

LGA/CFOA Health and Safety Report: Update

Background

At the FSMC discussion in July on Health and Safety, Members asked officers to provide more information about activity in the FRS since the HSE Consolidated Report of inspections in eight fire and rescue services published in October 2010.

Following each of the inspections in the 8 brigades, the HSE wrote to the relevant FRS with a summary report detailing strengths and weaknesses and a list of recommendations. In response, each FRS developed and agreed a plan to address the recommendations with an agreed timetable with the HSE. At the same time, CFOA Operations and H&S Committees shared understanding and learning from each of the inspections.

The HSE had planned to conduct a short programme of visits to a further 4 FRSs to assess progress against the recommendations but to date no further inspections have taken place or been announced.

CFOA Analysis

Upon receipt of the HSE Consolidated Report, CFOA completed a thorough analysis and assessment of the report to clarify its findings and to determine future action. This evaluation report was subsequently sent to all Chief Fire Officers/Chief Executives to allow them to conduct a local gap analysis.

A number of key aims were identified and published in the CFOA Operations Directorate plan as follows:

1. **Command Competence** To promote the use and to facilitate the continuous development of command competence and its support systems
2. **Technical Competence** To promote the continuous development of FRS technical competence, facilitating Operations effectiveness and training needs analysis
3. **Generic Risk Information and Doctrine** To facilitate the production and availability of generic risk assessments for significant Operations risks to FRS personnel
4. **Dynamic Assessment and Situational Awareness** To enhance the development and application of dynamic risk assessment methods based on situational awareness by FRS operations personnel
5. **Safety-Critical Training Provision** To promote, enhance, and facilitate the development of safety critical training provision across UK FRSs, supporting Nations, Regions and local FRS to maximise public and Firefighter safety

6. **Management of Risk Information** To promote the use and to facilitate the continuous improvement and best practice regarding FRS operations risk management strategies and supporting systems
7. **Operations Assurance and Monitoring** To promote and facilitate best practice regarding the development of monitoring and improvement systems focused on assuring operations safety critical activities and command functions.

An eighth aim will be added to cover the aspect of public expectation of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Safe and Effective Task and Finish Working Group

Prior to the inspections, CFOA had established a Safe and Effective Task and Finish Group. The work of this group was combined with the results of the inspections to form the core of the CFOA Operations Directorate Workplan.

Although it is not the role of CFOA to monitor progress of CFOs, it has accorded a high priority to this work with the aims of continuous development of both command and technical competence; provide generic risk information and doctrine; develop the risk assessment process in a dynamic way; ensure safety critical training provision and developing and monitoring improvement systems.

Progress

Very good and positive progress has been made in a number of important areas.

- CFOA have establish an Operational Training lead – this will provide a new central focus to drive the programme of work on operational training.
- The Retained Duty System working group has been re-established with the remit to look specifically at priority training areas and this is already linking into the work on Breathing Apparatus.
- Incident Command qualifications are complete and issued.
- A review of the Fire Service Risk Assessment, including Dynamic Risk Assessment is nearing completion.
- A project group to review Breathing Apparatus training has been established and will report by the end of this financial year.
- In conjunction with CFOA, the Fire Service College has developed training modules and Instructor accreditation to meet the outcomes of the inspections.
- An operations Bulletin system has been launched by CFOA to identify significant safety events with possible national implications ensuring that the

sector receives swift information on incidents and can review and make changes locally.

- A working group is established to consider the statistics required by Fire Authorities to deal with risks at an incident.
- Guidance on the provision of risk information is currently with the CLG for publication.

CFOA's Operational Response Business Plan 2012-15 has maintained these and other issues as priorities the key drivers for objectives, tasks and milestones for future years.

Since initial publication of the HSE Consolidated Report in October 2010 further liaison and discussion has continued between CFOA and HSE regarding the application of health and safety legislation and regulations at operational incidents. HSE's policy statement 'Striking the balance between operational and health and safety duties in the fire and rescue service' recognises the particularly challenging nature of fire and rescue activity and the extremely dangerous environments in which firefighters have to work, whilst also clarifying how the FRS should comply with health and safety during operational activities. A further recent HSE publication has also recognised the performance of heroic acts within the FRS and the health and safety implication on the individual, supervisor or organisation at particularly operational incidents.

Role of FRAs

The leadership shown by CFOA Operations Directorate plus the Local Government Group's work with CFOA on national functions such as the Fire Service College and Operational Guidance will greatly assist FRAs in meeting the health and safety challenges highlighted in the HSE consolidated report.

However, as the responsibility for health and safety lies with FRAs locally, elected Members may wish to review progress in their own FRA to ensure that key issues are adequately addressed and that all areas have been able to take advantage of the emerging work and support provided by CFOA.

If there are any further questions about this report, please contact:

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