

# **Fire and Rescue Service Health and Safety Arrangements Part 3**

## **Fire and Rescue Service**

### **Statement of Intent**

We, the undersigned, fully endorse Oxfordshire County Council's Part 1 Health and Safety Policy and the Chief Fire Officer's part 2 Safety Policy Statement. As the senior managers responsible for the day-to-day running of the Service, we are committed to the objectives of this policy, and will aim to provide the necessary resources for its effective implementation.

In relation to this commitment, our underlying principle is:

*To respond appropriately to societal risk whilst, at the same time, effectively managing organisational risk.*



**Simon Furlong, Deputy Chief Fire Officer,  
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service**

Date: May 2016

Date for Review: May 2017

**Grahame Mitchell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer,  
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service**

Date: May 2016

Date for Review: May 2017

# Policy

The Council policy framework will ensure the effective management of all activities based on the 'plan – do – check – act' management process.

The Council's policy framework is as follows:

- Health and Safety Policy – Part 1  
Chief Executive's H&S Policy Statement for the whole organisation.
- Health and Safety Policy – Part 2  
Director's H&S Policy Statement containing Roles and Responsibilities.
- Health and Safety Arrangements – Part 3  
Deputy Director's arrangements for managing significant risk

As the two Oxfordshire County Council Third Tier Officers responsible for the day-to-day management of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS), we accept our responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HASAWA) and all subordinate health and safety regulations. As OFRS is an exemplary employer, we (as principal managers) recognise that compliance with the relevant statutory provisions is a minimum standard only and one which we will actively seek to enhance.

We also believe that a successful 'Health and Safety' culture depends on co-operation between employers, employees and others, as such we are determined to continue to promote structures and provide proportionate resources to support a climate in which the positive aspects of safety are encouraged and developed.

However, we must also recognise that the Fire and Rescue Service is required to regularly operate in dangerous, difficult and challenging environments, which are often the result of someone else's failure to effectively manage risk. Such emergency incidents often require firefighters and their operational managers to have to adapt their approach and bring into play their specialist training, experience and supervision skills. This blending of training, experience and supervision is known as the 'Safe Person Concept' and is one of key methods the Service uses to effectively manage operational risks.

## **Planning for Health and Safety**

The Corporate Health and Safety Strategy provides the strategic objectives for the Council which is to:

- Embed “Sensible Health and Safety” into the Council’s culture
- Raise H&S Competency Levels
- Review the way that H&S performance is measured
- Ensure that the Council is a “learning” organisation
- Ensure that H&S is robustly managed in contracted services
- Effective management of work related stress

The Corporate (CCMT) Health and Safety Action Plan will identify measures to achieve these objectives and will link to the Fire and Rescue Services Health and Safety Action Plan.

In complying with section 2 of the HASAWA and Regulation 5 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR), we will ensure (so far as is reasonably practicable and taking into account the emergency response context in which the Service must regularly operate) the health and safety of all employees, contractors and the public during Fire Service operations by providing systems, equipment, information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure:

- Risks to the public, contractors and employees are identified and suitably assessed
- Equipment, plant, premises and systems of work are adequately maintained
- Articles and substances that are used, handled, stored and transported at work are done so in a safe manner
- The health and safety of the public, contractors and employees is supported by appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary, depending on the specific work circumstances
- So far as is reasonably practicable, resources are committed to achieve this policy.

This policy statement will be complimented by a range of risk-assessed health and safety policies and procedures (our Health and Safety Management System) which set out our approach and standards to the various workplace environments and circumstances in which we will foreseeably operate, coupled with an operational assurance framework that will be used to monitor, audit and review the Service’s performance, according to need.

We will ensure that details of our health and safety performance are included in the Fire and Rescue Service Annual Report.

## **Organisation & Responsibilities**

The health and safety management framework will be based on the HSG65 (2013) model as well as the Safe Person Concept (as good practice guidance) with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer having overall responsibility for ensuring the framework is complied with by managers and personnel. Group Manager (People & Organisational Support Manager) and Station Manager (Health and Safety) will also have a strategic and advisory role in assisting the Deputy Chief Fire Officer in the compliance of the framework. This team, in conjunction with, the Health and Safety Technicians and Joint Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Committee (JHSWCC) will ensure that:

- It formulates and develops health and safety policies and procedures appropriate to the organisation.
- any relevant health and safety events that occur in either the Service or the wider sector are suitably reported, analysed and the learning outcomes adopted, where appropriate, back into the organisation in order to deliver continual improvement.
- it keeps up to date with changes to health and safety legislation, standards and good practice relevant to the organisation

In ensuring the above we recognise that accidents, ill health and near misses may be the result of failings in management control and are not necessarily the fault of individual employees.

## **Risk Assessment**

Effective health and safety planning is concerned with reducing the likelihood of accidents and ill-health by identifying, eliminating and controlling hazards and risks. Risk assessment and associated risk control systems are the basis for ensuring that adequate precautions are provided and maintained. The principals of this are contained within the MHSWR under Regulation 3 'Risk Assessment' and Regulation 4 'Principles of Prevention'.

Managers shall ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, all significant hazards within their service are identified and properly assessed. In addition the risks will be eliminated or controlled and adequate information, instruction, training and supervision will be provided.

A range of generic risk assessments are available to assist managers in completing risk assessments, the content of which should be added to and edited as required. The Fire and Rescue Service has developed a comprehensive approach to risk assessment and guidance on this process can be found on the Fire and Rescue Service health and safety pages on the intranet.

These arrangements will be complemented by a range of health and safety policies and procedures which set out our approach and standards to the various workplace environments and circumstances in which we will foreseeably operate, coupled with an operational assurance framework that will be used to monitor, audit and review the service's performance, according to need.

### **Management of Significant Service Risks:**

Serious injury or death of firefighter(s) at operational incidents remains the greatest risk facing the Service. In the UK during the 10 year period 2004 to 2014, 14 firefighters tragically lost their lives at operational incidents. The other key areas where employee safety can be put at risk in the organisation are during operational training, prevention and protection activities and our support services (such as fleet and premises).

If a major safety event occurs within OFRS, we will ensure the Service reviews and, where appropriate, revises its relevant policies, procedures, training and equipment – so that the Service can continue to deal as safely and effectively as possible with the whole range of activities and emergency incidents it is expected to.

However, the learning outcomes from major safety events are only one element of the risk mitigation approach taken by OFRS. As described earlier, the Safe Person Concept and HSG65 model are applied to both the preparation phase (proactive) and for managing incidents (reactive), so that the risks to firefighters can be identified, assessed and mitigated before an incident occurs as well as during it. The tools we use within this framework include:

- National Generic Risk Assessments (NGRA's)
- SOP / TOG / AHIS risk assessments
- National Operational Guidance (NOG)
- Local site specific risk assessments (e.g. SSRI and special events)
- Notable safety event analysis (e.g. case studies, Analytical Risk Assessments (ARA's))
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Specialist Equipment to do the job
- Research into new ways of working
- Risk Critical Skills training

- Incident Command training
- Active Monitoring of incidents and Operational Debriefing
- Overarching Operational Assurance Framework
- CFOA / LGA Operational Assessment Toolkit
- Appropriate information, instruction and training
- Our Incident Command Philosophy (“Emergency Response Maxim”).

**The headings below set out how we will discharge our duty of care:**

- 1. Intervention**
- 2. Training**
- 3. Prevention and Protection**
- 4. Support Services**
- 5. Staff Welfare**
- 6. Provide a safe place of work**

### **1. Intervention:**

The tools, equipment and frameworks mentioned above are used to determine the appropriate actions, levels of protection and additional risk mitigation measures taken locally when dealing with an emergency incident.

This holistic approach is employed across the whole range of incidents that firefighters are expected to attend and not just fires - such as road traffic collisions, major incidents, flooding and hazardous material spillages, as well as rescues from difficult-to-access places (e.g. at height, across ice, or from mud or water). It also takes into account the on-going safety of the public during an incident, by employing such skills as First Aid and trauma care for those who are injured and systems such as cordoning and evacuation to remove people from danger.

To inform this approach further, OFRS also uses its Integrated Risk Management processes (including its operational risk register) together with its operational assurance framework to organise, plan, implement, monitor, audit and review any policies, practices, equipment and training it has developed to meet the operational risks it has identified.

In addition, OFRS works closely with other Fire and Rescue Services (FRS’s) to continually improve such areas as Tactical Operational Guidance (to deal with specific incident types), as well as its command and control systems, equipment and training.

## **2. Training:**

The Safe Person Concept relies on the Service having competent operational teams that are appropriately equipped, trained and supervised, in order for them to respond effectively to emergency calls.

In order to achieve the training aspects of the Safe Person Concept, the Service has identified a number of key operational competencies (known as risk critical skills - because undertaking these activities is where firefighters are most likely to put themselves at highest risk of injury) that it requires its operational staff to undertake and maintain, along with a number of specialist skills. Currently, these risk-critical skills are:

- Driving to incidents
- Incident command
- RTC
- BA
- Water safety
- Working at height
- Firecraft (use of ladders, pumps & practical firefighting)

To minimise the risks, firefighters receive initial training, regular refresher training and assessment in these areas and are also subject to further training if they fail to meet a competent standard – irrespective of the duty system they work. However, the levels of supervision at incidents may vary depending on the experience and skills of the respective fire crews, in line with the Safe Person Concept.

The training is recorded and monitored using an electronic system (Redkite) that assists managers in both maintaining compliance and identifying any further training needs.

However, because of the potentially dangerous nature of the intervention role, the training itself can also carry with it inherent risks. Therefore, all training is risk-assessed and managers are given the skills to both identify and manage health and safety issues in the training environment.

A similar approach is taken, where appropriate, in respect to specialist training (such as specialist rescue, hazardous material incidents and national resilience activities), in order to allow the Service to effectively manage more complex incidents. In-house instructors and/or external training providers are used to deliver this training, dependent on the needs of the Service – all of which is assessed and recorded.

### **3. Prevention and Protection:**

In domestic premises, OFRS staffs primarily undertake fire risk checks in people's homes in order to raise awareness of the dangers of fire and encourage them to fit of smoke alarms, with the aim of directly reducing the number of deaths and injuries from fire across the county. OFRS has widened this approach to include other risks/dangers in the home, such as slips trip and falls. OFRS staff in conjunction with OCC and other external partner agencies will work to ensure the wider safety of public we serve, in reducing risk to working, travelling and living in Oxfordshire by our risk reduction activities.

Similarly, in order to manage the fire risk in non-domestic premises, OFRS officers enforce the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 countywide, using a risk-based inspection regime of fire safety audits, coupled with analysis and the making of recommendations on community developments during both Building Regulations and major planning consultations.

The OCC Trading Standards function is incorporated into the Fire and Rescue Service, and work to ensure the interests of both the business and domestic customers we serve are protected. This includes working with OFRS, OCC staff and other partner agencies in reducing risk.

The OCC Emergency Planning (EP) team work closely with our local councils and neighbouring counties in ensuring that the county and those people within it, are prepared for emergencies, and provide a service to assist in reducing the impact when incidents occur. The EP team, work with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum in ensuring our preparedness in reducing the impact of risk in Oxfordshire, and fulfilling our statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Procedures, PPE, equipment, training and supervision are provided to staff to manage any identified health and safety risks associated with these activities.

#### **4. Support Services:**

OFRS also provides and maintains a number of support services (such as fleet, premises and administration services). In respect to Fleet management, all OFRS vehicles are subject to a rigorous safety inspection regime. All premises under OFRS control are regularly inspected in accordance with our **Active Monitoring Procedure**, from a Health & Safety perspective, with a view to keeping them in a condition that is safe and without significant risks to health to staff, visitors or contractors - as well as ensuring safe means of access and egress are maintained.

In relation to OFRS staff working on these vehicles and in these buildings, work processes are appropriately risk-assessed and PPE is provided, where needed – as well as training and supervision being given.

#### **5. Staff Welfare:**

Throughout all of the key functional areas highlighted above, appropriate facilities and arrangements for welfare needs at work are provided for, whether it is on the incident ground, via occupational health or in OFRS premises.

#### **6. Provide a safe place of work**

The council's policy requires every establishment/workplace to have an up to date procedure which details the locally agreed arrangements relating to all health, safety and welfare matters in the workplace. A copy of the procedure can be found on the Health and Safety Intranet Pages.

##### Buildings managed by Corporate FM

Corporate FM is responsible for the health and safety of the workplace including County Hall, Foxcombe, Knights Court, Samuelson House.

### Buildings managed by Local Managers (e.g. Fire Stations)

The Deputy and Assistant Chief Fire Officers will appoint managers responsible for the premises and they must ensure that the establishment/workplace procedure is:

- Completed;
- Kept up-to-date;
- Communicated to all staff, and users of the premises.

### Shared Premises

It will be the responsibility of Service Managers and Property and Facilities (responsible for the landlord/tenant arrangements) to ensure that effective arrangements exist for the co-operation and co-ordination of health and safety with other employers and building owners. Such measures include:

- Exchange of information on risks within the working environment and safe systems of work;
- Co-operation on matters such as implementing evacuation procedures, first aid etc.;
- Safety monitoring procedures, including inspection of premises.

Such arrangements must be stated in a formal agreement with nature and extent of health and safety responsibility clearly defined.

### Hiring or loaning of Premises

Managers must ensure all necessary formal agreements are in place when hiring or loaning out Council buildings to third parties. This will include ensuring all relevant checks and approvals are in place concerning:

- Health & Safety and Safeguarding Risk Assessments;
- Insurances;
- Security and Emergency Procedures;

Guidance can be found on the H&S Intranet page or via the Council Insurance Team.

### Emergency Management Planning

Managers will ensure that all premises have business continuity plans in place to manage foreseeable emergencies such as flooding. any alternative, temporary locations should have up to date risk assessments , supported by operational emergency procedures which will be drawn to the attention of all relevant persons.

## **Monitoring**

Periodic reviews of premises by local and tier managers and the H&S team will be supported by:

Periodic peer review using the CFOA / LGA Operational Assessment toolkit to provide the Service with external scrutiny and assessment of how effectively it is managing operational Health and Safety.

The Health and Safety Team, with the Assistance of the Organisational Assurance Team, will carry out an annual audit of the Health and Safety Management System.

OFRS in conjunction with CFOA District No.5 have adopted the "Protocol for Inter Fire & Rescue Service Health & Safety Audits" for peer review of health and safety in the workplace by means of ROSPA QSA auditing to assess how effectively it is managing Health and Safety.

## **Revision of Health & Safety Policy**

We will review (and where appropriate revise) this overarching Health and Safety policy every year, and/or when necessary. Any such revisions will be brought to the attention of all OFRS employees, where the revisions are relevant to their role.

As principal managers in OFRS, we also recognise (notwithstanding our legal duties) the moral commitment we have to promoting the health and safety of the Service's employees and others affected by our work. As a consequence, we will ensure the Service consults regularly with the employees' appointed safety representatives (in accordance with Health & Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996), and the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended) in order to make and maintain arrangements, which will:

- Provide for effective co-operation in the promotion and development of measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all persons who may be affected by the nature of the Service's work activities.
- Revise these measures (as and when required) to ensure both legal compliance and moral commitments are maintained. Any such revisions will be brought to the attention of all its employees.

This consultation will take the form of regular, pre-planned meetings of the Joint Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Committee (JHSWCC), chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (or their delegated deputy) as well as regular sub-group and ad-hoc meetings, set up between relevant managers and health and safety representatives to deal with any specific issues that are a result of either the consultation process, managerial actions and/or safety events.

The Joint Health Safety and Welfare Consultative Committee (JHSWCC) will then report and recommend actions to the Service's Leadership Team in relation to Health and Safety within the organisation.