



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Emergency Response

Emergency Call Management and Mobilising Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following policy outlines the call handling and mobilising arrangements used in Fire Control. It does not detract from the Mobilising Officer using discretion and adaptation to meet particular circumstances.

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires Fire Authorities to make arrangements for dealing with emergency calls and for the provision for the purpose of extinguishing fires, rescuing people, and protecting life and property. This policy describes how Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) will meet this requirement.

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, DIVERSITY 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 or 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 AND OBJECTIVES

Aim

To issue guidance on how emergency calls are received, processed and a fire service response is determined and despatched.

Objectives

To establish a system of call routing, call handling, protocols and mobilising arrangements for the number and type of appliances responding to emergency incidents in accordance with the intervention standards specified by Humberside Fire Authority (HFA).

To establish standardised responses to incidents, but also to enable Mobilising Officers to vary these responses, where necessary, to enhance firefighter safety or

otherwise improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Service. Where responses have been varied, the decision and rationale will be recorded on the Incident Log.

To establish Fire Control operating procedures and systems of work to ensure operational readiness and response is maintained in an efficient and effective manner.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Assessment](#)
- Legal References
 - Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
 - The Communications Act 2003
 - Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- National Guidance References
 - National Operational Guidance – Fire Control Command
 - National Operational Guidance – Emergency Call Handling and Mobilising
- Fire Standard – Fire Control
- Fire Standard – Emergency Preparedness
- Fire Standard – Operational Preparedness
- Unwanted Fire Signals Position Statement
- Automatic Fire Alarms COP
- Standby Policy (under review)
- [Incident Support Team Policy Delivery Guidance](#)

5. DEFINITIONS

Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA): The number and types of appliances that has been pre-determined to be an appropriate response to the type of incident.

National Resilience: Provides national capability and co-ordination to support fire services in dealing with large scale or critical incidents. Co-ordination is through National Resilience Fire Control who co-ordinate the resources and personnel required to support these types of incidents.

On-Call Stations: Fire stations and personnel who do not work primarily for the fire service but are alerted when needed via a pager system to respond to incidents. They are trained and equipped by the fire service, and will respond to the station to crew fire appliances when needed.

Full-Time Duty Stations: Fire stations that are staffed 24 hours a day by personnel who's primary employment is with the fire service.

Flexi-Duty System Officers: Officers who respond to incidents in either a supervisory or support role in addition to their day-to-day duties. They have specialisms such as fire investigation, hazardous materials and may either support Incident Commanders or be Incident Commanders depending on the nature or the incident.

6. GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION

Emergency Call Routing

When callers ask for the fire service, British Telecom (BT) call handlers route the call to the fire and rescue service (FRS) in the geographical area the call originates from. Other emergency services and agencies have direct contact numbers to the FRS Control Room. Alarm companies pay an annual fee to the FRS to have an allocated direct line into the Control Room.

East Coast & Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium (ECHCRC)

Humberside Fire Control are a part of the East Coast & Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium (ECHCRC). The consortium is a Control Room Collaboration with Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk Fire & Rescue Services.

The Consortium supplies the Mobilising System (Capita Vision 4) and the ICCS Communication System (Capita DS3000) on behalf of the four services.

This allows increased resilience, with the ability during busy periods/spate conditions for calls to be answered and processed by other Control Rooms within the Consortium.

Vision Mobilising System Configuration

Vision 4 Mobilising System (VMS) is used for mobilising resources to incidents.

HFRS uses the National Incident Types format with Pre-Determined Attendances (PDA) taken from HFRS Weight of Response documentation.

Each incident type is configured with an incident priority level 1 – 5 (which has been determined using the National Incident Type Priority Rating). The ECHCR VMS is configured to reflect these incident priority levels.

Where those incidents are allocated a priority one (life risk) or priority two (property risk) the fastest HFRS response will be mobilised regardless of geographical area. For lower priority incidents the response will revert to the appliance which normally covers that area.

The priority levels set against each incident type also enable:

- resource reallocation to incidents of a higher priority
- the release of resources from certain status types
- the allocated priority levels to form the basis for queuing

Road Network Manager

The VMS runs in conjunction with the Road Network Manager (RNM) data which enables every road within HFRS area to be allocated either an urban speed or a rural speed.

As an incident is created and plotted on the map within the VMS, all routes, speeds and road types are used to calculate the proposed response to the incident.

Engine Activation Times

A two-year average of station response times is used to allocate appliance activation times:

- Full-Time appliances are set as the overall Full-Time average response times.
- On-Call appliances are set as the actual station average response time.

Over the Border Appliances

Over the border appliances have been weighted with an activation time of 10 minutes so that these engines are not offered in preference to HFRS resources.

Sections 13 & 16 of the Fire Services Act allow for arrangements between FRS to support one another when necessary. Where Section 13/16 arrangements are in place, resources may be requested to attend incidents in the HFRS area.

Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue resources are not weighted as the shared mobilising system provides accurate resource availability information.

7. EMERGENCY CALL MANAGEMENT

Emergency Call Management (ECM) is based on a set of nationally agreed emergency call prompts. These prompts enable Fire Control personnel to assess incidents and elicit information appropriate to the call. This informs and assists with mobilising resources.

Efficient ECM may also improve the safety of staff and the public, as it is possible for the FRS to start to assess and manage risk whilst managing an emergency call.

The ECM protocol provides a generic system for the successful management of emergency calls based on the principle that an emergency call can be dealt with in 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 decisions, 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.

8. MOBILISING

The number and type of appliances mobilised to an incident is determined by a PDA. PDAs are assigned to the differing incident types that are used with the Vision mobilising system.

During the call taking process, the Fire Control operator will match the incident type to the details given by the caller. It must be recognised that the nature of calls means that it is not always obvious which type of incident type is the best fit with the nature of the incident the caller is describing.

In these circumstances the Mobilising Officer must use their professional knowledge and experience to adjust the response as required (Dynamic Mobilising).

Dynamic Mobilising

Mobilising Officers have discretionary authority to adjust the response offered by VMS, based upon the information given by the caller through the call management process, subsequent calls, review of the response times offered by VMS or, with consideration of the Service-wide incident or climatic conditions.

It is important to remember that the actions taken by the Mobilising Officer may have a direct positive or negative effect on the outcome of the incident.

Any use of Dynamic Mobilising must be added to the Incident Log, including the rationale for the decision. Examples of Dynamic Mobilising include:

Re-direction of Assigned Resource

When two or more events occur simultaneously within a station/geographical area, resources should be re-directed to attend the higher priority (potential life risk) with additional resources being mobilised to supplement other incident activity.

Increasing Attendances

The information given during the call taking process may mean that the Mobilising Officer feels an increased attendance is appropriate from that offered by the Vision system.

Special appliances may also be mobilised at the time of call if information received from the caller indicates that doing so could lessen the risk to life and/or property.

Reducing Attendances

In some circumstances initial attendances may be reduced, based on the information obtained from the caller and other incident activity.

The Mobilising Officer will use professional discretion before reducing attendances, regard being given to the impact of such decisions. The rationale for reducing attendances must be recorded on the Incident Log.

Incident Support Teams

Fire Control operators also have the option to mobilise additional On-Call staff to an ongoing incident (above the PDA), as an Incident Support Team. This is however, in strict accordance with the Incident Support Team Policy Delivery Guidance, and in conjunction with the requirements of the on-scene Incident Commander.

Mobilising Procedures

Control Operating Procedures (COPs) have been developed which specify the mobilising requirements for those incidents where specialist resources must be mobilised.

For example:

- Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)
- Water Rescue
- Animal Rescue
- Hazardous Materials

(List not exhaustive)

National Resilience

The COPs also include the procedures to be followed for the use and/or provision of national assets and ensures that the correct protocols are adhered to when liaising with the National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC).

Major Incidents

Major incidents can be declared either by the fire service or by partner agencies. When a major incident is declared then the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is informed via a Partner Alert email.

For fire service major incidents the response is determined by the requirements of the Incident Commander, appropriate informing of officers and partner agencies then takes place.

Fire Control will announce a major incident declaration to the police and ambulance service using the relevant Airwave radio channel. If appropriate, a national announcement can be made using National Talk Group 20 on the Airwave network.

Fire Alarms

Our response to calls to automatic fire alarms is in line with the Unwanted Fire Signals Position Statement and the Automatic Fire Alarms COP. Attendances to commercial premises will not normally be made unless there is indication of a fire situation.

Calls to domestic alarms and sleeping risk premises remain unaffected.

Hoax Calls

Where a caller is suspected of making a hoax call, Fire Control staff will challenge the caller as to how genuine the call is, and if necessary, give a warning of potential action that could be taken against the caller should the call be a hoax.

A reduced or non-attendance can be made at the discretion of the Mobilising Officer.

Where details of the caller can be obtained, either from British Telecom or from a mobile telephone network provider, details may be passed to the police for further action.

Standby Moves

Covering moves should be made when appropriate to ensure that the Service maintains an appropriate level of response cover. This is a very dynamic situation and will be dictated by the nature and number of incidents being attended, and the availability of resources at the time.

The Service's standby policy identifies key stations at North Hull, West Hull, Bridlington, Goole, Grimsby and Scunthorpe which require a standby if all pumping appliances from a key station are likely to be engaged for more than ten minutes after booking in attendance at an incident.

Optimum resource locations (ORL) are also identified in the standby policy. These are geographical areas outside the 20 minute risk profile of key Stations, these areas

should have a standby mobilised if all resources from the ORL are likely to be engaged for more than 10 minutes after booking in attendance at an incident.

Use of Adjoining Fire and Rescue Services

If the Mobilising Officer is proactive there should not be a need to use other FRS resources for a make-pumps or a standby.

It is practical good sense to use our resources first, even if they are not strictly “next fastest or geographically closest” as long as it is reasonable and practical to do so and providing the given response time difference is minimal. However, there are circumstances when HFRS resources are requested to assist neighbouring FRS’ or vice versa.

Over the Border Incidents

When an HFRS appliance is mobile to a cross border incident, the crew responding will transfer to the host FRS radio talk group.

Similarly, Flexible Duty System (FDS) Officers should also transfer to the appropriate channel. FDS Officers are mobilised on the same principles as HFRS Officer mobilising.

HFRS Fire Control will share relevant risk information with any over the border engines attending an incident in the HFRS Service area.

Flexible Duty System

FDS Officers are an operational resource available to Mobilising Officers. When on duty they provide monitoring, command and tactical support for incidents and operational personnel.

Officers will be mobilised on a `nearest Officer` principle and based upon the level of Incident Command required for the incident or for specific tasks during major, spate or critical incidents.

Officers should be informed of the role they are to undertake when being mobilised to an incident; this could be as Monitoring Officer, Incident Commander or for their skill-set specialism.

On-Call Stations

If an On-Call appliance has not booked mobile within five minutes of the alert time, Fire Control will attempt to contact the appliance/station to determine the reason for the delay. Depending on the reason, or, if there is no response, the next appropriate appliance will immediately be mobilised.

Special Appliances

Special appliances are vehicles that carry specific equipment or have a specific capability for use at incidents. Special appliances will not normally be mobilised as part of an initial PDA but will be mobilised on request from the Incident Commander or, at the discretion of the Mobilising Officer (dependant on the type of incident).

All special appliances are Unit Crewed. This is when a pump crew take a special appliance to an incident, so that the special and the pump mobilise together as a unit.

Spate Conditions

During periods of severe weather, a great number of calls for assistance may be received by Fire Control. As part of the ECHCRC Consortium, call flows are used to enable extra call demand to be dealt with by our partner Control Rooms within the consortium.

HFRS also participates in the NFCC 'Operation Willowbeck' procedure; this allows Control Rooms to liaise with BT to deflect calls throughout the country in periods of prolonged excessive demand. Details of Operation Willowbeck can be found on the Control SharePoint site.

When the volume of calls received continues at a steady rate beyond a 30 minute period, or at the discretion of the Mobilising Officer, then Fire Control is considered to be in Spate Conditions. At this point calls will be queued and allocated to resources on a risk based priority.

Appropriate command levels will be established in Fire Control and the Incident Support Room. A strategic reserve of officers and appliances will be allocated to 'business as usual' calls. The remaining available resources will be allocated to attending the spatte condition related calls.

Assisting Other Emergency Services/Organisations

Requests for assistance from other emergency services or organisations will be determined by the nature of the request. The Mobilising Officer has the discretion to mobilise the resources they deem appropriate and can seek further advice/assistance from a duty NILO, if required, based upon the type and likely duration of an incident.

If anyone requires any further guidance / information regarding this document, please contact Fire Control.