



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

# Emergency Response

## Decision Log Policy

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<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Head of Emergency Preparedness</b>
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What we must  
do well



How we support our  
communities



We value and support  
the people we employ



We efficiently manage  
the Service

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy relates to Humberside Fire and Rescue Service's (HFRS) arrangements and the procedures to be followed to facilitate the robust capture and recording of information relating to decisions associated with emergency response, public safety, and other role related functions.

Decision makers are accountable for their decisions and must be prepared to provide a rationale for what they did and why. In some circumstances the need to document decisions is prescribed by law, required by organisational strategies, policies, or local practices, or left to the decision maker's discretion.

The need to record decisions cannot be overstated, especially where these may vary from those set down in Operating Procedures or Procedural Guidance and offer the individual making the record with a point of reference in the requirement of a future investigation or enquiry.

During the performance of their role most Service personnel will be required at some point to consider and make decisions in respect of actions that may affect themselves, service personnel, other organisations or members of the public.

The policy seeks to distinguish between decisions made as part of 'Business as Usual' activities and those taken more dynamically during an emergency response or business continuity situation (e.g. this policy).

Whatever the circumstances, the Service acknowledges that it is practically impossible to record every single decision and that not all decisions need to be recorded. In most instances, professional judgement should guide personnel on whether or not to record the rationale and the nature and extent of any explanation. The record should be proportionate to the seriousness of the situation or incident, particularly if this involves a risk of harm to a person.

### **Core Code of Ethics**

HFRS has adopted the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. The Service is committed to the ethical principles of the Code and strives to apply them in all we do, therefore, those principles are reflected in this Policy.

### **National Guidance**

Any National Guidance which has been adopted by HFRS, will be reflected in this Policy.

## **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 & OBJECTIVES

#### Aim

This policy aims to ensure HFRS personnel are conversant with the requirements and procedures that need to be applied to support an efficient and effective method for recording role-related information and associated decisions.

#### Objectives

The provision of personal and event-specific decision log books is intended to provide service personnel with the necessary means to;

- Support a professional consistent approach.
- Embed a structured process to decision recording.
- The timely, accurate recording of information.
- The identification of problems/issues.
- Providing context and rationale to decisions.
- Indication of other options considered.
- The recording of choices taken.
- The identification of others involved in the decision process.
- The review and affirmation of decisions.

### 4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

- [Equality Impact Analysis](#)
- Legal References
  - Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
  - Civil Contingencies Act 2004
  - Data Protection Act 2018 / UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR)
- National Guidance
- Risk Impact Assessment
- Personal (Contemporaneous) Notebook
- Personal Official Day Book
- Generic Incident/Event Decision Log

### 5. POLICY STATEMENT

HFRS will produce policies necessary for the efficient running of the Service. Policies will be produced, amended and presented on the Service Website and internal 'Portal' in the standard format as approved by HFRS.

## 6. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure relevant HFRS personnel are conversant with the requirements and procedures that need to be adopted to support the efficient and effective means for recording role-related information and associated decisions.

The Policy builds upon existing practices and supports embedding a structured approach to the way relevant information is recorded, retained and made available as required. The policy seeks to outline the minimum requirements needed for entries in 'Decision Books' and aims to minimise bureaucracy.

## 7. INFORMATION

### Types and Issue of Decision Record Books.

There are 3 types of books in use by the Service for the recording of individual and collective decisions namely:

- **Contemporaneous (Personal) Notebook**  
Issued to Operational Supervisory, Middle and Strategic managers and designated Support staff (minimum Grade 13).
- **Official (Personal) Day Book**  
Issued to Operational and Support Middle and Strategic managers.
- **Incident/Event (Generic) Decision Logbook**  
Issued to Operational Middle and Strategic managers for use during an incident/event, available on request to support Middle and Strategic managers for use during an incident/event.

**Note:** An e-version of the logbook is available for inclusion with other incident related information recorded via Resilience Direct or MS TEAMS platforms.

### Decision Book Entries – Do's and Don'ts

#### Do's:

The log must be **C.I.A.**

- C** CLEAR
- I** INTELLIGIBLE
- A** ACCURATE

- Relevant information should always be recorded in the book.
- Write in permanent **black ink**.
- Write legibly.
- Your log should be made at the time of the event/incident/meeting or contemporaneous within 24 hours of the occurrence.
- Use a new log entry for each specific issue.

- Ensure you note dates, times (use 24-hour clock), places and people concerned.
- Only note down facts. Do not assume anything, do not give your own opinion or your own comments.
- Mistakes must be ruled through with a single line and initialled by you.

### **Don'ts:**

Personnel shall not:

- Remove or insert any page.
- Erase or obliterate any entry.
- Make double entries between lines or overwrite an entry.
- Writing above the 'ruled through error' must not be made
- Leave blank pages or spaces.
- Enter information of a personal nature or in relation to a safety event.

Personnel have the discretion to enter any information into their Personal Note and Day Book which they consider may be required as a reference at a later date or could be of value to subsequent fire investigations, operational debrief, post incident enquiry or potential contraventions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.

### **Security and Ownership**

Decision books are issued to assist service personnel in the course of their role related duties. Individuals are responsible for the security of personal books they are allocated; however, the books will remain the property of the Service and may (with prior notification) be requested for audit and examination purposes.

*Contemporaneous notes in relation to safety events etc. should be recorded separately and remain viewable only to the individual, the Police or the HSE.*

In the occurrence of the loss or misplacement of a personal note book the matter is to be reported as soon as possible to the emergency preparedness section (SHQ) indicating the last known use and location of the book.

### **Issue, Replacement and Storage.**

- Stores and Supplies are responsible for managing the issue of new and replacement Contemporaneous (Personal) Notebook
- The Emergency Preparedness section (SHQ) will be responsible for managing the issue of Official (Personal) Day Book and Generic Event/Incident Decision books.

On completing any Personal Decision Book personnel have the option to securely retain the book for future reference purpose or dispose of the book in line with the

designated retention schedule.

Storage and retention schedules should be included on the personnel's individual sections information governance pages, this should include the retention schedule and method of disposal. This also includes any part-completed books of those who have moved to another FRS, resigned or retired from the Service, where the functional head of the individual leaving should receive the books on behalf of the service.

It is recommended that without rationale for an alternative time period that all Personal Decision books will be retained for a 3-year period prior to confidential disposal.

### **Disclosure of Entries under Legislation**

Those completing the personal decision books should bear in mind that entries may be subject to disclosure, in full or in part, under the Freedom in Information Act 2000 or, where the details relate to personal data, may have to be disclosed in response to a Subject Access Request under UK GDPR or Data Protection Act 2018.

**For further guidance / information on this document, please contact the  
Emergency Preparedness Section**