HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

CONTROL

EMERGENCY CALL MANAGEMENT

Owner	Director of Service Delivery
Responsible Person	GM Control
Date written	September 2018
Date of last review	October 2018
Date of next review	September 2019

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

HFRS will make efficient arrangements for dealing with emergency calls, including the provision of appropriate safety advice to the caller and will obtain as much information as necessary from the caller to assist the responders to handle the emergency safely and effectively.

2. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

HFRS has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010, and a commitment, to ensure it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in any of its functions and services nor in its treatment of staff, in relation to race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, gender reassignment or marriage and civil partnership. It also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, employees and service users.

3. AIM

The aim of the policy is to effect systems and procedures for managing the handling of emergency calls in accordance with the Fire Service Circular 54/2004, Emergency Call Management.

4. OBJECTIVES

To embed Emergency Call Management within existing call handling arrangements, as part of effective risk management.

The development and implementation of training and education in emergency call management.

The establishment of a performance management framework to monitor and audit activities.

5. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Control Personnel employed by Humberside Fire and Rescue Service**.**

6. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- AFA's Policy
- Hoax Calls Policy
- Fire Service Circular 10/1993 (Appendix A – Fire Survival Guidance)
- Fire Service Manual Volume 1 - Fire Service Technology, Equipment and Media.
- Fire Services Act 2004
- Fire Service Circular 54-2004 - Emergency Call Management
- DCOL 5/2001 "Cross Border Operational
- Activity – Good Practice Guide".
- Service Control business continuity Plans

7. GUIDANCE INFORMATION

Purpose

The Purpose of this Policy is to ensure that all personnel understand the process for dealing with emergency calls.
The policy has been developed using guidance, advice and good practice developed jointly by CFOA and HMFSI to assist effective emergency call handling by the Fire and Rescue Service.

ECM Protocol

The ECM protocol in brief, offers a generic system for the successful management of emergency calls based on the principle that an emergency call can be dealt with within three distinct stages:

Stage One: Primary questions, which aid the mobilising decision.

Stage Two: Assessment questions that help build a picture of the incident, aid mobilising decision, and assist the safety of responders and the caller.

Stage Three: Pre-arrival advice designed to assist the safety of the caller and the public at the scene.

The overall aim of using the above stages is to ensure that the response is appropriate to the types of risk and calls attended, reduce the risk to responders and improve public safety. This is achieved by the provision of timely, accurate and relevant information, which will better equip HFRS to:

- Resource appropriately against the identified risk (dynamic mobilising);

- Reduce risk to the first emergency service crews by the provision of information of the threat, pre-planning and briefing;

- Reduce risk to the public and the environment by the provision of appropriate and accurate information, of the potential effects of any occurrence and how to implement the necessary control measures to aid public safety.

Reducing the Level of Risk

The essential purpose of the ECM is to obtain as much information as possible during the call handling process to focus the mobilising officer's attention on the identified risks and on the options available to reduce, control or eliminate them. There are several actions that individually or in combination could contribute towards reducing risk to emergency callers and first responders:

- Provision of safety advice to those directly involved i.e. Fire Survival Guidance;

- Provision of safety advice to those indirectly involved i.e. bystanders making follow up calls;

- Provision of quality information to responders

- To aid dynamic mobilising to ensure an appropriate response is made to each call.

To assist with identification of risks, six generic call types have been identified to cover incidents that HFRS attends. The six call types are:

- Rescue
- Fires
- Hazardous Materials
- Alarms
- Explosion
- Civil Disturbance

Stage One

Aim

The aim of stage one of the ECM process is to accumulate sufficient information to assist Control Room personnel to make an informed judgement as to the magnitude of the incident and the resources required to achieve a safe and expedient conclusion.

Objectives

The objectives of stage one are to:

- Identify nature of incident and location.
- Determine potential for loss of life and/or property
- Determine if incident is developing or contained
- Aid decision making process to determine an appropriate and proportionate response
- Determine what action needs be taken in accordance with the FRS policy for response.

Questions: Primary

In order to be able to achieve the above the following **Primary Questions** will be used:

Establish from the caller:

- Telephone Number/Reference Number
- Identify nature of incident and location
- Location/Address/Unique Reference Number
- Type – Generic Type

- Persons Involved

- Incident – developing or contained

- Access

- Landmark

Actions: Stage One

After the primary questioning stage, a decision whether to make an attendance needs to be made:

- If no attendance, explain to the caller why and offer advice if appropriate. If an attendance is to be made, determine what resources are to be mobilised.

- Mobilise resources to the location or to a Rendezvous Point (the rendezvous point, unless already designated, should be nominated by the first response).

- Conduct any follow up actions appropriate to the type of incident.

Before continuing with the call, Control room personnel should ensure the safety of the caller and advise the caller of the actions that have been carried out. Control room personnel will then have the discretion to either end the call, or utilise Stages Two and Three as appropriate.

Stage Two

Aim

The aim of stage two of the ECM process is to obtain specific information to aid continuous assessment and build a more detailed picture of the incident. This will assist in maintaining the safety of responders, the caller and other members of the public at the scene.

Objectives

The objectives of stage two are to:

- Gain critical information for resources attending the incident

- Review assessment in light of further information

- Continue to assess the call

- Aid the decision as the type of incident, scale and size of response, linked to FRS policy for attendance

Enable operator to provide appropriate safety advice

- Telephone Number/Reference Number

- Identify nature of incident and location.

Questions: Assessment

This should only be carried out when it has been established that the caller considers they are in a place of safety and the Control Room Operator (CRO) believe that the caller is able to continue with the call. The safety of the caller is paramount, and the caller should be advised that:

- They must remain alert as the situation could change quickly
- If it becomes unsafe to continue they must end the call. The assessment may include ascertaining the number of people affected and/or if there are any hazards

Actions: Stage Two (Dynamic Mobilising)

Consider if:

- Resources need to be adjusted
- Resources need to be returned/redirected
- Resources need to be sent

Resources must be kept updated with **all** relevant information. Before continuing with the call, Control Room personnel should advise the caller of the actions that have been carried out. At this point Control Room personnel have the discretion to either end the call, revisit Stage One or utilise Stage Three.

Stage Three

Aim

The aim of stage three of the ECM process is to assist with the personal safety of the caller and members of the public at the scene.

Objective

The objectives of stage three is to give the caller appropriate pre-arrival safety advice.

Actions - Stage Three

Before ending the call, the Control room operator should be satisfied where possible, they have obtained the relevant information and have given the caller specific Pre-Arrival Safety Advice. They must also consider that they may have to:

- Revisit Stages One and Two
- Revert to Stage Two
- Use another generic call type
- No further action is required – call is complete

Resources must be kept updated with all relevant information.

8. DYNAMIC MOBILISING

Dynamic Mobilising is defined as the ability 'to achieve the best match between incident need and resources available at the earliest opportunity to ensure those in need receive a safe and appropriate service'.

Dynamic mobilising allows Control Room personnel and the FRS, a flexibility in their approach to emergency calls, which will result in a proportionate and appropriate initial response. The Service already adopts this approach, most often during spate conditions. Humberside Fire and Rescue Service recommends that Control Room personnel are encouraged to alter or amend their initial response decisions, as more information is obtained from the caller.

Call management flexibility supports IRMP, in that risks identified through the wider risk management process, may be further categorised by Control Room Operators as requiring different weights of attack. Having the clearest picture of immediate circumstances at the time from caller information, current incident requirement and the state of readiness of the FRS, Control Room personnel are uniquely best equipped to make this judgement. Accurate assessment of the call is essential and must be carried out in a logical and systematic manner to ensure the most appropriate response.

At each stage of the ECM process Control Room Personnel will have to consider if resources should be:

- Sent
- Adjusted
- Returned/redirected or sent to Rendezvous Point (RVP)

The immediate dispatch of an appliance(s) cannot always be justified particularly where there is no risk to life or property. Resources must be available for life-threatening emergencies.

9. ABANDONED OR SUSPECTED MALICIOUS CALLS

If any call is suspected to be malicious, Control Room personnel should   challenge the caller in accordance with the HFRS Hoax Call Policy.

10.   AUTOMATIC FIRE DETECTION SYSTEM ALARM CALLS

Any call received via 999 or Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) should be handled in accordance with the HFRS AFD Policy.

11. CROSS BORDER ACTIVITY

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service borders with Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to the South, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to the West and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to the West and North.

The Procedures contained in this Policy are written with consideration to DCOL 5/2001 "Cross Border Operational Activity – Good Practice Guide" and focuses upon Fire Service Control ECM Actions.

Calls Received by HFRS for Adjoining FRS.

Generally these types of calls are received as part of pre-arranged spate condition contingency arrangements for handling call overflow, agreed between BT and neighbouring authorities. On occasions they can occur when the BT boundary for an STD code area overlaps into HFRS area, for example Stamford Bridge has a York STD code, or when cell phones are connected to the wrong Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) due to the location of the receiving base station.

In all these circumstances Control will obtain all the incident details as per the Service's ECM policy and forward these to the appropriate adjoining FRS. On most Occasions the adjoining FRS will take the call and mobilise their own resources, however, there may be circumstances when HFRS is asked to provide resource(s) to assist at the incident.

Calls can be received from a fire alarm company for an adjoining FRS, due to the alarm company dialling the incorrect FRS or because the alarm monitoring company is local and may not have an emergency number for the FRS in which the premise is located. Where the company has contacted the wrong FRS in error, Fire Control personnel will advise the company of the correct Service and HFRS will not have any further involvement. Where the alarm company does not have the contact number for the FRS, then Control will take details of the call as per the Service's ECM policy and forward the details to the appropriate FRS.

Request from HFRS for Resource(s) from Adjoining FRS

Generally, these types of requests occur due an existing arrangement between neighbouring FRS for discharge of functions or the location of an incident and an appliance from an adjoining FRS may be closer than a HFRS appliance due to increased incident activity. On occasions there have been instances where crews from an adjoining FRS have been requested to deal with an incident in the HFRS area on our behalf, because there was no HFRS appliance or crew available to respond at that time.

Often HFRS requests the services of an adjoining FRS to incidents on the motorway network when one junction is in the HFRS area and the opposite junction is in the adjoining FRS's area.

In all the above circumstances, HFRS Control will handle the call (or act upon receipt of a message from an incident if a makeup) as per its ECM policy or incident support procedures and determine which resources are required from the adjoining FRS. Control will then contact the FRS and make a request for the appropriate resource(s). There may be occasions when the requested resource(s) from the adjoining FRS are not available, then Control will determine whether other HFRS resource(s) are nearer to the incident and mobilise accordingly.

Requests from Adjoining FRS for HFRS Resource(s)

Again this may be because of an existing arrangement between neighbouring FRS for discharge of functions or HFRS appliances may be closer to the incident that one belonging to an adjoining FRS (on receipt of the initial call or on a makeup message). Similarly, for motorway incidents if one junction is in the HFRS area and the other in an adjoining FRS. HFRS will be asked to proceed on one of the carriageways.

The adjoining FRS will have handled the call (or be acting upon receipt of a makeup message), have mobilised appropriate resource(s) from their own FRS, as per its own call handling policy and request assistance of HFRS resource(s). If the HFRS resource(s) are unavailable, then the requesting FRS will be advised of this, and should follow their own incident support arrangements to determine whether their own resource(s) are nearer to the incident and mobilise accordingly.

12. ECM ARRANGEMENTS FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE SPEECH AND HEARING DIFFICULTIES

The Director General's OFTEL Advisory Committee on Telecommunications for Disabled and Elderly People (DIEL) advised that all involved in the 999 Service should take account of the need to establish uniform access to the emergency services for people with severe speech and hearing difficulties.

To that end the Text Users' Emergency Service was launched in March 1995. Run by Type Talk, which is part of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, and funded by BT, it provides access to the emergency services for people with severe speech and hearing difficulties.

The operators employed by Type Talk are highly trained and fully familiar with the needs of the hearing impaired and other text phone users.

Type Talk procedure for dealing with incoming emergency calls is incorporated into the ECM procedure guidance within Service Control.

The service is tested at regular and frequent intervals. This testing involves Type Talk and BT responses, Emergency Authorities and BT are not informed of the times of any test calls.

SMS Emergency Text Service for Hard of Hearing

The emergency SMS service is an add on to the existing 999 and 18000 services that are available in the UK to enable hard of hearing people to be able to contact the emergency services via a text message.

Users are required to register their mobile phone with the SMS service before it can be used for that purpose.

A user requiring the Service via this procedure will text an SMS text message detailing the Service required and incident details. This will then be connected to the 999 operator through the Text Relay 18000 service.

A relay assistant will speak the SMS message to the 999 advisor, their reply will be sent back to the user as an SMS message.

13. ACCESS TO TRANSLATION SERVICES TO SUPPORT ECM

HFRS area is made up of many diverse communities with varied language requirements.

To ensure continuous access to interpretation services exist to support the ECM function a Service Level Agreement has been made with Language Line Ltd. The management and maintenance of this agreement is the responsibility of the Control Manager.

14. EMBEDDING EMERGENCY CALL MANAGEMENT INTO EXISTING CALL HANDLING ARRANGEMENTS

HFRS has continually reviewed its emergency call handling arrangements in light of new legislation and guidance. Procedures and plans exist to support this function. i.e.

• Call routing arrangements	999 Isolation Plans
• Fall-back and testing arrangement	Service Continuity Plans
• Staff shortage plans	Service Continuity Plans

HFRS has robust arrangements for the provision and testing of equipment to support this risk critical function. A quarterly testing schedule exists to review the effectiveness of the ECM policy within fall-back and secondary working environments and assess the capability of the people and equipment employed to implement the policy. The essential starting point for this process is the full and active endorsement of the policy and strategy by the Corporate Management Team.

All Control Watch Managers and staff will need to be involved in the implementation of ECM at an early stage, through assessing the criticality and prioritisation of the Sections/Watch functions. This process will be supported by a series of visits/lectures to Control Managers and personnel to reinforce the initiative.

15. EXERCISE AND REVIEW

Validation and maintenance of the ECM Policy is essential and is required to be conducted on a regular basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and takes account of any changes in circumstances and environments. ECM cannot be considered robust until it is exercised and proven to be fit for purpose.

Fall-Back Exercise

Fall-back environment conditions will be exercised half yearly. Control Watch Managers are responsible for planning exercises and ensuring watch member participation.

Secondary Exercise

Secondary environment conditions will be exercised quarterly. Control Watch Managers are responsible for planning exercises, liaising with Station personnel, and ensuring watch member participation.

Exercise Planning

The exercise planning process will be carried out by the Training Group assisted by the Watch Managers.

Exercise De-briefs

Exercise de-briefs will be conducted following all exercises and form part of the review process. Outcomes will be discussed at bi-monthly Watch Manager meetings.

Regular meetings will take place between Control Manager, key stakeholders and partners in agreements to review existing overflow and contingency arrangements.

16. PROVISION OF RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE ECM FUNCTION

Human Resources

Provision of human resources to support the ECM function has been established using Staffing Model FSC 6/1996. Staffing levels are subject to review and contingency arrangements are in place with Business Continuity Plan – Control Staff Shortage, in the event staffing levels fall below minimum, or there is an increase in call volume (spate conditions).

Physical Resources

Provision of physical resources to support the ECM function has been obtained following risk analysis of the work areas and is reinforced by Service Level Agreements covering key equipment to support core functions.

Site Audits conducted by system providers support business planning and inform ICT Strategy.

17. TRAINING

HFRS has a statutory requirement to respond to emergencies other than fires. Therefore, it is important that Control Room personnel have the right training and guidance for the new role that they will undertake during the ECM process.

Initial

Existing Control Personnel will receive initial training delivered by on Watch personnel and recorded on PDR/PRO.

Trainees

New trainees will receive initial ECM training during Phase One of their development Control Support. Continuation training will continue throughout Phase Two.

Refresher

Refresher training will be provided following individual request, identified need, or as part of a return to work package. Training needs can also be identified following independent audit of the ECM process by Control Support or following workplace assessment / exercise de-briefs by the Control Watch Manager. Any identified watch or individual development Control Support need will be highlighted to relevant Control Watch Manager.

Support Materials

Guidance on ECM is provided in Service Control Operating Procedure No 16 (produced and maintained by Control Support).

Recording

All training will be recorded on PDR/PRO.

18. ADMINISTRATION

The administration of this Policy will be the responsibility of the Control Manager, supported by the Control Support.

If anyone requires any further guidance / information relating to this document, please contact Control Section