



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Service Delivery

Fire Control Staffing Policy

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| Responsible Person | Head of Emergency Preparedness and Fire Control |
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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy details the staffing arrangements for Fire Control staff and sets out the guidelines and framework for the maintenance of staffing levels.

Humberside Fire & Rescue Service (HFRS) is committed to providing the best possible service to its communities. In doing so it also recognises the need for as much flexibility as possible for its employees in maintaining their work life balance.

This policy ensures that all employees can take their nationally agreed allocation of leave whilst maintaining the necessary staffing levels required to maintain the Service's core function of emergency call handling and mobilising.

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 implement a framework to ensure that the duty system worked by Fire Control based staff is fit for purpose, maximises efficiency and productivity, and maintains the minimum required staffing levels.

The policy will also ensure the allocation of leave is distributed equitably for individual staff consistently across Fire Control, and that sufficient rest days are allocated.

HFRS will ensure that conditions relating to the duty system are in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) whilst maintaining operational readiness.

Objectives:

The primary objective of the Fire Control Staffing Policy is to enable Fire Control staffing to be able to support HFRS mission statement of “Safer Communities, Safer Firefighters”.

The following are also applicable:

- Utilise effective long-term workforce planning to ensure, so far as is reasonably foreseeable, that staffing levels are maintained across all watches.
- Provide a clear policy and policy guidance to support Watch Management Teams (WMT) in managing and forecasting the required watch and Fire Control availability, through a dynamic approach utilising the full Fire Control establishment.
- Promote the ownership of absence management and availability by WMT within the defined parameters of this Policy and associated Policy Delivery Guidance.
- Ensure policy and policy guidance is consistently applied across all four watches by means of regular audits and review with appropriate intervention.
- Provide the necessary rest days and leave arrangements for all staff across the entire year and the means to recall staff during periods of increased demand.
- Make provision for all individual leave allocations to be programmed prior to the start of the calendar year.
- Coordinate the allocation of training courses prior to the start of the calendar year.
- Provide a degree of flexibility for staff to move or exchange leave without compromising staffing levels or the quality of service provided.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Assessment](#)
- [Fire Control Staffing Policy Delivery Guidance](#)
- [East Coast & Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium – Ways of Working Document – Staffing Levels](#)
- Legal References
 - [The Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#)
 - [Working Time Regulations 1998](#)
- National Operational Guidance
 - [National Joint Council \(NJC\) Scheme of Conditions of Service \(Grey Book\)](#)

5. DEFINITIONS

Shift – a single continuous period of duty. Fire Control staff work the 2-day, 2-night, 4 off shift pattern (2,2,4). Day shifts consist of 9 hours and night shifts 15 hours. An individual leave day can be allocated to either a day or night shift.

Watch Establishment – The number of staff allocated to each watch. This is currently set at, 1 Watch Manager, 2 Crew Managers, 3 or 4 Firefighter Control (FFC) depending on the watch.

Watch Strength – This is the number of staff available to provide staffing for that watch, this may be impacted by vacancies, maternity leave, long-term sickness, temporary transfers etc. The watch strength may be above or below the watch establishment.

Standard Crewing Level – This is set at four, consisting of two supervisors (Watch or Crew Managers) and two FFC. This may be a mixture of watch based staff supplemented by day duty staff.

Minimum Crewing Level – This is set at three, including at least one substantive supervisor and may be a mixture of watch based and day duty staff.

Leave Group – The allocation of a block of leave to which one or more individuals is assigned. An individual's leave group will move on by one leave group at the start of each leave year. Following watch moves, the person being moved will be assigned to the leave group of the individual they replace.

Detachment – The voluntary movement of staff from a watch forecast to be over Standard Crewing Level for a particular shift(s) to another watch's duty shift to cover a staffing shortage. The detachment will usually involve some benefit to the individual, for example doing a day shift instead of a night shift. The benefit of reduced overtime costs to the organisation outweighs the contractual shortfall in hours worked.

6. STAFFING LEVELS

The Fire Control establishment is divided into day duty staff and watch based staff. The day duty staff roles include managerial support, system support and a training and development role.

The Fire Control standard staffing level provides enough flexibility to allow for appropriate rest and meal breaks during a shift.

Where only minimum staffing level is available for any shift, day duty staff will support rest and meal breaks, and general managerial supervision as required.

7. ALLOCATION OF LEAVE

Leave allocation will be in accordance with the NJC Scheme of Conditions of Service as set out below.

- 25 scale A days leave
- Five scale B days leave
- Three Long Service days leave for employees who at the start of the leave year have completed five years' continuous service.

Personnel will be allocated one of six leave groups on their watch. Leave (with the exception of 3 x B leaves) will be allocated into blocks on the register/availability system prior to the 1 December. Courses and Training days will first be allocated, and after the 1 December individuals can ask for their remaining 3 x B leaves to be programmed.

8. MOVEMENT OF LEAVE

Staff may request to move their leave after the 1 December. Leave requests should be emailed to the individual's Watch Manager who is responsible for maintaining standard crewing levels and recording each individual's leave allocations.

The maximum number of staff allowed on leave from a watch at any time will be two. This will allow for opportunities for short notice courses to be programmed and leave the potential to allow for inter watch detachments.

Staff who cannot move leave to a period they require due to crewing levels should seek a leave swap with available staff.

9. TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL) AND OVERTIME

Staff who agree to cover shortfalls in staffing for TOIL will accrue the time 1.5 times the hourly rate. Staff who agree to work for overtime shall be paid in accordance with the agreed national pay rate for their role.

At the end of the leave year any outstanding TOIL owed will be paid up at the appropriate rate. TOIL must be taken in full shifts, not part shifts.

10. SPECIAL LEAVE

Special leave may be requested by an individual through their line-manager or Fire Control Station Manager. Each case will be judged on its own merits and may be paid or unpaid. Special Leave must be approved by a Station Manager.

11. STAFFING SHORTAGES

Fire Control provides a 24/7/365 critical function to HFRS, and does so from a limited number of staff. Fire Control staffing levels are a responsibility of the Fire Control Station Manager and WMT and not limited to shortages being the issue of one watch in isolation.

Once staffing shortages are identified, Fire Control WMT should attempt to cover the shortfall in the most efficient manner possible. Initially a detachment from a watch

with sufficient staff should be sought, if this proves unsuccessful then during the week it may be possible for day duty staff to provide support to Fire Control.

If these options cannot provide the necessary cover, then staff should be contacted for overtime or TOIL.

When necessary, for example for large scale incidents or spate conditions, a Recall to Duty (RTD) request will be sent out on Textmarketer and if necessary on the Fire Control Whatsapp group to request any available staff to report for duty as soon as possible. Payment for RTD will be in accordance with the agreed conditions of service.

The agreement to work a detachment/overtime/TOIL/RTD will be entirely voluntary.

WMT will monitor the number of additional hours being worked by staff to ensure, where reasonably practicable that no more than 24 additional hours are worked per month, averaged over a six-month period.

Detailed information on the processes to be followed in addressing shortfalls in Control staffing are provided in the [Fire Control Staffing Policy Delivery Guidance](#).

12. EAST COAST AND HERTFORDSHIRE CONTROL ROOM CONSORTIUM

HFRS Control are part of the East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium. This includes the Control Rooms in Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Humberside FRSs working in partnership to deliver the Fire Control function for each service. The minimum staffing total for all four Control Rooms combined is eleven.

Where shortfalls occur, notifications are sent to the other Fire Control Rooms to advise them of the shortfall and that additional fire and administrative telephone calls may be re-distributed throughout the Consortium in accordance with the agreed call flow processes.

This capability provides additional resilience for all four Control Rooms in terms of staffing and call handling; however, all FRSs are required to take all reasonable actions necessary to ensure their control room is staffed adequately.

13. CONTROL CONTINGENCY STAFF

A pool of contingency staff is maintained to provide additional staffing cover for Fire Control, if required during periods of industrial action or spate conditions. Their level of competence in terms of call handling and mobilising is not maintained at a level for them to be able to provide staffing support to Fire Control at short notice.

If you require any further information or guidance in relation to this policy, please contact the Fire Control Station Manager.