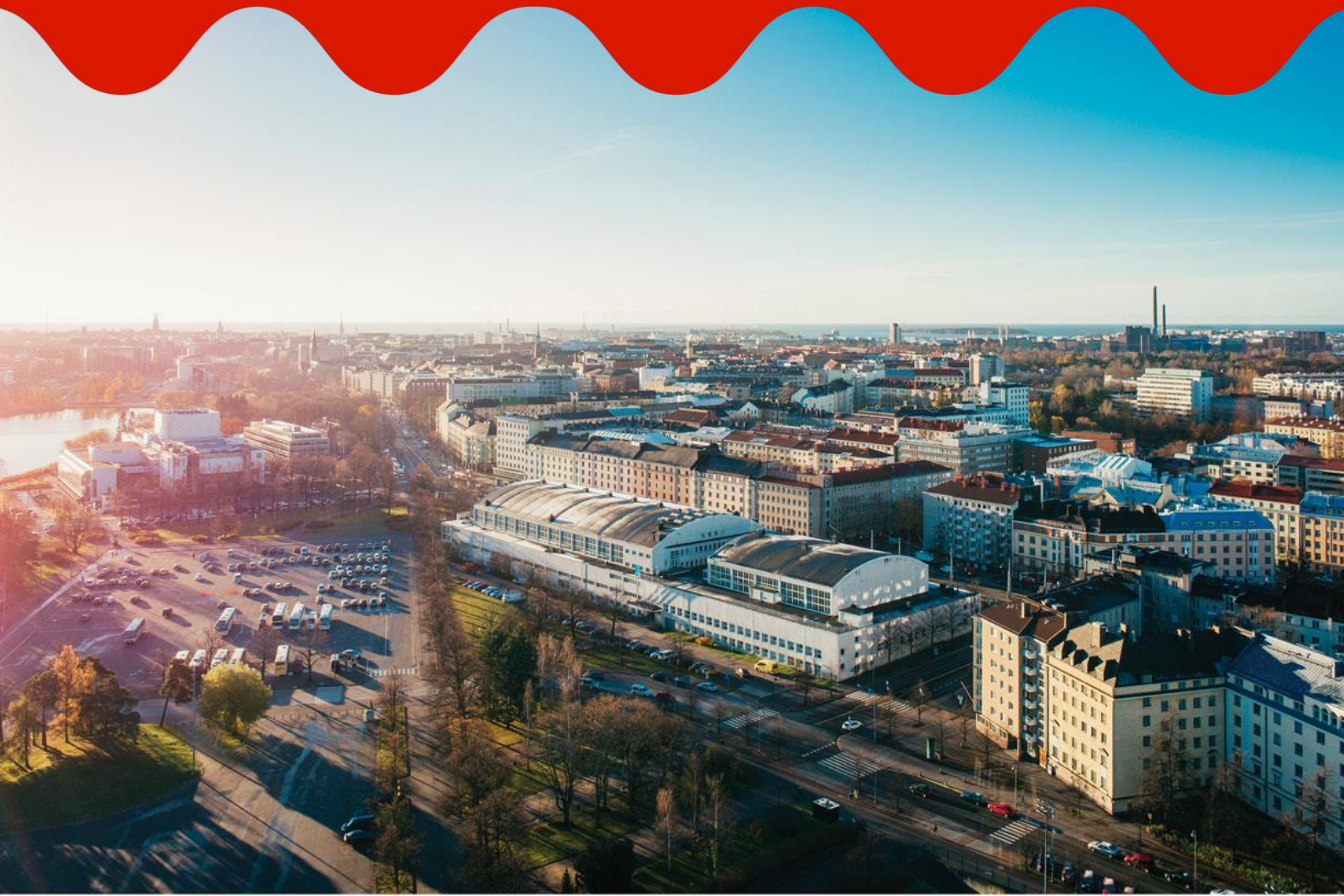




Helsinki Region Rescue Services' Service Level Decision 2024–2026

Summary (public)





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Purpose of the summary

At its meeting on 15 November 2023, Helsinki City Council discussed the *Helsinki region rescue services' service level decision*, created for 2024–2026. The City Council approved the service levels for a total of 29 rescue operation services.

The service level decision discussed by the City Council is not a public document in itself. It contains detailed information about the operative functions and performance capacity of the City of Helsinki's Rescue Department. The confidentiality of the document is based on Section 24(8) of the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999).

This summary presents the public content of the rescue services' service level decision. It provides a comprehensive description of the objectives and priorities of the Rescue Department's operations in 2024–2026.

The City of Helsinki organises the services, the Rescue Department provides them

The City of Helsinki is responsible for organising the rescue services in the Helsinki region. The services are provided by the City of Helsinki's Rescue Department, which is responsible for the rescue services in the Helsinki region, emergency medical care services, supervision related to accident prevention and preparedness, safety communications, and other guidance and advice. It is also responsible for emergency preparedness planning and for developing, planning and coordinating civil protection preparedness measures in Helsinki.

The Helsinki region rescue services' service level decision 2024–2026 has been prepared by specialists from the region's rescue services, led by the rescue commander. When determining the service levels of rescue services, their highest possible level of equal availability has also been taken into account. Furthermore, residents of Helsinki were consulted during the decision's preparation. An open consultation was carried out from 22 June to 7 August 2023 through the Kerrokantasi service, identifying residents' expectations regarding the rescue services and ways in which these services should be further developed.

1. Main policies

The strategic objectives and operational focal points of the Helsinki region rescue services contribute to the implementation of the national safety objectives and the strategic goals set for the organisation of rescue services. The service level decision takes into account the national safety objectives and policies set out in the following documents:

- *Internal Security Strategy*
- *Security Strategy for Society 2017*
- *National strategic objectives for the organisation of rescue services 2023–2026*
- *Ministry of the Interior's operational and financial plan for the administrative branch 2022–2026.*

The strategic objectives for 2022–2026 presented in the *Ministry of the Interior's operational and financial plan for the administrative branch* are as follows:

1. The sense of security is high amongst all population groups.
2. People, the environment and property are safe.
3. The threats to national security and serious disruptions are prevented.
4. Immigration is used to build a sustainable Finland.
5. Skilled and committed staff members who feel well facilitate the implementation of the strategy.

Helsinki City Strategy 2021–2025 sets out guidelines for the operation of the City of Helsinki's Rescue Department, which provides the region's rescue services. The strategy emphasises the role and importance of rescue

services in a safe city. The City Strategy is committed to safeguarding the conditions in which rescue services operate.

The City of Helsinki Rescue Department Strategy 2022–2025 was approved by the Rescue Services Committee on 9 February 2022, and it includes the following strategic objectives:

- We will improve the availability of rescue and emergency medical services so that the needs of the ever-growing and developing capital city and the requirements set for the service level are met.
- We will work together with our stakeholders to reduce the number of tasks that fall outside of the remit of emergency medical care services.
- We will prevent accidents in a customer-oriented manner and make our accident prevention services more efficient.
- We will update the city-level civil protection preparedness measures to better respond to threats and needs identified.
- We will enhance our role as a regional centre of the Finnish rescue services.
- We will improve our knowledge management and analytics to meet the requirements of the reformed rescue services and the Rescue Department.
- We will improve our staff members' skills in a sustained and systematic way, in order to respond to the changing customer needs and operating environment.
- We will strengthen our employer image to ensure staff availability and engagement.
- We will take advantage of digitalisation and new technologies to make our services more effective and customer-oriented.
- We will improve our services available in Swedish and other languages in order to promote service equality in the multicultural operating environment of Helsinki.
- We will remain active in creating solutions in Helsinki to achieve the goals set in the reformation of the health, social and rescue services.
- We will increase productivity by rewarding individual and group performance.

Helsinki's rescue services face a particular challenge: a shortage of rescuers. Not all vacancies have been successfully filled. With the expansion of the station network, Helsinki also needs to increase the number of rescuers considerably. From Helsinki City Rescue Department's point of view, it is important to maintain rescue training in Uusimaa and organise regular rescuer training in Swedish as well in order to ensure that the rescue departments have sufficient staffing and, subsequently, the desired service level is retained. In addition to the recruitment of rescue workers, funding can be seen as a challenge. Building new rescue stations and hiring staff for them will not be possible without additional funds.

1.1. Determining the need, quantity and quality

Because the City of Helsinki is responsible for organising rescue services, it must determine which rescue services are needed in the Helsinki region and how much they are used. The City must also decide on the quality of the services to be provided. There are several dimensions connected to the need, quantity and quality of services that are strongly interlinked.

The Rescue Act provides for the duties of the rescue services and the Rescue Department in the wellbeing services county. Therefore, the areas responsible for arranging the services cannot, in practice, decide which rescue services are to be provided in the area. The starting point for the organisation of services is that all wellbeing services counties must provide the statutory rescue services.

The quality of the rescue services provided is assessed in a number of ways. The statutory services must be provided in compliance with national regulations, guidelines and the requirements of good governance. The quality management tools include self-monitoring, incident reports, customer satisfaction surveys on the accident prevention services and a city-wide customer feedback channel, among others. Another essential element in the quality assurance is to recognise, process and remedy any deviations with the appropriate seriousness and speed.

1.2. Selecting the provision method

In Helsinki, the rescue services are provided by the City of Helsinki's Rescue Department. The Rescue Department may negotiate on the provision of rescue services with the region's contract fire brigades based on a

separate agreement. Additionally, voluntary organisations and individuals may be used to assist the rescue services in the training, advisory and awareness-raising duties, as well as rescue operations.

1.3. Controlling and monitoring service production

The Act on Organising Rescue Services (613/2021), which entered into force at the beginning of 2023, obliges the City of Helsinki to ensure through self-monitoring that the rescue services it is responsible for organising are carried out according to legislation and that the availability, quality and effectiveness of these services are adequate. Self-monitoring promotes quality and is part of the internal control measures. The Act on Organising Rescue Services states that self-monitoring of tasks and services is a mandatory part of their organisation and provision. The Helsinki rescue services self-monitoring programme was approved by the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Sub-committee on 19 December 2022.

1.4. Continuous risk management methods

The Act on Organising Rescue Services (613/2021) requires that the level of services in an area correspond to the national, regional and local needs, accident risks and other threats. The Helsinki Rescue Department service level decision is based on a risk analysis, produced in cooperation with the Uusimaa rescue departments, the preparation of which took onboard the risks identified in the national and regional risk assessments. The Rescue Department also participates in City-wide risk assessment. In practice, risk assessment takes place on a daily basis in the operational functions of the rescue services. It is carried out on both the services' own activities and in cooperation with other authorities.

1.5. Service provision arrangements during disruptions and emergencies

The provision of rescue services during disruptions and emergencies is guided by the Rescue Department's continuity management plan, the public components of which have been compiled into a separate rescue department contingency plan in Finnish, Swedish and English. These plans are available on the Rescue Department's website for the local residents and others living in Finland.

2. Assessing the ending service level period

2.1. Accident prevention and monitoring

During the service level decision period that began in 2021, resources were allocated to the provision of accident prevention services in accordance with the service level decision. There have been challenges in achieving the quantitative goals of accident prevention in previous service level decision periods. These challenges have been caused by staff turnover, long monitoring processes of laborious inspection items, the reformation of the hearing practices in the administrative supervision process and the difficulty of predicting the amount of follow-up monitoring.

The monitoring of residential buildings during the service level decision period took place in accordance with the accident prevention plan. The guidance and advice provided to housing companies by contract fire brigades was increased during the service level decision period. The importance of guidance and advice was also highlighted in the accompanying letters of the self-assessment round of 2023. Furthermore, during the service level decision period, information was distributed about the campaign of the Finnish Chimney Sweeps' Association regarding the obligations of chimney sweeps.

The Rescue Department carried out 200–250 risk-based fire inspections in homes annually. The resources for processing fire risk notifications and conducting fire inspections based on them were increased during the service level decision period.

The monitoring intervals for periodic fire inspections carried out at non-residential sites are based on risk figures specified for each site by the City of Helsinki's Rescue Department. During the service level decision period,

1,015 periodic fire inspections were performed at the main sites in 2021, while the total number in 2022 was 585. In 2023, the number of periodic fire inspections is predicted to exceed one thousand again.

During the service level decision period, there was continued variation in the number of inspections and, for example, the processing of emergency plans in the supervision of public events due to the COVID-19 virus. Approximately 50 inspections are carried out annually. A fire inspection was conducted on all risk-based events during the decision period. Furthermore, inspections were also carried out outside office hours, where required.

The Rescue Department processes approximately 60 notifications related to chemicals every year. In addition to the notifications and related inspections, the Rescue Department receives plenty of requests for advice on chemicals, mainly by telephone and via email.

In the assessment of evacuation safety surveys, new assessments received for processing, updates to previously prepared assessments, assessments of implementation plans and supervision of the implementation requirements have been taken into account. A significant number of the evacuation safety surveys are processed as part of the periodic monitoring, which ensures the timeliness of site assessments and takes note of any operational changes.

Themed monitoring rounds are carried out according to the rescue departments' joint plan in the cooperation area of Helsinki's and Eastern, Central and Western Uusimaa's rescue departments (HIKLU), typically once a year with varying themes.

In fire investigation, the previously defined goals were generally achieved during the service level decision period, meaning that all fires and accidents that exceeded the investigation threshold could be investigated with the required accuracy. The quality of accident reporting was monitored primarily for the reporting of fires and accidents that exceeded the investigation threshold.

Safety training was carried out in accordance with the service level decision and the annual accident prevention plan. Training was organised every year for contract fire brigades on safety communications and self-assessment of residential buildings.

The *NouHätä!* campaign has been training all the lower secondary schools that wish to participate each year. During the academic year of 2022–2023, operations returned to the good level that existed before the coronavirus. The concept of station visits for fourth-graders only took place remotely in the academic years of 2020–2021 and 2021–2022. In spring 2023, the station visits were reinstated and became an alternative to remote training.

The Rescue Department provided construction guidance in structural fire safety as planned, in accordance with the pre-determined service level, in close cooperation with the building control services and other stakeholders. Cooperation and communication between the City's various operators was enhanced by establishing an urban environment services unit, which is particularly focused on providing guidance on structural fire safety and construction, as well as ensuring that the rescue and emergency medical services have adequate operating conditions in the urban environment.

The Rescue Department provided guidance and advice on the maintenance of rescue equipment and monitored operators to ensure that the equipment is appropriately maintained and inspected. In addition to this, the Rescue Department maintained the information cards and key holders of automatic fire alarms connected to the Emergency Response Centre, issued requests to correct false fire alarms and managed invoicing.

Furthermore, the Rescue Department intensified its communications in order to reduce the number of false fire alarms and the subsequent number of rescue missions by contacting those locations that cause the most false alarms.

2.2. Rescue operations

The development of rescue services has been strongly guided by the enhancement of the level of services and operational readiness. The number of rescue stations and staff members has increased. A new rescue station has begun operating in Konala, in addition to which key units have been located in Kontula and Jätkäsaari. In May 2023, one key unit also started operations in Tapanila and Suutarila. The construction of the rescue station

in Kontula began in summer 2023, while the planning stage for the one in Tapanila started in spring 2023. The plan amendment required for the station in Vuosaari is under way.

A rescue team consists of at least 1+3 people, i.e. one manager and three fire fighters from the crew. Since 2020, the Helsinki Rescue Department has also had ready-to-deploy key units consisting of 0+2 teams, i.e. two fire fighters but no manager.

The Situation Centre's operations have been further improved. The transfer of visual information between an incident scene, the command centre vehicle and the Situation Centre has been developed so that all have access to a real-time image of the scene. Additionally, the Situation Centre has been upgraded to be able to assist in the management of the entire HIKLU region, as necessary.

During major accidents, other demanding incidents and disruptions that require resources from the Rescue Department, the rescue formations can be strengthened according to specific plans by making more effective use of their own resources, such as voluntary shifts, students of Helsinki Rescue School, and the resources of contract fire brigades and fire departments in the neighbouring regions.

The Rescue Department's strategy emphasizes the importance of improving operational readiness and accessibility. The Rescue Department and the City of Helsinki have invested heavily in new rescue stations. The new stations and staff members have managed to improve the operational readiness and accessibility as planned. However, a shortage of rescuers is the biggest threat to the enhancement of preparedness. The Rescue Department has not received a sufficient number of applications from qualified applicants to fill the posts. In fact, without the fire fighters graduating from Helsinki's own Rescue School, the measures to develop the operations could not have been carried out.

2.3. Rescue service plans

The operational plans, prepared in advance based on the rescue services' operational readiness planning guidelines, form part of the operational readiness. At the beginning of 2019, the Ministry of the Interior issued a Decree on Rescue Plans (1363/2018), which regulates the content and structure of the plans, and the rescue service cooperation plans. The plans and guidelines for the general arrangements of rescue operations have been prepared in collaboration with the other rescue departments in Uusimaa. The joint guidelines have been supplemented with the Helsinki Rescue Department's own incident type and other incident-specific plans, as well as a continuity management plan. The guidelines and plans concerning the general arrangements for rescue services and incidents requiring emergency operations also take rescue operations during major incidents, disruptions and exceptional conditions into account. Additionally, flood prevention guidelines have been created together with the City of Helsinki's divisions.

2.4. Rescue service volunteering

Helsinki's contract fire brigades took part in the provision of rescue services according to plan and an agreement on the service level. The Rescue Department audited all contract fire brigades in order to assess their structural operating conditions, and the state, quantity and locations of their equipment in the Helsinki region. The audit provided a comprehensive picture of the overall situation of the fire brigades and was used to determine the objectives of the upcoming service level decision period.

Training was provided to the contract fire brigades to support them in acquiring new members by improving their communications. At the same time, the Rescue Department increased the visibility of the contract fire brigades by linking them to its own information channels. The aim is to further develop and intensify the acquisition of members and information distribution during the next service level decision period.

2.5. Preparing for civil protection

Helsinki's civil protection, evacuation, training and structural protection plans have been updated. The staff members of the underground shelters were trained according to the cooperation agreement signed with the National Defence Training Association. Analyses of risks associated with exceptional situations were conducted with the Guard Jaeger Regiment and the National Defence University, among others. Furthermore, the existing fixed outdoor alarm system's current state and requirements were assessed, and the necessary updates to the

system will be made in 2023–2024. The review of the expansion needs of the outdoor alarm system has also begun.

3. Risk analysis as basis for the service level decision

According to Section 6 of the Decree of the Ministry of the Interior on the Rescue Services' Service Level Decision, the risk analysis on which the service level decision is based must include the main threats and risks identified on the basis of an assessment of the operating environment and the monitoring of the rescue services' accident trends, as well as the changes in these for which the rescue services must prepare. The assessment of threats included in the risk analysis must cover daily accidents, disruptions and exceptional situations. The risk analysis must be carried out in a way that allows the rescue services to be scaled according to the risks and threats. The assessment of disruptions must take into account the findings in the national and regional risk assessments. Additionally, the exceptional conditions defined in the Emergency Powers Act (1552/2011) must be taken into account when assessing the threats during such conditions. The information provided by the Defence Forces to the rescue services, pursuant to Section 65(5) of the Rescue Act, necessary for assessing threats during war and their effects must be used in the assessment of war-time threats.

Uusimaa's regional risk assessment of 2023 was prepared as a collaborative effort by a cross-administrative working group. The assessment is a separate overview of risks in the region from the risk analysis that serves as basis for the service level decision. Its concrete goal is to establish a common understanding of risks between different operators in order to improve regional resilience and incident management.

In addition to the cross-administrative risk analysis for Uusimaa, a risk analysis was carried out specifically to serve as the basis for the service level decision. This risk analysis was conducted by the HIKLU rescue departments for the entire region of Uusimaa. HIKLU's risk analysis contains a description of the operating environment, the past and predictable changes, trends and forces of change, the main threats and risks identified on the basis of accident statistics and expert assessments for which the rescue departments must prepare, as well as an assessment of the service level in relation to the risks identified in the risk analyses.

The following key factors for change in the operating environment have been identified:

- national reform projects
- weakening public finances
- diversification and ageing of the population
- increased social and societal inequality
- climate change
- rapid development of technology
- operational security of the critical infrastructure
- changed security environment.

As the capital city of Finland, Helsinki is a special environment, which also results in special tasks and challenges for the rescue services:

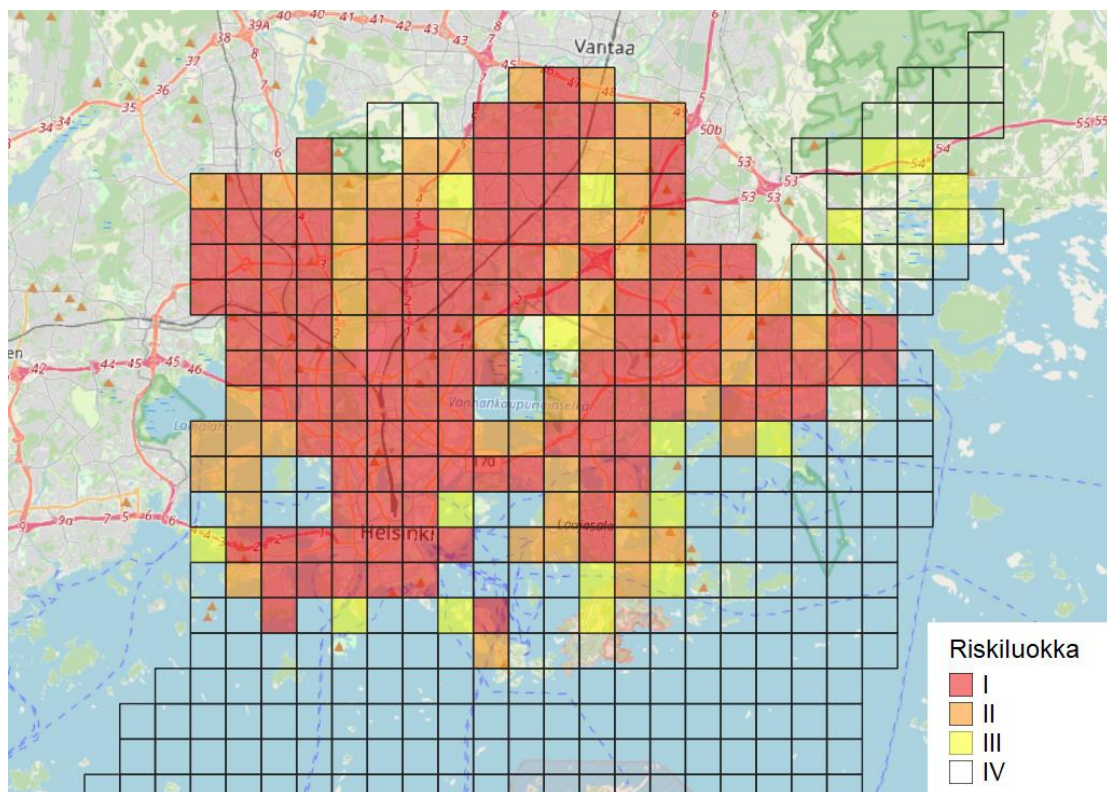
- Parliament and a significant portion of the central government functions are concentrated in the capital.
- State visits set requirements for the performance capacity of the rescue services and require extensive cooperation between the authorities.
- Many important and critical business operations are located in Helsinki.
- Helsinki also has a lot of critical infrastructure.
- Frequent large-scale public events and other gatherings take place in Helsinki.
- As the rescue department of a growing metropolis, Helsinki Rescue Department also faces the challenges posed by extensive underground construction, as well as tall and dense building above the ground.
- Helsinki is the largest city in the country by population, with many people living, visiting, and working there. The diversity of the population sets requirements for the language skills of the rescue services' personnel.
- Helsinki is a popular tourist destination. In summer 2022, more than 1.3 million overnight stays were registered in Helsinki's accommodation establishments.
- Helsinki has an underground metro, a dense local rail network, a tram network and several busy passenger ports. All of these create jobs for the rescue services.

- Helsinki is a growing and developing city and, therefore, subject to constant change. It has a lot of new, infill and infrastructure construction. The constant and abundant construction poses significant challenges for the rescue services in performing their duties.

The risk analysis was clarified by the operational management of Helsinki's rescue services, so that Helsinki's special characteristics could be taken into account. The special nature of Helsinki also poses its own challenges for continuity management planning and operational functions during disruptions and exceptional situations.

Based on a risk analysis, the rescue departments' experts have divided the urban environment into six operating environments in the joint accident prevention plan of the rescue departments in Uusimaa (HIKLU): the built environment, housing, work, early childhood education and care, leisure and transport. The accident prevention plan defines the objectives, risks and trends affecting the risks for each environment, determines their need for services and provides recommendations. Furthermore, the accident prevention plan describes the accident prevention services provided by the HIKLU rescue departments, the purpose of which is to achieve the pre-determined service level.

The risk categories for the risk grid of the HIKLU region were determined as part of HIKLU's risk analysis. Based on the rescue services' operational readiness planning guidelines, the entire country has been divided into a risk grid, consisting of one square kilometre cells, the risk categories of which are determined according to the same criteria across Finland. The risk categories depend on the population and floor space within a cell, as well as their combined effects, accidents that have taken place in a cell, the mathematical risk model based on the floor space and building type, and locations that require special attention, such as sites that are challenging for rescue operations. The risks are the highest in risk category I cells, and the lowest in risk category IV cells. The risk category affects the speed with which a rescue department must attend a scene during urgent tasks. Of all the category I cells in Finland, 24% are located within the operating area of Helsinki's rescue services. The risk categories of the risk cells in the operating area of Helsinki's rescue services are presented in the attached map. The map does not show the entire operating area of the rescue services as the sea area belonging to Helsinki's rescue services continues along the boundaries of the City of Helsinki all the way to Finland's sea border. The sea area excluded from the map falls entirely into risk category IV.



4. Decisions on the service level by service

The Rescue Department's services are divided into five groups: accident prevention and monitoring, rescue operations and preparing for them, rescue department plans, voluntary rescue services and civil protection preparedness under the responsibility of rescue authorities. These five groups consist of 29 services, in addition to which 14 elements of readiness have been presented for the rescue services. This summary contains a brief description of each service and the City Council's decision on the service level. No service level decision has been proposed for the emergency medical care services, as the level is determined in a separate emergency medical care service level decision, prepared by the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS).

4.1. Accident prevention and monitoring

In order to reduce the number of accidents and their effects, the Rescue Department carries out inspections and other accident prevention measures, including guidance, advice and safety communications, which is the duty of rescue authorities.

The more detailed allocation of the resources between different services is decided each year in the accident prevention plan. In addition to the full-time staff members of the Rescue Department, other personnel of the Department and contract fire brigades in Helsinki take part in the safety communications, among other things.

4.1.1. Guidance, advice and safety communications under the responsibility of the rescue services

Safety communications refers to measures aimed at improving the safety skills, attitudes and behaviour of people and organisations. It can take various forms, such as advice, training and media communications. Safety communications are carried out both as separate actions and as part of the Rescue Department's other civil protection services.

The focus in safety communications is on providing services for strategically selected target groups, such as pre-schoolers, fourth-graders, eighth-graders, various City departments and HUS. On average, around 400 safety training courses are held every year during a service level decision period, reaching approximately 10,000 adults annually. At least 6,500 children and young people on average are also reached yearly through safety education measures.

Safety education involves education and guidance aimed at developing the safety-related knowledge, skills and attitudes of children and young people.

Media communications mean the distribution of safety-related messages through various media and mass media. Additionally, media communications refer, for example, to influencing that takes place on social media. The Rescue Department's website is available in Finnish, Swedish and English.

The Rescue Department also conducts *safety communications at public events*, which in this context refers to planned events that are attended by the public on a voluntary and self-initiated basis.

Another part of the Rescue Department's safety communications is *the Fire Museum* at the rescue station on Erottaja. It organises visits for different types of groups and regular open days for the public that involve safety communications.

The on-call fire inspector of the Rescue Department provides advice and guidance on fire safety by responding to questions and contact made by Helsinki residents about fire safety. The service is provided over the phone and via email on weekdays. Additional fire inspection are carried out based on contact made by the residents on a risk basis.

The Rescue Department provides guidance and advice on the preparation of *rescue plans*, particularly in the context of the supervision, safety training and safety communications it carries out. The guidance pertaining to

rescue plans is closely linked, above all, to periodic monitoring, but also other aspects of supervision, such as the monitoring of residential buildings, public events and locations that must carry out evacuation safety assessments.

Rescue equipment refers to fixed firefighting, rescue and suppression equipment in buildings, equipment that facilitates firefighting and rescue work, as well as fire detection equipment, alarms and other devices that indicate the danger of an accident. The Rescue Department provides guidance and advice on the maintenance of this equipment and monitors that the equipment is appropriately maintained and inspected.

The information cards of fire alarm locations and key holder agreements are kept up to date. More intensive communication efforts are used to reduce false fire alarms. The locking systems of outdated key holders connected to fire alarms are removed from use and replaced with updated systems.

The Rescue Department provides guidance and advice on *structural fire safety*, as well as the operational conditions and safety of the rescue services. The guidance and advice are mainly provided during the construction of new-builds and renovation projects. The organisation and practices of the operations are coordinated in close cooperation with the building control services.

The advice and guidance on construction is provided by the information and advice team of structural fire safety, which operates under the Rescue Department's urban environment unit. The team prepares zoning reports, provides statements to the building supervision authority in connection with building permits and building commissioning, participates in negotiations and cooperation meetings, and provides guidance and advice on fire safety directly to private building designers and construction contractors.

4.1.2. Fire investigation

According to the Rescue Act, the Rescue Department must carry out *fire investigations*. The purpose of a fire investigation is to prevent similar accidents, limit damage, and improve rescue operations and operational preparedness. A fire investigation reviews the cause of a fire, the reasons behind the fire and its spreading, the damage caused and the course of the rescue operation.

A fire investigation is carried out for all fires in accordance with the Rescue Act. The decisions on the resources allocated to these investigations are made annually in the accident prevention and fire investigation plans. A plan, updated once a year, is created for the fire investigations. It determines the qualitative and quantitative objectives of fire investigations, the investigations' focus areas and resources, and the operational areas that require further development. The information obtained through fire investigations is systematically and regularly utilised in the prevention of accidents and the development of fire-related operations.

4.1.3. Collaboration in accident prevention

According to the Rescue Act, the Rescue Department must cooperate with other authorities, and the communities and residents in the area, in order to prevent accidents and maintain safety. Furthermore, it must participate in local and regional security planning. If authorities detect or otherwise obtain information about an obvious fire hazard or other accident risk in a building, home or other location in the course of their official duties, they must notify the wellbeing services county's rescue authorities, regardless of any confidentiality regulations. This notification obligation also applies to a wellbeing services county, municipality, other public community and personnel employed by such a community, as well as an operator and its personnel responsible for maintaining a care facility and providing service and supported housing.

The Rescue Department actively takes part in cooperating with the officials, and the regional and local safety planning work. Regular cooperation and exchange of information are maintained with the City of Helsinki's Urban Environment Division and the Police, among others. Additionally, consistent practices in cooperating with the officials and other rescue departments are promoted through collaboration.

The inspections under the Rescue Act during building projects are carried out in collaboration with the building control services. All fire risk notifications received are processed within two weeks and monitoring takes place at all locations that require it, based on a risk assessment. Furthermore, all fault notifications received from chimney sweeps are processed, and the municipality's residents are either offered advice, based on the risk assessment, or a fire inspection is conducted.

4.1.4. Monitoring accident trends

According to the Rescue Act, the Rescue Department must monitor the trends in the number of accidents and their causes. Based on the conclusions drawn from the observations, it must then take action to prevent accidents and prepare for them, as well as create proposals for other authorities and operators, where necessary.

Accident trends are monitored as part of the rescue services' risk analysis, research and expert work. Its focal points include the monitoring of the number of daily accidents, the reasons behind accidents and subsequent damage, and identifying changes and phenomena in the operating environment that cause new types of accident risks or major incident hazards. Particular focus is also placed on utilising the observations and conclusions that have been made when planning Rescue Department operations and enhancing the personnel's skills.

4.1.5. Monitoring that the wellbeing services counties' operators organise their shared duties pertaining to accident prevention and supervision appropriately

The City of Helsinki has not made an agreement to transfer the responsibility for the organisation of accident prevention and supervision duties to another wellbeing services county. Consequently, the Rescue Department has no requirements, objectives or improvement needs when it comes to monitoring how the shared duties are carried out. Additionally, no resources will be allocated for this purpose during the service level decision period.

4.1.6. Supervisory tasks

Themed inspections refer to supervision measures taken by the Rescue Department based on annually changing themes. Inspections are typically carried out once a year, usually by fire inspectors and, when necessary, rescue personnel. The themed inspections focus on a specific theme or target type, such as chemical storage, high street restaurants, shops' exit safety or care facilities. Themed inspections are carried out according to changing themes through collaboration within HIKLU.

The Rescue Department also performs *additional fire inspections* based on changes in the operating environment, risk-based assessments and requests that the Rescue Department receives.

Inspections in residential buildings are part of the Rescue Department's supervisory responsibilities under the Rescue Act. These inspections makes use of the buildings' self-assessment regarding fire safety, meaning that housing companies that are obligated to have a rescue plan in place report their findings to the Rescue Department with an electronic form. Additionally, further measures are taken in residential buildings, such as risk-based inspections, in order to improve safety. The supervision of detached and semi-detached houses and holiday homes will be intensified during the service level period. In addition to that, the contract fire brigades will provide housing companies with more guidance and advice.

The Rescue Department is also responsible for the safety regulation and authorisations for the industrial handling and storage of hazardous chemicals, in accordance with legislation governing chemicals. This applies to both chemicals that cause a physical hazard, i.e. flammable and explosive chemicals, as well as chemicals that are hazardous to health and the environment. *Chemicals control* also includes decisions pertaining to chemicals and conducting related inspections in facilities that engage in temporary, minor industrial handling and storage of hazardous chemicals. Furthermore, it involves the processing of inspections of underground fuel tanks, conducting start-up inspections of oil heating systems, processing permits for storing and selling fireworks, and supervising these. All the chemicals control measures that must be taken are carried out, and the Rescue Department takes active part in the cooperation between authorities and stakeholders.

The Rescue Department provides guidance and advice on the planning and organisation of safety measures for public events and temporary accommodation facilities. The statutory emergency plans for public events and temporary accommodation facilities are assessed, the related notifications are processed and the necessary decisions and statements are issued. Fire inspections are carried out based on a risk assessment at public event venues and temporary accommodation facilities that are obligated to have an emergency plan in place. In accordance with legislation governing chemicals, the Rescue Department monitors the use of explosives and hazardous chemicals as special effects at public events, as well as temporary, minor industrial handling and storage of hazardous chemicals.

The Rescue Department is also actively involved in the operations of an event field group, which consists of various operators and authorities in the City organisation. Furthermore, it participates actively in the work of a

national network of event safety specialists and the work of collaborative working groups between the authorities and event organisers.

The Rescue Department supervises *the evacuation safety level* of care institutions as well as service and supported housing units. The evacuation safety survey sites include hospitals, retirement homes, institutional care facilities, closed penal institutions, and service and supported housing units, whose residents' functional capacity is reduced. *The evacuation safety reports* submitted to the Rescue Department are reviewed together with their implementation plans and updates. In addition to this, the Department supervises that the orders to improve evacuation safety are observed within the given time limit. Operators are offered guidance and advice on evacuation safety, as well as support in holding evacuation safety exercises.

4.1.7. Verifying preparedness

According to the Rescue Act, rescue authorities may carry out inspections in order to monitor preparedness measures for major accidents and exceptional situations stipulated in the Rescue Act. The aim is to plan and implement an operational model for preparedness inspections during the service level decision period. However, this requires an increase of resources by one person-year.

4.2. Rescue operations and preparedness for them

4.2.1. Warning the population in the event of danger or an accident and the necessary alarm system

The official in charge of rescue operations is responsible for the operational communications regarding accidents and warning the population in the event of danger or an accident. Communications during disruptions and accidents must be informative and instructive, and information is distributed in cooperation with other authorities involved in incident management. The communications always follow the guidelines and plans created for this purpose.

In the event of a hazardous or emergency situation, the authorities will warn the public of an imminent danger with a general alarm signal given by outdoor sirens and a related warning message that provides instructions for action and warns of the dangerous situation. A warning or alarm message is broadcast on all radio channels and shown as a running text at the top of the screen in the television programmes of YLE, MTV3 and Nelonen, on page 112 of the teletext channel, in the 112 mobile application, on digital outdoor displays, and on the websites and in the press releases of the authorities.

During the service level decision period, the controls and amplifiers of the fixed outdoor alarm system will be updated, the coverage of the outdoor alarm network will be mapped, and the network will be extended to noise and shadow zones, as well as new residential areas, based on a coverage review and a risk assessment.

4.2.2. Rescue operations

The Helsinki rescue area differs from many others in the country due to its small size and high population density. Helsinki Rescue Department forms a single service area and provides the same services throughout its area. No differentiation has been made to the service scale criteria for different parts of Helsinki based on the risk analysis; instead, Helsinki is treated as a single entity where the criteria is the same for all districts.

4.2.2.1. Operational readiness target times

Rapid response times allow help to reach the recipients fast, which in turn reduces the damage caused by accidents and prevents further damage. The target times are determined by the risk categories of the risk cells, which are one square kilometre in size. The rescue services must reach cells of higher risk faster.

	Risk category			
	I	II	III	IV
<i>The first unit's</i> risk category-based maximum operational readiness time for a cell in minutes	6 min	10 min	20 min	-

<i>The first unit's</i> achievement of the cell-specific minimum operational readiness time as a percentage (min 50%)	50%	50%	50%	-
<i>The first unit's</i> operational readiness time target (median) in minutes and seconds in all urgent cases, regardless of risk category	6:18			
<i>The rescue services'</i> risk category-based maximum operational readiness time for a cell in minutes	11 min	14 min	22 min	-
<i>The rescue services'</i> achievement of the cell-specific minimum operational readiness time as a percentage (min 50%)	50%	50%	50%	-
<i>The rescue services'</i> operational readiness time target (median) in minutes and seconds in all urgent cases, regardless of risk category	11:44			
<i>A rescue team's</i> risk category-based maximum operational readiness time for a cell in minutes	20 min	30 min	30 min	-
<i>A rescue team's</i> operational readiness time target (median) in minutes and seconds in all urgent cases, regardless of risk category	10:08			

In 2016, the Regional State Administrative Agency issued an order to the City of Helsinki's Rescue Department to rectify the operational readiness time of the first unit. In 2019, the Regional State Administrative Agency imposed a penalty in order to increase the effectiveness of this order. According to the order, the service level of the rescue services in the Helsinki region must be rectified so that the minimum target of 50% set for the first unit's operational readiness time is achieved in all category I risk cells. The shortcomings must be rectified by 2025. In early 2023, the Rescue Department submitted its first report to the Regional State Administrative Agency on the progress made in addressing the deficiencies.

The Rescue Department will improve its operational readiness times by building new stations and utilising key units in accordance with its 10-year plan. In addition to that, the Rescue Department is making preparations to respond to the city's rising population. However, the operational readiness times of risk category I cells cannot be brought to the required level by building rescue stations alone. At the moment, the Ministry of the Interior is reforming the operational readiness planning guidelines, and the changes made will also affect how the operational readiness of Helsinki's Rescue Department will compare to the guidelines, going forward. Additionally, it is important to identify the key units' performance capacity as well.

The Rescue Department will increase its cooperation with the Urban Environment Division of Helsinki when new building projects and transport solutions that affect the operational readiness times of the rescue services are being planned. These include major construction projects, multiple simultaneous repairs of Helsinki's main roads, temporary beer gardens in the summer, and width reduction works of main roads or streets, to name a few. Projects that affect the rescue services' operational readiness time, such as the width reduction of the Eteläesplanadi and Pohjoisesplanadi streets, will be reviewed in advance and actively monitored. The Rescue Department will also act as an active expert partner in transport planning during the design, implementation and evaluation phases, particularly in projects that affect the rescue services' operational readiness time.

4.2.2.2. Operating models for regulating readiness

The rescue services have four readiness levels, which are normal readiness, increased command readiness, increased readiness and full readiness. The guidelines on regulating readiness will be kept up to date and observed under all conditions, including exceptional ones. The plan for alerting contract fire brigades and personnel from their days off is ready and in operation.

4.2.2.3. Quantity and quality of the rescue services' human resources in the wellbeing services county

Helsinki's Rescue Department has a sufficient number of crew members, supervisors and managers taking part in its operational functions in relation to the existing station network and operations. The majority of the crew-level personnel have been trained as practical nurses specialising in emergency medical care through apprenticeships.

In accordance with the risk analysis, a sufficient number of rescue teams and the required number of support units are constantly kept ready. However, the number of support units changes whenever the operating environment's requirements change. The hiring of new staff members will continue, the number of staff will be increased to meet the needs of the new rescue stations and changes in the needs of emergency medical care will also be taken into account. Practical nurse apprenticeships will be arranged for rescuers and the apprenticeship process will be developed to ensure that rescuers can acquire multidisciplinary skills in emergency medical care and rescue work for both routine tasks and major accidents.

4.2.2.4. Main principles for retaining and enhancing the rescue services' human resources

The enhancement of professional competence in the Rescue Department is guided by legislation, as well as regulations and guidelines governing the operations. In addition to this, the Rescue Department's skill enhancement is guided by the Rescue Department's strategy, the City of Helsinki's Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division's service strategy, the City Strategy, the Service Level Decision and the HUS cooperation agreement on the organisation of emergency medical care.

Competence is an integral part of the occupational health and safety of the Rescue Department employees. The regular practising of shared procedures will ensure that the Rescue Department's staff are able to work safely under various conditions. Skill development plays a key role in the daily operations of the Rescue Department and is part of every work day.

Every rescue worker undergoes training specifically designed for them, based on the annual action plan, including so-called mandatory training. New employees receive a comprehensive induction to ensure an adequate competence level. The quality of the training and training needs, stated in the action plan, are actively assessed based on the evolving operating models and changes in the operating environment. Furthermore, when developing oil spill response training, the end of the support from the Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (ÖSRA) will be taken into account.

4.2.2.5. Minimum physical fitness level of the rescue services' human resources

Fitness tests are based on the Ministry of the Interior's publication *Guide to the fitness level assessment and development of rescue workers*. Guidelines have been prepared for Helsinki Rescue Department based on this guide, namely *The guide on physical fitness tests of the operative personnel of the City of Helsinki Rescue Department* and *Physical fitness tests of the contract fire brigades at Helsinki Rescue Department*.

The required tests are carried out in a timely manner and the results are stored in a data-secure way. The staff members are provided with guidance and advice on how to retain their ability to work and improve it. The testing system and scope of the operative personnel's testing will be evaluated and further developed.

4.2.2.6. The rescue services' equipment resources by operation

The performance capacity of the rescue services must correspond with the risks in a given area. The continuous maintenance and quality monitoring of the equipment ensures that it matches the required level of operational readiness in terms of both quantity and quality. Acquiring new equipment and replacing the existing is based on detected defects and operational needs. The equipment also has a lifespan target, and its condition and quality are maintained by remaining within this target and reacting to any deviations. The goal of determining the scale of rescue operation equipment is to make sure that the Rescue Department has the equipment needed to maintain its operational readiness. During the service level decision period, the Rescue Department may increase or decrease the number of rescue, support and specialised units, but the readiness requirements identified in the risk analysis must be kept in mind. The aim of procuring new equipment is to make safe, economical and environmentally friendly decisions. In addition to that, the equipment must perform well and be safe to use.

The operations of the key units are developed as part of the overall rescue services. Similarly, the locations, number, usability and quality of the support units are assessed and developed as part of the services.

4.2.2.7. Rescue stations, fire stations and other facilities and sites

The Rescue Department currently has a total of twelve rescue stations, three of which are key unit stations. The Rescue Department cooperates with the city planning unit and the built assets management unit in connection with leasing properties, as well as designing and constructing new premises. Once the risk assessment process has been completed, a decision will be made on whether the plans must be reassessed and whether any new requirements have arisen. The construction projects are run together with the rest of the City organisation.

The construction project of the rescue station in Kontula will be completed. In Tapanila, a temporary key unit will be maintained and the planning of Tapanila rescue station will continue. Progress in the plans for Vuosaari rescue station will be ensured.

The need for, usability, and repair requirements of premises and properties are assessed for both the premises used by the key units and the premises of the contract fire brigades. Subsequently, necessary improvements are made based on the assessment.

4.2.2.8. Smoke diving readiness

Smoke diving is a type of firefighting and rescue work that requires personnel to enter a burning, enclosed interior space filled with smoke. Smoke divers use compressed air breathing apparatus and appropriate personal protective equipment. Work on the roof of a burning building using compressed air breathing apparatus is comparable to smoke diving.

The Ministry of the Interior's rescue diving instructions on smoke divers' qualifications are followed. Adequate resources in terms of competent smoke divers are ensured by maintaining and developing the training system and training provision. The evolution of and risk factors in the operating environment are actively monitored, and operating models for fires in buildings are developed based on this information. Newly created firefighting solutions will be introduced to reduce the firefighters' potential exposure to smoke gases.

4.2.2.9. CBRNE accident preparedness including chemical diving preparedness

An accident involving hazardous substances means an accident in which hazardous substances are released, posing a hazard to people, the environment or property. A CBRNE threat refers to dangerous situations arising from chemical substances (C), biological pathogens (B), radioactive substances (R), nuclear weapons (N) or explosives (E) and the misuse of knowledge about these substances.

The Rescue Department prepares for such incidents by improving its equipment, training its staff and participating in the planning and risk management of transport routes, usage locations and storage facilities. Mainland rescue stations maintain the required readiness for chemical diving, as well as expertise and readiness in CBRNE. Active cooperation and networking between authorities will be continued, and the authority partners will be trained according to their needs.

4.2.2.10. Water rescue preparedness, including vessels, and underwater and surface rescue preparedness

Water rescue operations refer to the rescue of people, animals or property from the surface of the water or below the surface, as well as the prevention of environmental damage at sea.

All of the Rescue Department's rescue units are continuously ready for surface rescue operations. In addition to that, a pre-specified rescue station maintains constant readiness for underwater diving. A constant readiness and performance capacity are maintained in order to manage and prevent maritime rescue operations and environmental disasters. The readiness includes the possession of appropriate skills and equipment. Sufficient management of surface rescue and underwater diving skills is ensured according to the rescue services' rescue diving instructions. Furthermore, a contribution is made to the nationwide development of water rescue operations and the related collaboration.

4.2.2.11. Special rescue operation readiness for environmental disasters

Helsinki is a maritime port city and surrounded by numerous islands, which entails special requirements for the management of maritime operations and a readiness to combat oil spills. The Rescue Department's fleet consists of vessels purchased and best suited for oil absorption, and they are also equipped for use in rescue operations. The maritime operations under the leadership of the rescue services include, among others, extinguishing fires and carrying out rescue operations on the islands. The Rescue Department and the Gulf of Finland Coast Guard District have had a cooperation agreement in place since 1994. The operating area of the agreement covers the entire Gulf of Finland's sea rescue area. The purpose of the agreement is to develop the collaboration and preparedness to perform demanding rescue operations.

The Rescue Department is an oil spill response authority in its area, in accordance with the Rescue Act. Preparations have been made to combat oil spills on land and at sea. These preparations are based on the day-to-day organisation of the Helsinki Rescue Department, which is the starting point for the response measures.

At the very least, the current operational readiness in Helsinki's archipelago will be maintained during the service level period. The operative personnel will be provided with regular training and exercises on the prevention and management of environmental disasters that occur on land and at sea. The flood control skills and storm damage skills will be maintained at the current level.

4.2.2.12. Readiness for high-altitude rescue, including the principles concerning vehicles and work in an area with a risk of falling

The Rescue Department is prepared to rescue people from high places or from pits and trenches using aerial platforms and various rope techniques. Aerial platforms are used as the primary technical means of rescue.

All the rescue units have level I preparedness for working in an area with a risk of falling from a height (PVAT). Additionally, some staff members are qualified at the more demanding level of PVAT II. The necessary number of platforms and/or ladder units are constantly kept ready. The personnel's competence is ensured through annual PVAT I and PVAT II level training. Additionally, an adequate number of PVAT trainers is proactively ensured by anticipating employee turnover. A performance test will be introduced for PVAT II level, which will quickly identify the areas of a rescuer's PVAT work that require improvement. Furthermore, the option of using performance tests for PVAT I level as well will be explored.

The equipment and vehicles are inspected annually, and the development of tools and tactics is monitored. New information will be implemented in the personnel's training and equipment. Shared PVAT instructions will also be prepared in collaboration with the HIKLU rescue departments.

[PVAT = work in an area with a risk of falling]

4.2.2.13. Readiness to obtain extinguishing water, including the principles on hoses, tanker lorries and pumps

According to the Rescue Act, the Rescue Department must draw up a plan for the acquisition and distribution of extinguishing water in cooperation with municipalities and water treatment and supply plants as referred to in the Act on Water Services. The plan will ensure an adequate supply of fire-fighting water at the scene of an accident.

In matters related to extinguishing water and in the planning of the fire hydrant network, the Rescue Department works actively with HSY Water and the City of Helsinki. The Rescue Department's extinguishing water plan, as well as the service agreement between the Rescue Department and HSY for the supply of this water, will be updated during the upcoming service level decision period. The state of the fire hydrant network will be monitored and feedback will be given to the responsible party.

An adequate water transport fleet and the availability of special equipment will be maintained to ensure a sufficient supply of extinguishing water in various situations and in areas where access to this water is critical. The

water supply readiness for demanding situations will be assessed and developed further. Moreover, an adequate supply of hose equipment will be planned and procured to ensure its availability in every situation.

4.2.2.14. Readiness for other local risks

The Rescue Department will pay particular attention to the operational conditions of the rescue services at demanding urban construction locations. These locations include large underground spaces, such as expansive facilities connected to transport and municipal engineering, as well as tall buildings or other structurally demanding sites, such as large shopping centres, industrial buildings and care facilities. The Situation Centre maintains up-to-date information on the demanding locations, and creates the necessary instructions and material on the locations to support operational management. In addition to this, work shifts visit sites that are about to be completed and train there, which will increase the knowledge and skills of the operative personnel when it comes to these locations.

In addition to repairs and new construction, the requirements for operational rescue services are also ensured in cooperation with rescue service and accident prevention experts. Close cooperation will be maintained and enhanced with town planners, building supervision, property representatives and many other operators. However, the flow of information between the rescue services and accident prevention experts must be improved. It must also be ensured that the advisory group takes the rescue services' operating requirements into account in their statements.

The Rescue Department is prepared to carry out rubble rescue missions. Additionally, it maintains the national MIRG preparedness together with the Southwest Finland Rescue Department and various Border Guard units, based on a cooperation agreement. The MIRG operations are evaluated, maintained and developed in collaboration with the stakeholders. Furthermore, the operational readiness and performance of heavy rescue will be developed in the HIKLU area.

[MIRG = *Maritime Incident Response Group*]

4.2.3. Management of rescue services

Efficient rescue operations and the necessary cooperation between the authorities require a functioning management system. The leadership and targeting arrangements of formations in daily and major accidents have been described in the planning guide for the operational readiness of rescue operations, the publication "Concepts of Rescue Operations" by the partnership network of rescue departments, and the joint guidelines for readiness and rescue operation management of the HIKLU rescue departments.

The management of rescue services will maintain a sufficient number of senior officials in place. Work shift and on-call solutions, as well as guidelines for special circumstances, will ensure the quality and continuity of leadership during prolonged situations.

During the service level period, a situation and command centre will be designed for the cooperation area and the entire country, to be located in Helsinki, and preparations will be made to commission a new field command system.

The skills of the management personnel will be maintained at the current level. At the start of the service level decision period, a plan will be in place for the skill management of general managers and field managers, which specifies their training cycles, among other things. When the new situation and command centres begin operating, the need for a duty officer will be assessed and, if necessary, P20 training and operating instructions will be initiated. The leadership training of those working in the role of fire chief or similar, such as the crew of a key unit, will be assessed and developed.

Daily exchanges of information and cooperation are carried out with the police, the Border Guard and the neighbouring areas, and collaborative operating models will be developed.

4.2.4. Monitoring that the wellbeing services counties' operators organise their shared duties pertaining to rescue services appropriately

The City of Helsinki has not transferred the provision of any rescue services to another wellbeing services county. Consequently, the Rescue Department has no requirements, objectives or improvement needs when it comes to monitoring how the shared duties are carried out. Additionally, no resources will be allocated for this purpose during the service level decision period.

4.2.5. Rescue authorities' official assistance to other authorities

Functioning cooperation is an integral part of the Rescue Department's operational capacity and it facilitates, in particular, the development of the operations, the flow of information between different authorities and the functional cooperation of the authorities under all security circumstances. The aim of international cooperation is to improve rescue services and exchange expertise and best practices of rescue services with foreign rescue authorities and stakeholders.

Collaboration with the HIKLU rescue departments will take place in its current form, and the activities of the rescue departments' partnership network and joint development of rescue services will be actively participated in. Official assistance practices will be further developed with the rescue authorities in the cooperation area when the regional situation and command centres begin operating. Cooperation between the authorities will be carried out and provided in accordance with the Rescue Act, as well as agreements between the Rescue Department and other authorities. A new cooperation plan that corresponds to the Rescue Department's rescue service plan will be updated. It will form the basis for the plans for participation in rescue operations in the City organisation.

4.2.6. Participation in maintaining the readiness required for the provision of international assistance and the receipt of international assistance included in rescue services

The Rescue Department takes part in international collaboration in the development of rescue services. Where necessary, it is able to deploy personnel as international rescue resources, either as part of the Finnish *Finn Rescue Team* or as separate experts. Furthermore, in line with the EU guidelines on *Host Nation Support* (HNS), the Rescue Department is prepared to support the receipt of international assistance in accordance with separate guidelines.

Preparations will be made to receive international formations in accordance with the HNS instructions, in collaboration with other rescue departments in the HIKLU area, and to serve as the leader in coordinating international assistance. The Rescue Department will play an active role in international rescue operations development projects. Additionally, the Rescue Department's operations will be actively monitored, contributed to and developed in an international context, particularly with regard to its statutory duties.

The personnel's skill development will be promoted in the areas of international rescue operations and preparations will be made to deploy equipment and/or personnel as international rescue resources abroad, as necessary, as a response to a variety of incidents.

4.3. Rescue operation plans

4.3.1. Alarm guidelines

The operational plans, prepared in advance based on the rescue services' operational readiness planning guidelines, form part of the operational readiness. At the beginning of 2019, the Ministry of the Interior issued a Decree on Rescue Plans (1363/2018), which regulates the content and structure of the plans and rescue service cooperation plans. Plans pertaining to rescue services must meet the local needs, and their content must be based on threats and the related risk assessments in the rescue service area. The plans must also form a coordinated whole that covers the general rescue service arrangements and rescue operations in demanding situations. These rescue service plans will be kept up-to-date, ensuring that their content remains at the level required by the Ministry of the Interior Decree on Rescue Plans (1363/2018).

4.3.2. Mutual assistance plans between rescue departments

The mutual assistance between the HIKLU rescue departments is based on a cooperation agreement signed by the departments in 2015 and the collaboration carried out based on the agreement. Helsinki Rescue Department's own plans that supplement the common guidelines of the HIKLU rescue departments are referred to in more detail in the following chapter, which describes the special features of the operational readiness in the Helsinki rescue service area.

The planning of management resources will be developed for assisting neighbouring regions in major disasters or during multiple smaller accidents taking place simultaneously. Additionally, measures and guidelines for internal assistance within the cooperation area will be planned and prepared during the service level decision period.

4.3.3. Planning rescue service cooperation

The cooperation planning is based on Helsinki's Rescue Department's existing cooperation agreements with its neighbouring rescue departments, the Police, the Border Guard, the Air Patrol Squadron, and the Defence Forces' Army and Navy. Cooperation with the aforementioned authorities is very active and enhances the operations. The Rescue Department also cooperates actively with the City of Helsinki's various public enterprises and operators whose resources can be used in rescue operations both on land and at sea, if necessary.

Agreements signed with authorities and other cooperation partners will be kept up to date. Active contact with different stakeholders will also be promoted, and any changes in their activities and the impact of these changes on the Rescue Department's operations will be taken into account. Furthermore, the Department will take part in exercises organised by other authorities and hold joint exercises itself for creating and testing plans and collaborative measures. Additionally, information about the current conditions will be shared between different actors systematically and with a low threshold.

4.3.4. Plans necessitated by the wellbeing services county's accident risks on providing and managing rescue services

The plans necessitated by the wellbeing services county's accident risks on the provision and management of rescue services are based on the cooperation plans, in accordance with the Ministry of the Interior Decree (1363/2018) described in Section 4.3.1, as well as the cooperation agreement signed in 2015 with the HIKLU rescue departments and the cooperation based on it. It should be noted that the City of Helsinki is responsible for organising the social welfare, health care and rescue services in its area.

The plans will be kept at the level required by laws and regulations, and the need for and scope of any new plans will be evaluated. The updating needs will be reviewed at least once during the service level period. The rescue services' planning unit is responsible for updating the various rescue service plans, and it will assess the need for new plans through active cooperation with different stakeholders. The plan for extinguishing water will be maintained at least at the current level together with HSY and the City of Helsinki.

4.3.5. External rescue plan for sites posing a special risk

The Rescue Department, together with the operators, draws up external rescue plans, as referred to in Section 48 of the Rescue Act, for sites that pose a special risk and ensures that these plans remain up to date. Exercises required by the plans are held at these sites with the operators every three years at the minimum. The external rescue plans are announced on the Rescue Department's website, while the operators are responsible for providing safety information in the local area. The accident communication measures and usability of the communication channels will be assessed and improved.

4.4. Rescue service volunteering

4.4.1. Use of volunteers to provide rescue services

The contract fire brigades complement the operational readiness of Helsinki's rescue services according to the agreements, as necessary. Helsinki has 14 contract fire brigades that support the permanent operative personnel of the Rescue Department, as defined in the regional fire brigade agreement. The contract fire brigades' operations are supported through guidance and advice, and their operational readiness is boosted with training and by involving the operators in joint exercises and training organised by the Rescue Department. In addition to this, the operational readiness and capability of the contract fire brigades are promoted at a planned level financially, in terms of equipment and through guidance in the renovation or new construction of the station network to the extent determined through audits of the station buildings. In new construction, the needs of the rescue services to improve operations are taken into account by designing and creating shared facilities. Active collaboration with the "stadinpeto" rescue dog group will be maintained.

4.4.2. Promoting rescue service volunteering

The Rescue Department acts as the operational manager of the contract fire brigades in its area. The chief fire officer assigned for the task is in charge of managing the operations together with the operational management steering group. The steering group includes representatives from both the Rescue Department and the contract fire brigades. Operational management ensures the quality and efficiency of service provision by the contract fire brigades by supporting the fire brigades' activities through guidance and advice, as well as with financial and equipment aid. In addition to the operational management steering group, matters pertaining to the contract fire brigades are prepared by six SYK working groups (Development of Cooperation between Contract Fire Brigades), which cover operative activities, skill management, equipment, occupational health and safety, preparedness and safety communications.

The contract fire brigades' operations are supported in such a way that their operational capacity remains efficient, secure and sound in terms of occupational safety. Training is also maintained and developed to ensure that the operations are effective and comply with the operating models of the Rescue Department. Furthermore, the continuity of youth activities is promoted by participating in its maintenance, development and recruitment of new members, and boosting the advertising and marketing efforts when it comes to recruiting members. Visibility can be improved through the communication network and channels of the Rescue Department. The contract fire brigades are directed to cooperate with one another in order to improve their efficiency through joint exercises and member recruitment campaigns. Additionally, their mergers are facilitated so that brigades operating on small budgets can unite to create a single secure and efficient contract fire brigade in its area, offering active and productive youth activities and training.

4.4.3. Health check-ups of members of contract fire brigades and other similar organisations

The City of Helsinki's Rescue Department organises regular health check-ups and check-ups required by courses offered to smoke divers of the contract fire brigades, based on the fire brigade agreement. In addition to that, the Rescue Department complies with the Ministry of the Interior's instructions on the assessment and improvement of rescue workers' fitness levels, according to which rescuers other than smoke divers must be adequately fit. The state of health of those involved in rescue operations is monitored through initial and periodic check-ups.

4.4.4. Qualifications of part-time and contracted personnel

In accordance with the Rescue Act and the fire brigade agreement, Helsinki Rescue Department is responsible for ensuring that the contract fire brigades' staff members have received sufficient basic and further training. The training system used for the contracted staff is the national training system under the responsibility of the Emergency Services Academy, which provides qualifications to serve as a senior training officer through training and courses, as well as qualifications for the contracted staff members to carry out various rescue service tasks.

In Helsinki, the training for contract fire brigades is provided by Helsingin pelastusliitto (HELPE) together with Helsinki's Rescue Department. It takes part in developing training and organises joint exercises on day-to-day and major accidents. Additionally, it provides training in special areas connected to Helsinki's operating environment. Operational reliability and know-how are verified by monitoring these exercises and conducting exercises that measure readiness and operational performance. To ensure the continuity of operations, financial support is provided for the participation of contract fire brigades in expensive specialised courses, such as the fire chief course.

4.5. Preparing for civil protection under the responsibility of the rescue service authorities

In 2019, the City Board confirmed the criteria for civil protection plans as follows:

1. The Rescue Services Committee is responsible for planning civil protection.
2. The City of Helsinki's organisations participate in the planning and provision of civil protection, in accordance with their duties and legislation.
3. The civil protection as a whole is described in the protection plan, drafted by the Rescue Department.
4. The divisions and public enterprises will plan their civil protection duties according to the protection plan.
5. The joint civil protection planning work will be carried out under the direction of the Rescue Department and through the cooperation arrangements determined by it.

The City's latest administrative regulations (2022) contain an update on the aforementioned decision, stating that the Rescue Services Sub-committee approves the plans based on the City Board's criteria. Unless otherwise decreed, the Rescue Services Sub-committee of the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Committee will approve the City's civil protection plans in accordance with the criteria confirmed by the City Board and decide on the division of the City into civil protection areas.

4.5.1. Planning required by the civil protection preparedness

According to the Rescue Act, the City of Helsinki's Rescue Department must have adequate plans in place in order to be prepared for the civil protection operations that fall within its remit. Additionally, it is responsible for the City's overall civil protection plans in the event of exceptional situations. The Rescue Department coordinates the civil protection plans of the City's divisions, public enterprises and limited liability companies, as well as HSY, HKL, HSL and HUS, to name a few. Furthermore, the Rescue Department is responsible for assessing threats and their effects, as required by various civil protection tasks. The assessment of the effects of war-time threats is based on a threat assessment of the use of military force, which has been prepared in cooperation with the Defence Forces.

The plans under the preparation responsibility of the City of Helsinki's Rescue Department, the risk analysis of exceptional situations, the plan for the repair and construction of underground shelters, and the development and investment plan for material readiness, are kept up to date and reviewed annually.

4.5.2. Harmonising civil protection operations and plans

The civil protection and evacuation plans have been drawn up in cooperation with all the City of Helsinki's divisions, public enterprises, limited liability companies and other operators, and they are coordinated annually. Any amendments to the plans are actively communicated to all operators. A preparedness working group operates in the cooperation area of the Uusimaa rescue departments, and its members include representatives from all the rescue departments in Uusimaa. The coordination of preparedness is ensured by the cooperation structure of the city organisation in order to arrange rescue services and preparedness measures for civil protection purposes.

4.5.3. City of Helsinki's civil protection organisation

The City of Helsinki's civil protection organisation was defined and updated during the extensive planning round of 2023. Its structure, tasks and performance capacity are assessed annually so that they meet war-time requirements. The organisation is updated when necessary, in accordance with the criteria of the Ministry of the Interior. As a result of organisational planning, a proposal is prepared for the Ministry of the Interior on the individuals, materials and facilities that are protected under the Geneva Conventions. A register will be created to maintain the plans, as directed by the Ministry of the Interior.

4.5.4. Reserving personnel required for civil protection

The City's divisions, limited liability companies, public enterprises and other civil protection operators make their own personnel and vehicle reservations required during exceptional circumstances, based on a confidential civil

protection plan. The Rescue Department makes its own reservations regarding its hired staff, volunteers trained for civil protection duties, and the civil protection organisation's facilities and vehicles for which the Rescue Department is responsible. The supervision and inspections of the allocation of personnel, facilities and vehicles of divisions, public enterprises, limited liability companies and other operators take place annually. In addition to that, the Rescue Department is also involved in the procurement of a City-wide personal data system of preparedness.

4.5.5. Training requirements of civil protection management and special staff

Civil protection training aimed at individual residents of Helsinki is provided by HELPE, based on a cooperation agreement. The training is supported in accordance with the existing cooperation agreement. The training for the general and shared shelters managed by the City of Helsinki is organised by the southeastern military district of the National Defence Training Association in cooperation with the Civil Defence Association of Helsinki and other partner organisations. The training for volunteer Helsinki residents in leadership and special tasks in civil protection, provided by the National Defence Training Association, is supported so that 300 students complete the basic course annually, 150 students complete the advanced course and 50 students complete the specialist course. The training for civil protection management and special tasks of the City of Helsinki's officials and staff will be expanded to cover 200 people annually.

4.5.6. Ensuring conditions for management during exceptional situations

A management plan for exceptional situations has been created, and the related tests and exercises have been initiated. The management and supervisors in particular at the Rescue Department will be familiarised with the management plan as internal training. The management of rescue services and civil protection, as well as the related communications, are made possible in all circumstances.

4.5.7. Cooperation with municipalities

The City of Helsinki's Rescue Department works with the City of Helsinki, other municipalities in the capital region and wellbeing services counties in the local region in terms of civil protection and preparedness. In addition to the duties of a rescue authority, the Rescue Department performs some of the City's civil protection tasks assigned to it on the basis of an agreement, such as training of officials and staff members of the City organisation on duties in the civil protection organisation.

Important collaboration networks include the active cooperation network for preparedness and civil protection (HIKLU), close cooperation with the Cities of Espoo and Vantaa, and Helsinki City Group's preparedness and security manager forum, which promotes civil protection preparedness, planning and coordination.

4.6. Emergency medical care

The Rescue Department and HUS have a cooperation agreement in place on the organisation of emergency medical care and emergency response services. The Rescue Department provides emergency medical care on a cost-recovery basis. HUS is responsible for creating and monitoring a separate service level decision for emergency medical care. The service level decision prepared by HUS defines the manner in which the emergency medical care service is organised, the content of the service, the qualifications of personnel participating in the emergency medical care provision, the level of readiness, the target times for reaching the patients and other elements necessary for organising emergency medical care services in the area. HUS is responsible for providing the emergency medical care services referred to in Section 39 of the Health Care Act in its area.

5. Development plan

The major development and improvement requirements of the service provision of the City of Helsinki's Rescue Department can be divided into three main groups.

5.1. Commissioning new rescue stations and light stations

The Regional State Administrative Agency for Southern Finland has issued an order to the rescue services in the Helsinki region for the rectification of the significant shortcomings detected in the level of services. Moreover, the Administrative Court has imposed a penalty to increase the effectiveness of this order.

Various means linked to urban and transport planning can be used to enhance preparedness of the rescue services. However, in a city that is growing fast and becoming more densely built up, these means have a relatively small impact. In Helsinki, the improvement of operational readiness requires the construction of new stations in areas where considerable problems have been identified in readiness times.

According to the Rescue Department's 10-year plan, four new rescue stations will be opened in Helsinki by 2030. The first one opened in Konala in January 2023. Based on the plan, the rescue station in Kontula will become operational in 2024, the one in Tapanila in 2026 and the one in Vuosaari in 2028. According to the current plans, three light stations will also begin operating in 2029, and key units will be placed there. The locations of the light stations will be decided later once the trends in construction in Helsinki, the number of accidents and the operational readiness times of the Rescue Department are known.

The station locations are based on analyses carried out in 2019 and 2023, which studied the occurrence locations of accidents, damage to property, injuries, exceeded operational preparedness target times and emergency medical care assignments.

5.2. Renovation investments

More than 9,000 emergency response assignments take place in Helsinki every year. In rescue operations, the equipment is subject to considerable wear and tear and must be replaced regularly. Fire engines are replaced according to plans. Similarly, special-purpose vehicles are acquired and replaced so that the fleet matches the challenges posed to the rescue services by the growing city. In addition to the vehicles, other equipment must regularly be replaced to avoid compromising on the quality of the rescue services.

During the service level decision period, the condition and investment needs of the contract fire brigades' rescue units will be examined. The analysis will be carried out once the Rescue Department has replaced its own rescue units. It is important to maintain the contract fire brigades' vehicles at an adequate level so that the Rescue Department is able to provide a sufficient level of services, including in situations where the contract fire brigades have been alerted to different tasks.

During the service level decision period, the condition and related maintenance of the contract fire brigades' station network will also be reviewed. The efficient operation of the contract fire brigades requires functioning fire stations from which the rescue units can be dispatched without hindrance.

5.3. New duties and a growing workload in a growing city

The provision of statutory rescue services in a growing city requires that the Rescue Department has sufficient human resources for its service provision. In addition to the increase in the number of tasks related to the city's growth, new tasks and changes in the focal points of certain tasks, such as the civil protection preparedness, affect the number of personnel.

Helsinki Rescue School was granted an indefinite licence to operate in November 2021. However, its funding has not yet been resolved. General funding may not be used to fund its operations. Therefore, the Rescue School should be funded by the state, because the school trains rescuers for the entire country. In addition to that, the number of students in the Rescue School should be doubled.



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