



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

CONTROL

HOAX CALLS

Owner	Director of Service Delivery
Responsible Person	GM Control
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1. INTRODUCTION

This document details the Hoax Call Policy for Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) and associated procedures to be adopted when dealing with hoax and nuisance callers. The Purpose of this policy is to ensure that all personnel understand the process for the procedure for dealing with hoax and nuisance calls.

The policy has been developed using guidance, advice and good practice developed jointly by the Chief Fire Officer's Association and Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate to assist emergency call handling by the Fire and Rescue Service.

HFRS will reduce the impact of hoax and nuisance calls and will take measures to reduce the number of such calls received. As part of this policy HFRS will assist the police in the prosecution of malicious callers.

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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. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Fire Service Circular 54/2004 Emergency Call Management

4. AIM

The aim of the Hoax Call Policy is to assist in the identification and reduction of hoax and nuisance callers by means of statistical analysis and call challenging.

5. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are crucial to the successful implementation of this policy.

The embedding of a Hoax Call policy within existing call handling arrangements, as part of effective risk management.

- The development and implementation of training and education in the Hoax Call Policy.
- The establishment of a performance management framework to monitor and audit activities.
- Conducting a review and exercise programme.

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6. GUIDANCE INFORMATION

Definitions

Annex B of Fire Service Circular 54/2004 describes a hoax call as one in which the call is suspected malicious.

A nuisance call is one in which the caller is abusive and/or uses obscene language.

Receipt of Emergency Calls from Private Subscribers

When a fire call is received in Service Control, from a private subscriber EISEC (Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls) will display the telephone number and the address that the caller is ringing from. The call history will display if previous calls have been made from that number.

If the call is made to a specific address, and the Control Operator has no reason to believe the call to be a hoax, then a full attendance must be made. However, if during the call the Control Operator has a strong suspicion that the call may be a hoax, then the caller should be challenged:

IF THIS IS A FALSE CALL, WE ARE RECORDING YOUR VOICE AND A TAPE RECORDING OF THIS CALL WILL BE PASSED TO THE POLICE. DO YOU WISH TO CONTINUE?

If, following the challenge, the Control Operator still believes the call could be a hoax, then at the discretion of the Officer in Charge of Control, a reduced attendance of one pump may be mobilised to investigate.

In all cases where there is a reasonable doubt as to whether the call is a Hoax, then a full attendance **MUST** be made.

When a call is incomplete, or no address is passed, and the Officer in Charge of Control has a strong suspicion that the call may be a hoax, then a reduced attendance of one pump may be sent to the subscriber's address to investigate.

When a call from a private subscriber has been confirmed to be a hoax the following Procedure should be adopted:

- Confirm subscriber's name, address and telephone number with the telephone exchange.
- Enter the details on the incident log and carry out a filter search for any previous calls from the same telephone number.
- Pass details on to the Police and request a log number.
- Pass details to Community Safety Section of relevant CP

Receipt of Emergency Calls from Telephone Kiosks

When an emergency call is received from a telephone kiosk, EISEC will display the kiosk number and location...

The call history will display if previous calls have been made from that number.

If during the course of a call from a kiosk the Control Operator has a strong suspicion that the call may be a hoax, then the caller should be challenged:

IF THIS IS A FALSE CALL, WE ARE RECORDING YOUR VOICE AND A TAPE RECORDING OF THIS CALL WILL BE PASSED TO THE POLICE. DO YOU WISH TO CONTINUE?

If, following the challenge, the Control Operator still believes the call could be hoax, then at the discretion of the Officer in Charge of Control, a reduced attendance of one pump may be mobilised to investigate further.

However, if the call is terminated following the challenge, then at the discretion of the Officer in Charge of Control, Control may:

- Send one pump to investigate.
- Class the call as HOAX CALL NOT ATTENDED and make no attendance.

IN ALL CASES WHERE THERE IS REASONABLE DOUBT AS TO WHETHER THE CALL IS A HOAX, THEN A FULL ATTENDANCE MUST BE MADE.

If the fire crew requests verification, then all details passed by the caller should be relayed to them.

When a call from a telephone kiosk has been confirmed to be a hoax the incident should be tagged Malicious and closed FAM (False alarm malicious).

If it is apparent that there are numerous hoax calls being made from this kiosk inform CCTV and ask if it is possible for them to monitor the area & inform relevant CPU Community Safety Section.

Receipt of Emergency Calls from Mobile Telephones

The telephone number, location coordinates and service provider will be displayed via EISEC.

The call history will display if previous calls have been made from that number.

If the call is given to an address and the Control Operator has no reason to believe the call is a hoax, then a full attendance must be made.

However, if during the course of the call the Control Operator has a strong suspicion that the call may be a hoax, then the caller should be challenged:

IF THIS IS A FALSE CALL, WE ARE RECORDING YOUR VOICE AND A TAPE RECORDING OF THIS CALL WILL BE PASSED TO THE POLICE. DO YOU WISH TO CONTINUE?

If, following the challenge, the Control Operator still believes the call could be hoax, then at the discretion of the Officer in Charge of Control, a reduced attendance of one pump may be mobilised to investigate further.

IN ALL CASES WHERE THERE IS REASONABLE DOUBT AS TO WHETHER THE CALL IS A HOAX, THEN A FULL ATTENDANCE MUST BE MADE.

However, if the call is terminated following the challenge, then at the discretion of the Officer in charge of control, control may:

- Send one pump to investigate.
- Class the call as HOAX CALL NOT ATTENDED and make no attendance.

Due to the nature of how mobile telephone calls are received, it is not always possible to make an attendance to an incomplete or abandoned call; however, an appliance could be mobilised to investigate the area of the coordinates displayed via EISEC.

Attempts should be made to contact the caller for further details.

If the response is still unsatisfactory then, at the discretion of the Officer in Charge of Control, the call will be categorised as ABANDONED and no attendance made. The Incident log should be up-dated, and a filter search carried out to ascertain if previous calls have been made from that number.

Control will:

- Confirm the service provider with the telephone exchange if not already displayed on EISEC
- If believed to be a hoax, the supervisor will tag the incident with the 'malicious tag. This will prompt the operator that previous hoax calls have been made from this number, when a filter search is carried out.
- After the 1st or 2nd call a text message must be sent to the mobile number, with the following warning.

FROM THE FIRE SERVICE – YOU HAVE JUST RANG 999. IF YOU STILL NEED US RING 999. IF THIS IS A FALSE CALL AND FURTHER CALLS ARE MADE, YOUR MOBILE WILL BE DISCONNECTED.

A message must also be recorded on the incident log that a Hoax call text message has been sent:

- After the third call, or earlier if deemed necessary, send the Data Protection Form to the Service Provider to request disconnection.
- When confirmed disconnection is complete, update the incident log.

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- After the third call, or earlier if deemed necessary, send the Data Protection Form to the Service Provider to request disconnection.
- Under certain circumstances i.e. the caller has been repeatedly abusive; the service providers may disconnect the telephone after 1 or 2 hoax calls.
- Service Control should be in no doubt the call was a hoax malicious, and not a fire which had self-extinguished, thus reducing the risk of issuing warnings to callers who have acted in good faith.
- Where an attendance has been made and confirmed as a hoax call, a text message will also be sent (as above) and recorded on the incident log.

7. TRACING MOBILE TELEPHONES

If a trace is required of a mobile telephone in response to a “Grade One-Life at Risk” incident Service Control must speak to the Force Incident Manager at Police Ops. They will in turn contact their on-duty Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who will initiate the trace procedure.

Mobile Service Providers will only liaise with SPOC’s and will not pass any details to the Fire Service.

8. PROSECUTION OF MALICIOUS CALLERS

In all circumstances where it suspected that a hoax call has been made, HFRS will proactively supply evidence to the police to support the prosecution of offenders.

**If anyone needs any further guidance / information regarding this document,
please contact Control.**

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