



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Emergency Response

Exercises Policy

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Responsible Person	Head of Emergency Preparedness
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CONTENTS

1. Introduction
 - Core Code of Ethics
 - National Guidance
2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
3. Aim and Objectives
 - Aim
 - Objectives
 - Desired Outcome
4. Associated Documents
 - Equality Impact Assessment
 - Legal References
 - National Guidance
 - Incident Command
5. Exercise Theme
6. Exercise Criteria
7. Exercise Types
 - Table Top Simulation Exercises
 - Live Scenario Exercises
 - Business Continuity Exercises
 - Level 4 Exercises
 - Level 3 Exercises
 - Level 2 Exercises
 - Level 1 Exercises
 - Cross Border Programme
8. Frequency
9. Realism and Safety
10. Exercise Planning Overview
 - Methods of Facilitation
 - Structure
 - Other Agencies and Organisations
 - Premises
 - Pre-determined Attendances
 - Brief
11. Post Exercise Assurance

1. INTRODUCTION

Exercises will be conducted for the following (but not exclusive) purposes:

- Establishing or practising a new procedure or technique aligned to National Operational Guidance (NOG).
- Validating the efficiency of an existing procedure or technique.
- Consolidating knowledge of a risk and any tactics pertinent to the risk.
- Interoperability with other services utilising JESIP principles and the Joint Decision Model (JDM)
- In response to local or national incidents of significant consequence
- Identified risks as part of the station risk profile
- Testing Operational Pre Plans
- To act on National Operational Learning Notes and Information Notes
- Testing contingency plans
- Confirmation of Business Continuity (BC) plans
- Confirming National Resilience capabilities
- Testing regional and consortium FRS capabilities
- Temporary hazards that present a significant risk

All operational staff, Fire Control, contingency personnel, and Heads of Function must participate in appropriate exercises within designated frequencies at their level and for their specialism to support their continuous professional development in role.

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 ensure that all operational staff, Fire Control staff, contingency personnel and Heads of Function undertake exercises for identified risks and to assure key procedures to support an effective and efficient response to the wider community of the Humber area.

Objectives:

- To define type, frequency, and level of attendance at exercises.
- To ensure organisational assurance at exercises.
- To ensure organisational learning at exercises.
- To validate operation pre-plans and SSRI information.
- To realistically exercise operational staff's competence.
- To realistically exercise Fire Control's competence.
- To realistically exercise contingency personnel's competence.
- To realistically exercise Heads of Function BC plans.
- To ensure the suitability of equipment, policy, and procedures.
- To ensure suitable and sufficient mobilisation of assets.
- To promote inter-agency working utilising JESIP principles and JDM.

Desired Outcome

A fire and rescue service with competent operational, Fire Control and contingency personnel, who have been trained to use the hazard and control measure approach provided in National Operational Guidance, applying risk assessment, decision making and risk management skills.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Assessment](#) (under review)
- Legal References
There are no specific legislative requirements relevant to this policy
- National Guidance
This policy complies with and follows all relevant National Guidance
- Incident Command
This policy complies with and follows all relevant Incident Command L1-L3 Framework Policy Delivery Guidance
- [Business Continuity Policy](#)
- [Organisational Learning Process Assurance Monitoring System](#)

5. EXERCISE PROGRAMME

The exercise themes will follow the NOG training schedule, as populated by the Learning and Development Section, and will be aligned to local risks.

6. EXERCISE CRITERIA

An exercise is a process to train for, test, assess, practice, assure and improve the overall response capabilities of the Service.

It will follow the criteria below:

- It should involve the normal pre-determined attendance for the designated exercise site.
- Specialist appliances may be involved at the organiser's discretion.
- The exercise can be sited at other locations other than HFRS premises.
- Where possible exercises should take place at a recognised operational risk site off station.
- External venues will hold a current, in date off site risk assessment (OSRA) approved by the Health, Safety & Environment section and the Service's FBU safety representative.
- An exercise held on HFRS premises will hold a specific risk assessment for the particular exercise that will be conducted.
- Exercises will include realistic mobilising and the use of standard message procedures, including the M/ETHANE structure, in conjunction with Fire Control.
- All exercises will be allocated a code name by the organiser and the prefix 'Exercise (code name)' will be used for all messages at level 1 & 2.
- Fire Engines proceeding to an exercise will observe the normal Traffic Regulations.
- An exercise pro forma must be completed for all exercises categorised at level 1 and a copy sent to exercises@humbersidefire.gov.uk at least one week before the planned exercise date.
- An exercise pro forma must be completed for all exercises categorised from levels 2 to 4 and a copy sent to exercises@humbersidefire.gov.uk at least one month before the planned exercise date.
- All exercises will be subject to an organisational learning process. A person should be specifically appointed for this role; ideally this person should have a role in facilitating the exercise and conducting the debrief. e.g., Tactical Advisor.
- Business Continuity (BC) exercises will be co-ordinated by the Emergency Planning Team.
- Completion of exercises should be confirmed via the exercise email to be

recorded on the exercise matrix held within Emergency Preparedness.

7. EXERCISE TYPES

There are two main types of exercise:

- Table top simulation
- Live scenario

The choice of which one to adopt depends on the purpose of the exercise. It is also dependent on lead-in time and available resources.

Table Top Simulation Exercises

Table top exercises are based on simulation, they involve a realistic scenario and a timeline, which may be real time or expedited. Table tops can be facilitated in a singleroom, in a series of linked rooms or via Teams which simulate the divisions between responders who need to communicate and be coordinated. Real time injects will be added to the simulation to stimulate a clear pathway to achieve the desired aims, objectives, and outcome for the simulation. The participants are expected to know the plan or proforma they are invited to test; this includes how the plan works as the simulation unfolds. This type of exercise is particularly useful for validation purposes, particularly for exploring planning assumptions.

Live Scenario Exercises

Live exercises range from a small-scale test of one component of the response, such as evacuation - ranging from a building or "incident" site to an affected community - through to a full-scale test of the whole organisation's response to an incident. Live exercises provide the best means of confirming the satisfactory operation of emergency communications, and the use of 'casualties' can add to the realism. Live exercises provide the only means of testing fully the crucial arrangements for handling the media.

Level 4 Exercises

These exercises will test procedures at strategic and tactical coordinating group levels for CBRN(e), MTA, and spate incidents. HFRS officers will participate at the appropriate level to test multi-agency working and procedures plus HFRS support and resilience. In addition to appropriate level officer attendance, HFRS may use these exercises as development opportunities for less experienced officers to familiarise themselves with multi-agency working and JESIP principles at tactical and strategic level, including the support arrangements required.

Level 3 Exercises

The Local Resilience Forum will publish a series of exercises at the start of the year based around identified risks within the Humber Community Risk Register.

This level is typified by a responding tactical commander who will demonstrate the ability to review and determine incident status, assume responsibility, and take over command and control operations at an ICL 3 incident. These will include scenarios/

simulations such as MTA, CBRN(e), spate, flood, fires in tall buildings (above 18m) and emerging risks such as Lithium-ion batteries and Battery energy storage systems.

Each exercise being planned should meet the mobilisation criteria for this level of incident management (between 5 - 9 pumping appliances for GMs) and be structured to ensure a natural progression of the incident command structure.

The location and theme of these exercises will have cognisance of the specialism maintenance of competence, community risk register and in support of the mandatory upper tier COMAH on-site plan exercise arrangements.

Level 2 Exercises

This level is typified by a responding tactical commander who will demonstrate the ability to review and determine incident status, assume responsibility, take over command, and control operations at an ICL 2 incident.

Each exercise being planned should meet the mobilisation criteria for this level of incident management (5 to 9 appliances, including the Command Unit) and be structured to ensure a natural progression of the incident command structure with the inclusion of an Operational Support Group WM (OSG WM) to support with command functions.

Each exercise will be linked to the Services ops pre plans schedule to form an exercise which can be linked to the relevant NOG scenario.

The location and theme of these exercises will have cognisance of the national operational guidance scenario training schedule, community risk register and in support of the mandatory upper tier COMAH on-site plan exercise arrangements.

Level 1 Exercises

This level is typified by the officer who will demonstrate the ability to command and control operations at a task-focused supervisory level, or to control a more serious escalating incident in the early stages until relieved of command by a more senior commander.

Each exercise being planned should meet the mobilisation criteria for this level of incident management (1 to 4 Fire appliances) and be structured to ensure a natural progression of the incident command structure.

These exercises will be linked to the rolling NOG calendar populated by Learning and Development.

Cross Border Programme

Service Delivery Station Managers will develop an exercise programme with their bordering fire and rescue services, (within defined frequencies) to exercise interoperability, at risks where joint attendance is planned or where the community risk is similar, such as flooding.

Business Continuity Exercises

BC may be defined as “the capability of an organisation to continue the delivery of products or services at pre-defined acceptable levels following a disruptive incident” and business continuity planning (or BC and resiliency planning) is the process of creating systems of prevention and recovery to deal with potential threats to an organisation. In addition to prevention, the goal is to enable ongoing operations before and during execution of both BC planning and disaster recovery. These exercises will test BC plans and procedures held and co-ordinated at Heads of Function level.

Control Exercises

This type of exercise will embed competent and resilient fire control capability, resourced to meet the demand placed upon it. Fire Control will be prepared and empowered to manage emergency calls from when they are received, through to the conclusion of incidents and beyond, providing the best possible service to the public. Simulations will exercise Fire Control employees to gather and share information to make informed and proactive decisions. This will include mobilising resources, provide safety, evacuation, and fire survival guidance to the public and partner agencies in an accessible way, contributing to the effective, safe, and coordinated resolution of local, regional, and national incidents.

Incident and Commander Framework

Incident and Commander Framework																	
Incident Level	One				Two					Three							
Pumps	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
AM – L3																	
GM – L2 & L3																	
SM – L2																	
WM – L1																	
CM – L1																	
A/CM – L1																	

Legend	
Not within commander limitations	
Within limitations of commander	
Incident Commander with Monitoring Officer	
No expectation for an AM to be mobilised	

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service flexi duty system officers are level two and three commanders as below.

Role	Level of Commander
Area Manager	Level three
Group Manager	Level two and three
Station Manager	Level two

8. FREQUENCY

- BC exercises will be facilitated once a quarter coordinated by the Emergency Planning Team.
- Level 4 COMAH exercise schedule will be coordinated by the LRF (through the Emergency Preparedness Team for HFRS) with attendance by appropriate command and specialist officers. Level four exercises will be facilitated once every six months.
- Level 3 exercises once per quarter. (4, one per District per year)
- Level 2 exercises twice per quarter. (8, two per District per year)
- Level 1 exercises in line with the National Operational Guidance Training schedule, generally one per scenario subject every two months.
- Cross Border for each full-time station with a bordering fire and rescue service, one exercise per quarter and for each On-Call station, with a bordering fire and rescue service, one exercise every six months. These exercises can be at any of the above levels and are inclusive within the totals.

The programme will be the responsibility of the Head of Emergency Preparedness and quality assured through the Head of Operational Training and their team.

Exercise themes will have cognisance of the HFRS schedule for NOG training, the Humber Community Risk Register, mandatory exercising requirements of local partners.

9. REALISM AND SAFETY

Unless operational exigencies prevent it, all exercises will include realistic mobilising and the use of standard message procedure in conjunction with Fire Control. All exercises will be allocated a code name by the organiser and the prefix 'Exercise [codename]' will be used for all messages. Fire appliances proceeding to an exercise will observe the normal traffic regulations. Almost all fire and rescue service operations involve an element of risk; this risk must be controlled through suitable and sufficient planning and facilitation to ensure safety of personnel.

10. EXERCISE PLANNING OVERVIEW

Methods of Facilitation

Determine the format of the exercise; if the aim can be properly achieved without the use of unnecessary aids such as fire, smoke, water, and casualties, leave them out of the proposals. The effort involved in laying on these facilities may not be reflected in the outcome of the exercise, and often the logistics involved obscure the real purpose of the exercise.

Structure

Decide on how structured the exercise is to be. The organiser may consider it appropriate to take the part of the Officer in Charge (OiC) if they wish to precisely dictate the way in which they wish the exercise to go.

Alternatively, they may appoint an OiC beforehand and supply them with a detailed brief. Another option is to let the normal pre-determined attendance arrive and the officer requirements be dictated by the normal mobilising sequence.

Other Agencies and Organisations

Consider the involvement of other Services; combine the partners at exercises to validate JESIP principles.

Premises

The exercise location can be either on or off station, however all stated exercise outcomes must be achieved, and comply with Service health and safety procedures.

Select the premises and liaise with the occupier and representative bodies to assess the suitability of the building and confirm that it meets the aims and objects of the exercise, in both realism and safety. Establish the 'no go' areas and restrictions on interference with the premises. It is important to determine whether the workforce is to be involved in evacuations and whether water can be applied, or smoke introduced inside working areas, or on outside plant.

A joint risk assessment of the area of the premises is to be utilised to identify any hazards and control measures that may be necessary.

Pre-determined Attendances

Advise Fire Control of the extent of the exercise; it may be necessary to impose an upper mobilising limit, irrespective of the request sent from the incident ground, and to specify which stations are to be involved when requests for assistance are received. Fire Control must be informed of any delay when mobilising appliances from the exercise.

Brief

A full safety brief will be required for all attending; should written instructions be necessary then they should contain the following information:

- Action to be taken by umpires and safety officers.
- Communication arrangements for, or between umpires.
- Identification of umpires, observers, etc., e.g., coloured tabards.

POST EXERCISE ASSURANCE

Outcomes and learning from the exercise will be recorded using the organisational learning process ([See Section 4. Associated Documents](#)) completed by the person facilitating the exercise and conducting the debrief.

**If you require any further guidance or information in relation to this policy,
please contact Emergency Preparedness.**