



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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## OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Humbeside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) have strategies and plans in place to deliver its core public safety functions to the communities it serves. The scope of these functions is largely determined by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The public have an expectation that the Service will continue to deliver these functions in all but the most extreme circumstances. In order to do this the Service must have robust Operational Resilience and Business Continuity arrangements in place. This is also a statutory duty placed upon the Fire Authority under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004.

The provision of an effective emergency service is heavily reliant on having the correct number of personnel available at designated locations throughout the Service area. There are various scenarios that could result in a reduced number of personnel being available for operational duty. These include pandemic flu, industrial action, large terrorist incidents and extreme or spate weather conditions. Therefore, the Service must put in place effective contingency plans to ensure the continuation of emergency response provisions in the event of such a scenario.

## **2. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT**

- The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004
- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Compliant with Business Continuity Standard ISO 22301:2012

HFRS will be proactive in having plans and strategies in place to ensure the Service delivers its core operational functions except in the most extreme of circumstances. In relation to staff shortages this will include providing operational training for uniformed and some support staff personnel currently working a wide variety of duty systems. The training will form part of the Service generic staff shortage element of the Business Continuity Plans. In order to maintain other risk critical core operational support functions, It is incumbent on all identified Sections, Emergency Response Area's and Stations to maintain and update regularly their respective Business Continuity Plans.

## **3. 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.

## **4. AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

### **Aim**

The aim of this policy is to improve the resilience of Humberside Fire Authority against the impact of staff shortages and unforeseen events that may adversely affect the delivery of its core risk critical public safety and response functions.

### **Objectives**

To provide a means by which Humberside Fire & Rescue Service can maintain its core risk critical functions in order to provide operational resilience during times of staff shortages and unforeseen events for example:

- Major power cuts (outages)
- Loss of major IT functions or Telecommunications
- Major Industrial action impacting on the Service
- Severe Weather events or spate conditions
- Loss or disruption to HFRS Buildings
- Pandemic Health situations (influenza)
- Disruption resulting in the unavailability of a large number of Appliances or risk critical equipment such as B.A.

It will attempt to provide managers and personnel with guidance to assist throughout the various stages of resilience/business continuity related incident or occurrence and provide direction to promote recovery including:

- Pre-planning prior to the event/incident occurring including staff training requirements
- Exercising to test plans and planning assumptions
- Assessing priorities
- Resource allocation and legal considerations
- Post event recovery

In order to ensure operational resilience numerous external partners may be requested to assist. The policy will refer where necessary to these partner agencies and relevant documentation particularly the Humber Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Emergency Procedures Manual (EPM). The EPM details overarching multi-agency arrangements and defines how responding organisations should work together particularly during a major incident or 'declared' emergency.

## **5. OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE – OVERVIEW**

The overarching principles of operational resilience are closely linked with and contained within the Business Continuity Management Policy.

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The principle elements critical to achieving operational resilience and the specific section plans are detailed below.

## **6. STAFF SHORTAGES**

Under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 Humberside Fire & Rescue Service, as a Category 1 responder must have plans place to deliver its core Service Delivery & Public Safety functions to the community it serves including during periods of staff shortages.

HFRS Operational Resilience Cadre comprises of operational personnel (Wholetime, Retained, Day-Duty, Flexi-Duty) who have agreed to be available during periods of staff shortages. These Staff shortages might be through flu pandemics, adverse weather/spate conditions, or industrial action etc. This may involve operational personnel signing a resilience agreement to facilitate variation of the employee's normal Contract of Employment.

A Reserve Fire Crew cadre (RFC) will supplement the aforementioned resilience cadre and is made up of external non HFRS personnel, selected and suitably trained to carry out both defensive and offensive firefighting activities. The RFC will operate alongside HFRS operational staff using a mixed crewing methodology and will be subject to regular planned training to ensure the maintenance of role competencies and equipment familiarisation.

It is clear that in order to guarantee true operational resilience, the Service needs to ensure critical support elements are equally resilient; a prime example of this would be Service Control.

The use of Support Staff for non-operational activities and other defined duties (e.g. administrative/emergency call handling) represents a valuable resource pool that may be utilised to supplement areas of identified short staffing or facilitate the release of existing staff to other tasks commensurate with individual skills and competencies.

In all cases the undertaking of additional roles is on a voluntary basis and will be subject to prior agreement following a "one to one" interview. Personnel will be subjected to the necessary medical and fitness checks and will be provided with relevant training before undertaking these additional roles.

Note: The plan relating to staff shortages due to Industrial action is a restricted document.

## **7. SERVICE CONTROL**

Service control is without doubt one of the most critical functions to achieving operational effectiveness.

The Service Control plan will be activated progressively to fit the actual effects of an emergency or disruption to the provision of Control Room services. The activation of the Service Control Recovery Plan will be overseen by a Business Interruption Management Team (BIMT), who will be tasked with the overall co-ordination of the

recovery process. The team are also responsible for returning the function to its normal equilibrium following cessation of the emergency or disruption.

The Service Control Recovery Plan provides the necessary information, mitigation and response action in the event of an emergency or disruption of the function, within reasonable levels. The plan also indicates interaction with other recovery plans and maintenance contracts that we have with external providers.

The Control section, as part of the Risk Management Strategy have already highlighted and assessed the areas of risk specific to the section and have implemented control measures to minimise the risk. These measures include plans, procedure documents, security policies and alternative arrangements.

Collaboration with Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Hertfordshire FRS's provides an additional layer of resilience to control room critical functions with the ability to receive emergency calls and despatch appropriate emergency resources using control staff from any or all collaborative partners. Specific Business Continuity provisions are also embedded into these collaborative arrangements that will interface with the Service own internal BC procedures.

## **8. EXTREME WEATHER & SPATE CONDITIONS**

One of the most significant threats to operational resilience is the demands placed upon the Service by Extreme Weather or Spate Conditions. Examples would include widespread flooding, periods of extreme cold (snow/ice) or hot (drought) conditions, high winds or indeed large numbers of fire/emergencies due to events such as bonfire Night etc.

As proved during recent flood events not only can demands on the Service be virtually unmanageable but the loss of critical infrastructure and IT/Communication's is almost inevitable in certain circumstances.

A number of Service specific plans and guidance notes have been compiled to assist managers during these conditions, this includes plans specific to Service Control.

## **9. HFRS MAJOR INCIDENT PLAN**

The purpose of the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) Major Incident/Emergency Plan is to ensure all personnel are fully conversant with procedures that will need to be implemented in the event of a Major Incident/Emergency. This may include incidents at high risk sites throughout the Service area when an incident has been categorised as a "Declared" Emergency.

The plan describes how HFRS will respond to a Major Incident or Declared Emergency and does not take the place of the plans of other organisations which may be invoked in such events.

By the very nature of major incidents/declared emergencies they will inevitably require a multi-agency response, details of LRF & multi-agency response plans and arrangements are detailed below.

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## **10. FIRE SERVICE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

On occasions HFRS may require additional Fire Services resources to effectively deal with an incident or emergency. The Service will ensure that robust arrangements are in place to request support either on a day to day basis or during periods of high demand.

These arrangements will be formulated utilising the provisions within the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004, specifically Section 13 “Reinforcement Schemes” & Section 16 “Arrangements for Discharge of Functions by Others”

Furthermore, arrangements to request National Fire Service Resilience Assets may be made via the Fire & Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre (Merseyside FRS). The scope of assets that may be requested as part of these arrangements include;

- High Volume Pump (HVP)
- Urban Search & Rescue (USAR)
- Detection, Identification & Monitoring (DIM)
- Mass Decontamination (MD)
- Flood response
- Enhanced Logistic Support (ELS)

Guidance on the requesting, mobilisation and utilisation of FS Resilience Assets can be found within the following documents:

- National Resilience Policy

## **11. MULTI-AGENCY PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS**

Often during periods of extreme weather/spate conditions or whilst dealing with single/multiple large scale or major incidents, for example incidents which involve COMAH sites with significant off-site consequences, HFRS would not be able to adequately resolve the incident utilising its own resources, skills and expertise.

Therefore under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 HFRS as a Category 1 responder engages with numerous other Category 1 & 2 responders and voluntary agencies via the Humber Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

There are a large amount of LRF multi-agency plans which deal with a wide variety of threats and situations some examples are listed below:

- LRF Fuel Disruption Plan
- LRF Multi-Agency AIRWAVE Interoperability Plan
- LRF Pandemic Influenza Plan
- LRF CBRNe Plan

- COMAH and Pipeline Plans
- Community Emergency Plans
- LRF Multi-Agency Flood Plan
- LRF REPPIR Plan
- East Coast Tidal Inundation Plan
- NHS Heatwave Plan
- LRF Communications Protocol
- LRF Severe Weather Plan

As referred to the above plans tend to deal with specific situation and events. In order to operate to a common framework, the principle overarching document relating to multi-agency responding agencies working arrangements is the Humber LRF Emergency Procedures Manual (EPM).

The EPM sets out:

- The Nationally agreed definition of a “Declared” Emergency and how multi-agency arrangements will be “triggered” to deal with a Declared Emergency or significant event, this includes pre-planning arrangements.
- Generic multi-agency co-ordination, communication and recovery arrangements between responding organisations. Including those for the Humber area’s COMAH, very high-risk sites which require a different response to the generic arrangements.
- Gives an outline of Category 1&2 responder’s and voluntary agencies generic capabilities and responsibilities.
- Command & Control Structure including establishing and facilitating Strategic Coordination Groups (Gold) Tactical Coordination Groups (Silver) and Operational Coordination Groups (Bronze)

## **12. HFRS SECTIONS & FUNCTIONS ESSENTIAL TO OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE**

A number of sections & functions have been identified as essential to ensure Service Operational Resilience and are highlighted in the Business Continuity Planning Arrangements.

These plans are designed to be activated to provide a planned and dynamic response to the provision of an essential function within the service following a major emergency or disruption to that function. Each plan sets out the actions and procedures necessary to recover that function in the event of a major emergency.

The activation of these Recovery Plans will be overseen by a Business Interruption Management Team (BIMT), who will be tasked with the overall co-ordination of the recovery process. The team are also responsible for returning the function to its normal equilibrium following cessation of the emergency or disruption.

The identified Sections & Functions essential to Operational and where to find the Recovery Plans are detailed below.

- **Fire Control** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 1*
- **Information Technology** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 2*
- **Communications** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 3*
- **Financial Services** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 4*
- **Fleet & Equipment** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 5*
- **Estates** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 6*
- **Store & Supplies** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 7*
- **Community Protection** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 8*
- **Health & Safety** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 9*
- **Occupational Health** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 10*
- **Human Resources** *BC Plan Section 4 Part 11*

### **13. SKILLS MAINTENANCE TO SUPPORT OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE & BUSINESS CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS**

HFRS considers that operational continuation training will improve the resilience of the service and give uniformed personnel the opportunity to maintain a balance of operational and specialist skills. The training will also address the issue of “operational skills decay” associated with personnel working a variety duty systems. The training programme will provide an appropriate arena in which to introduce new operational procedures and equipment to personnel in specialist functions.

Personnel available for operational deployment must maintain competence in the risk critical elements of the appropriate firefighting/operational skills. The requirement to participate in the necessary resilience training will be on a voluntary basis, other than the maintenance of fitness.

### **14. WORKING TIME REGULATIONS**

Personnel making themselves available for operational duties must ensure that they do not exceed the prescribed hours as laid down in the Working Time Regulations 1998. It will be the individual’s responsibility to notify the operational resilience coordinator of the hours already worked, including any time that the individual may have been engaged at work by an external employer.

Furthermore, all personnel volunteering to undertake operational duties as part of the Operational Resilience Policy must be made aware that they are making an individual agreement to opt-out the weekly working time limit, as permitted in the Regulations.

However, since tiredness is recognised as a safety risk, individuals must inform the resilience coordinator or line manager of the number of hours that they may have been

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engaged in unpaid activities such as voluntary work or DIY. Personnel will not be expected to continue to work whilst tired as a consequence of working excessive hours.

**If anyone requires any further guidance / information regarding this document,  
please contact the Emergency Preparedness Section**