



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMPETENCE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) is committed to ensuring that all personnel are competent to carry out their role safely. The Service recognises that a competent person is a safe person. Furthermore, the concept of the competent person is seen as fundamental to the successful management of health, safety and welfare and the development of individuals.

The role of a firefighter demands safe operation in dangerous environments at incidents where existing risk control measures have potentially fallen short. It is essential that personnel are competent to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments. This will ensure the application and use of safe systems of work and appropriate levels of personal protective equipment in a rapidly changing and dynamic environment.

2. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

HFRS aims to continuously improve the standards of service we provide to the community we serve. We recognise the importance of and are committed to promoting equality and inclusion in the provision of our services and to our employees. We are committed to encouraging equality and diversity amongst our workforce and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. We aim for our workforce to be truly representative of the community we serve and for each of our employees to feel respected and to be able to give their best.

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

Training in health and safety is an integral part of the “Safe Person Concept”.

The Organisational Development Manager is responsible for ensuring that a programme of safety training and development is maintained.

Health and Safety training will be given at the following stages in an individual’s development:

- (a) Induction and initial training
- (b) Specific relating to role
- (c) Maintenance of competence
- (d) Change of place of work
- (e) Change of role
- (f) Introduction of new equipment and procedures
- (g) Temporary or permanent promotion

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The above list is not exhaustive; training will be given whenever the need is identified. The Service will endeavour to ensure that all personnel receive appropriate safety critical training prior to taking up a new post or role.

There are several levels of health and safety training given by the organisation dependant on position, developmental needs and role specific requirements. The courses available are listed below.

Criteria for Health and Safety courses	
Course type	Pre-requisites
Working Safely	All personnel without line management responsibility.
Managing Safely	Personnel with supervisory line management responsibility or with the potential for supervisory line management development.
NEBOSH Certificate	Personnel in a specialist role, such as health and safety practitioners or technical fire safety inspectors.
IOSH Leading Safely	Personnel who provide strategic leadership, direction and oversight and have responsibility for setting the health and safety policy for the organisation.

4. TRAINING FOR AND ATTENDING HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS

- (a) To prepare firefighters for the hazards that may be faced at operational incidents it is necessary for them to experience exposure to them in a realistic but controlled environment.
- (b) The Service recognises that realistic training is an essential element which aids the provision and maintenance of competent personnel. The Service is committed to providing realistic initial, refresher and specialist training that exposes firefighting personnel to an appropriate degree of controlled risk that is likely to be encountered on the incident ground.
- (c) The application of health and safety law is challenging for Fire and Rescue employers in relation to some of their operational activities because:
 - they have to send firefighters into dangerous situations in order to save lives or protect property and or the environment when anyone else would be seeking to get away from the danger;
 - there is often an unrealistic public expectation that firefighters will put themselves at risk even when such risks outweigh any potential benefits to be gained;
 - many incidents firefighters face can develop at speed, frequently in unexpected ways; – firefighters may, from time to time will be confronted with situations outside their experience; employers must prepare individual employees to be able to make decisions in dangerous, fast-moving, emotionally charged and pressurised situations.

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- circumstances where there may sometimes be incomplete or inaccurate information about the incident;
- they must respond to dangerous situations which are not of their own making;
- this is different to most other sectors where it is the employer's own business that creates the hazards; and
- they may not be able to control or mitigate some aspects of the working environment.

- To assist Fire and Rescue Service's to comply with health and safety legislation while performing operational duties, given the often-difficult circumstances in which they are called upon to act, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published a statement of principles. This document is titled "*Striking the balance between operational and health and safety duties in the Fire and Rescue Service*". It assists employers, HSE inspectors and the public to understand how Fire and Rescue employers can comply with health and safety requirements to safeguard the public and their own staff while providing an effective emergency service.

5. WORK RELATED ACCIDENTS

- The primary duties under health and safety law are on employers. HSE inspectors, when inspecting or investigating an individual Fire and Rescue Authority using HSE's own procedures, including the Work-Related Death Protocols, will consider:

- the adequacy of the employer's plans, policies, risk assessments and procedures; if these policies are adequate, then the focus will be on how they are/were applied in practice - this may be illustrated by the preparedness of the Service when dealing with foreseeable incidents;

- how the actions taken by that Authority measure up to what would be considered reasonable in the circumstances;

- the appropriateness and effectiveness of the command and control systems in place and used in operations;

- the extent to which any lack of preparedness contributed to the risks in particular circumstances;

- the actual information about the incident that was available to staff when they had to make operational decisions in what we recognise are sometimes dangerous, fast moving and emotionally charged environments. Inspectors will not revisit decisions made during operations with the benefit of information that could not reasonably have been known at the time;

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- the quality of decision making at an incident as illustrating whether individuals had been adequately prepared for that incident by the Service;
- the wider public duties on the Fire and Rescue Service, whether the arrangements and policies to fulfil these duties were sensible, effective and practical, the purpose of the operation and to what extent the risks that were taken were reasonable in the circumstances; and
- how Fire and Rescue Authorities prepared incident commanders and firefighters for operational incidents, e.g. by training, provision of equipment and information on hazards, risks and control measures.

**If you require further guidance on this document, please contact
the Health, Safety & Environment Section**