



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Service Improvement

Life Critical Condition or Death in Service Policy

Owner	Executive Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Person	Head of Corporate Assurance
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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

Effective health and safety management, procedures and control measures have assisted in reducing the risks encountered by Service staff, but it is impossible to eliminate all risks, so death and serious injuries do occur.

Life critical conditions or death can affect employees due to medical conditions that are not safety event related. Although these situations are not required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), they are included in this policy.

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

The aim of this policy is to consider and set out the process by which employees and their families are supported following a life critical condition or death.

To specify the type of response appropriate by detailing procedures and considerations so this can be given in a timely and sensitive manner.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Assessment](#)
- Legal References
There are no specific legal references relating to this policy
- National Guidance
There is no specific national guidance relating to this policy
- [Standards of Dress Policy](#)

- [Special Occasions Policy](#)

5. LIFE CRITICAL CONDITION OR DEATH (IN SERVICE)

- There are a number of objectives that the Service needs to consider when life critical conditions or death are identified.

They include:

- Providing welfare and support arrangements to families, employees, and other parties.
- Notifying external agencies of life critical condition/death within the specified timescales when required.
- Provide information to the media in a timely and sensitive manner.
- Make arrangements to continue to provide a normal service to the communities of HFRS.
- Investigate the cause of life critical condition/death, if necessary, to enable preventative measures to be introduced to prevent reoccurrences.
- Initiate actions to mitigate the risk of the Service facing civil or criminal proceedings arising from actions after the death or life-threatening injury.
- Strengthening the Service's capability to respond to a death or life critical condition.
- Provide the relevant information to interested parties such as the Police and Coroner.

Media

Media interest following a life critical condition or death may be intense and sustained for several months/years. Appropriate use of the media will help to avoid rumour and misinformation that may cause distress to those affected and their families.

Any approach for interviews should in the first instance be directed to the Corporate Assurance Section. If they are not available, any sensitive media should be forwarded to the duty Director. In any event the duty Director is to be informed.

Notification of life critical condition or death

All notifications of life critical condition or death are to be forwarded to Service Control at the earliest opportunity available.

Any department receiving notification from an external organisation/source of an on-duty employee's life critical condition or death, **MUST** immediately forward this information to Service Control.

Welfare

It is possible that the handling of the immediate welfare needs of employee's families can be the most critical part of any response to a life critical condition or death.

Consideration must be given to the timings and method of notifying families of the deceased or injured person, as this has a direct impact on the immediate and long-term welfare of the family.

The duty Director, with the line manager of the individual and in conjunction with the Police, is to ensure the nominated emergency contact is notified as soon as reasonably possible.

The duty Director will appoint a suitably trained Family Liaison Officer (FLO) who will then in turn appoint a Service Liaison Officer (SLO). Staff appointed to these roles should preferably be a middle manager or above, but not from the affected District / Section. The appointed individual tasked to notify the emergency contact of the life critical condition or death must **NOT** be appointed as a FLO. It is vital that in today's culture of social media, the informing of the emergency contact must be completed as soon as practicably possible.

NO correspondence is to be sent to the affected individual's home address or workplace.

Consideration must be given to Control personnel if they received or processed any sensitive information.

Welfare needs may include the following:

- Emotional support.
- Financial support, including liaising with the relevant pension fund i.e., West Yorkshire Pension Fund / East Riding Pension Fund and the Fire Fighters Charity etc.
- Provision of compassionate leave.
- Practical support in the form of regular liaison and transportation to hospital etc.
- Consider if the individual was a Sports and Welfare Association member.

Responsibilities

Service Control:

Upon receipt of the notification of a life critical condition or death, Service Control must create an incident log to record actions as below:

- Notify the duty PO and Duty Director
- Instigate the notification process for death or serious injury of operational firefighters to the office of the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor

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- Inform the Corporate Assurance Section.
- Record the name of the individual.
- Note the time and apparent cause of the life critical condition or death, if known.
- Record the location where the life critical condition or death occurred.
- List the details of any other injured employees at the incident.
- Record the location or the hospital that the injured or deceased person is situated or being taken to.
- Notify the relevant hospital / agencies of the name of any contaminant if hazardous materials are present.
- Mobilise additional resources if requested.

Duty Director (Area Manager):

Following the notification of a life critical condition or death the Duty Director will:

- Liaise with the police to ensure the emergency contact is notified as soon as reasonably possible.
- Appoint an FLO, of SM/GM or Grade 11/13

Appoint an SLO, of SM/GM or Grade 11/13, to be done by or with agreement of the FLO.

- Notify the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) who will notify the Fire Authority
- Notify the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor Duty Officer by telephone on 0303444 4101 for life critical condition or death of an operational firefighter.
- Initiate a BIMT meeting, this should include discussions around financial donations into Service from members of the public.

Family Liaison Officer:

Once appointed the FLO will:

- Ensure the nominated emergency contact has been notified.
- Collate all relevant information prior to contact such as:
 - Emotional needs
 - Financial needs – gaps in salary/pension may need addressing.
 - Practical support – transportation to hospital etc.
 - Details of The Firefighters Charity

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- Representative Bodies e.g. FBU/Fire and Rescue Service Association Fire Officers Association, Unison etc.
- Make contact and use the Service Chaplain and/or other religious/faith mechanisms.
- Consider discussing funeral arrangements and assistance from the Service.
- Medical or wellbeing assistance from Occupational Health & Wellbeing.
- Offer to remove any Service issued items kept at the home address, as soon as appropriate to do so.
- When appropriate obtain a copy of the death certificate and forward this to the HR Section to allow financial arrangements to be made.
- Consider memorial events in conjunction with the SLO.

The role of the FLO will remain, possibly for a period of 12 months, to offer support on important dates such as birthdays, Christmas, and other anniversaries, until it is deemed that all that can be achieved/all that is required has been done and that it is no longer required.

Service Liaison Officer:

Once appointed the SLO will:

- Contact the FLO and be a point of contact between the watch/section and the FLO.
- Ensure any welfare needs of the watch/section are addressed.
- Where the incident involves personnel on the On-Call Duty System, the SLO should act as the link between the nominated emergency contact, the Service and the individual's primary employer.
- Personal items in lockers/desks etc. are to be itemised, packaged, and returned to the family via the FLO when appropriate.
- Service issued items in lockers/desks are to be itemised and returned to stores. e.g. PPE, alerter etc.

Inform the following:

- Corporate Assurance
- Health, Safety and Environment
- Human Resources
- Finance
- Occupational Health and Wellbeing

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- Service Chaplin
- The Fire Fighters Charity
- Relevant Representative Bodies (e.g. FBU/Fire and Rescue Service Association, Fire Officers Association, Unison etc.)
- Organisational Development / Training
- Ensure Service Control have been informed.

In addition to the above requirements, following the death on operational duty of a member of the UK Fire and Rescue Service, the Fire Service College will hold a 'Bell Ceremony'. During this ceremony the Memorial Bell is rung, and a minute's silence observed.

To enable this ceremony to be conducted the SLO shall notify the Fire Service College as soon as possible on:

- Tel: 01608 652154 / 650831
- Fax: 01608 652155 / 651788.

Corporate Assurance:

Following the notification of a death or life critical condition Corporate Assurance will:

Liaise closely with the FLO/SLO.

- Publish details of funeral arrangements.
- Continuously monitor the media coverage of an incident informing the duty Director daily of the content and potential impact it may have.
- Report immediately any media coverage that changes significantly in bias or where the media make new/unexpected claims of a negative nature.
- Arrange, if necessary, for a Book of Condolence, both electronic and hard copy to be produced for a period of 2-3 months after the event.

Service Provision

The death or life critical condition of a colleague will have a direct impact on Service morale. If necessary, an affected station should be taken 'off the run'. In the event of the deceased / injured not being at their home station, then consideration should be given to taking affected personnel 'off the run'. In the event of the employee not being station based, consider removing colleagues from work activities at the individual's place of work.

6. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

The FLO is to liaise with the nominated emergency contact, and upon request the Service will assist in the provision of funeral arrangements via the SLO.

The Corporate Assurance Section will be responsible for promulgating details of any funeral arrangements.

Upon being notified of the death of a serving or ex-serving member of the Service, the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or his designated nominee, should consider offering to the next of kin, the Service's involvement in the funeral as follows:

Serving member dying whilst attending an incident

Full Fire Service funeral including:

- a. parade of personnel.
- b. use of fire engine as a hearse.
- c. appropriate personnel as pall bearers in Dress Uniform with medals.
- d. funeral cortege passing the appropriate Station where a salute will be given by personnel.
- e. consider offering a Service/Union flag.

Serving member dying on or off duty:

- f. appropriate personnel as pall bearers in Dress Uniform without medals.
- g. funeral cortege passing the appropriate station where a final salute will be given by personnel.
- h. consider offering a Service/Union Flag.

Death of an ex-member:

- i. funeral cortege passing the appropriate station, where a final salute will be given by personnel in Dress Uniform without medals.

Attendance of Service personnel at a funeral service:

Where the first three points (a – c above) are not deemed appropriate, the Fire Service may be represented by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive or designated nominee(s). Refer to the [Standards of Dress Policy](#) for appropriate wear.

Note: At all times consideration should be given to uniformity of appearance.

Flags

Refer to the [Special Occasions Policy](#) for guidance on the flying of flags at Service Premises.

7. Post-Incident Considerations, if applicable:

- Following the closure of the incident, the following actions should be considered:
- A debrief of how this policy was implemented, including representation from representative bodies and multi agencies if necessary.
- A report identifying all aspects of how this policy was implemented should be produced for the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT).
- Advice should be sought from the duty Director before beginning any debrief process to determine if the findings could affect any investigation or civil claim being made against the Service.
- Care should be taken to ensure that anniversaries of the incident and memorial dates are appropriately marked.

**If you require any further guidance in relation to this policy,
please contact Corporate Assurance.**