

Command support system

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Owner: **Head of Operational Policy**
Responsible work team: **Incident Communications**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The command support system (CSS) is an information and communications technology (ICT) software application designed to assist Incident commanders (ICs) to manage operational incidents from a command unit (CU).
- 1.2 The CSS application is consistent with the national incident command system (NICS) and the decision making model (DMM). It provides various tools to assist the user to gather and record incident related information which can be used to help monitor, plan, communicate and control events.
- 1.3 CSS will gather live incident information about resources automatically from other London Fire Brigade (LFB) ICT-based systems, such as the brigade's mobilising and dispatch system and the staff attendance recording system (StARS).
- 1.4 This policy provides information about the operation of CSS, the tools within CSS, and how it may be used by ICs to support operations at incidents.

2 Command support system

- 2.1 CSS is a dedicated computerised command support resource which can display and record all of the relevant information about an incident in one location. The information can be organised in various ways to assist the IC and other officers with their decision making process to assist with the successful resolution of an incident.
- 2.2 All automatically created data from the beginning of an incident is downloaded to every CU regardless of whether or not they have been mobilised to that incident, using the LFB wireless network at stations or a mobile broadband connection. Where incident data is entered manually this may require the assistance of a trained CSS operator.
- 2.3 CSS can be used as a tool for incident briefings, either inside or outside the CU. Incident information is displayed on a large screen and can be controlled using simple touch-screen controls, a mouse, or keyboard.
- 2.4 As well as being available on CUs, CSS can be accessed remotely by group managers and above, and other designated users such as resource management centre (RMC) and control staff. This enables remote users to gather information and monitor the progress of incidents.
- 2.5 Remote users are limited to "read only" access and cannot make alterations to the information within CSS. However, remote users are able to communicate with any CU, or with other users, via the CSS conferencing facility.
- 2.6 The system will only allow a maximum of 20 users access to CSS at any one time, so it is important that users log off to maintain this capacity once they have finished using the system.









3 Operational use of CSS








- 3.1 Whenever an IC decides that the use of an attending CU is required, CSS will be started up at the earliest opportunity so that it is ready to support the ICs decision making, and provide a reliable record of events.
- 3.2 Initially on arrival CU operators will be able to use CSS to provide the IC with a default incident related information screen, which will include a map and an organisational command chart. As the incident develops, the IC and CU crew should ensure that appropriate and sufficient use is made of all the relevant CSS functions. This will enhance operational control of the incident, and ensure accurate recording of events.

- 3.3 When a CU is in attendance at an incident it will have a minimum of two dedicated personnel to provide command support. At less complex incidents it is likely this level of support will be sufficient to deal with all aspects of support across the range of command support functions including the use of CSS.
- 3.4 At the early stages of a dynamic incident the IC should be aware of the number of CU personnel in attendance and their workload. The IC's objectives in relation to the provision of command support, including using CSS and populating it with data, should reflect the number of personnel immediately available. CU personnel should advise the IC if the command support requirements require the attendance of an additional CU.
- 3.5 CU personnel may ask the IC to arrange for additional personnel from the incident ground to assist with some of the CU's administrative functions. If additional personnel are taken from the incident ground, they will be briefed by the CU crew about the functions they are required to carry out; they will not be allocated specialist CU duties, such as populating CSS.
- 3.6 CSS relies on remote access using data over a mobile telephone network for some of its information gathering. There may be occasions when a network signal failure occurs, which will require some data to be assigned and entered manually. Manual data entry within CSS will take longer than if it is completed automatically.

4 CSS functions

- 4.1 CSS has a range of functions which can be used operationally by the IC or support officers.
- 4.2 The following is a brief summary of the CSS icons and their functions; a comprehensive guide to these functions is available via the ops support training computer based training (CBT) package, or within the CSS user guide (available to CU staff).

	Home screen – point from which any live, training or historical incident can be joined.
Information gathering tools	
	Browser screen – provides internet access, including 9 'favourite' web link buttons including hotwire, Google and Sky News.
	Imagery manager - access to images imported into the system.
	Documents - allows a range of documents and information to be captured or imported into CSS for viewing and storage.
	Organisational chart – a live application that shows all resources mobilised to an incident and those already in attendance. For creating and displaying a command structure.
	BA main control – an electronic replica of the breathing apparatus (BA) main control board to help establish additional control to co-ordinate and directly supervise BA resource needs. This provides a means to record and share BA resource allocation.
Gathering and thinking tools	
	Decision log - a recording tool to capture important decisions from an incident.
	Tasking module - allows tasks to be allocated to individual roles (once deployed on the org chart) and the progress of these actions captured.

Strategic development tools	
	Key decision log - used to record significant decisions that vary from normal procedure or policy.
	Objectives screen – recording organisational objectives and recording tactical mode.
	Planning screen – electronic whiteboard. For capturing and viewing screenshots such as; a command structure or Map.
Communication and control tools	
	Message screen – a record of all messages recorded on BOSS (main scheme radio traffic) for that incident.
	Live map Screen - an incident map with overlays including hydrants, surrounding risks and emergency water supplies. Appliances, sectors/hose lines can be added to show a detailed representation of the incident ground. This version also allows an aerial view of the location.
	Conferencing screen – allows text messaging between any/all CSS users.
	Timeline – brief summaries of key events are automatically entered in chronological order. Future events can be added manually, such as; planned silver meetings.

5 Closing down CSS

- 5.1 Once an incident has been resolved, the incident should not be stopped via CSS. Incidents will close automatically after approximately 24 hours.

6 CSS reports

- 6.1 All information and actions carried out within CSS are captured and recorded, and cannot be deleted. The information is accessible for performance review of command function (PRCs) or investigations via the "historical" tab (see user guide) for 12 months, after which time it is available on request via the ICT team on extension 31463.
- 6.2 As the information recorded within CSS may be used to support subsequent post-incident inquiries, appropriate levels of care should be taken to ensure that manually entered data is accurate, current and complete, and that comments are written in an unambiguous way.

7 Further reading

- 7.1 The following policies and training material should be read in conjunction with this policy document:
- Policy number 341 – Decision making model
 - Policy number 541 – Command support at incidents
 - National incident command system
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/incidentcommand.pdf>
 - Computer Based Training (CBT) package – training support icon on the desktop/ops support training/click to run interactive CSS.
 - CSS Operating manual - CSS-GEN-ERD-OperatorManual-V1.5-LFB_009

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	22/12/2009	SDIA	22/12/2009	HSWIA		RA	16/07/2012
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Policy reviewed as current and updated in line with the current version of CSS. Please read through to familiarise yourself with the content.	12/09/2011
Appendix 1, 3	The ICT acceptable use policy (AUP) has replaced the code of practice on the use of computers (CoPUC) policy.	24/04/2012
Throughout	Removal of non-CSS related information, specifically where this policy gave detail of the use of CUs (found in PN 541- Command support at incidents). Removal of appendices which provided detailed information about using CSS; this information can be found in the CSS User Guide.	23/01/2013
7.1	Changed the link to the CBT package.	12/03/2013
Page 5	Risk assessment date added.	02/08/2013
Page 5	'Subjects list' table - template updated.	06/01/2015
Page 2, para 1.3	Removed reference to ProCAD as the new mobilising system has gone live.	19/11/2015
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current with no changes made.	11/02/2016
Page 4, para 4.2	Reference to MOBIS removed from table and replaced with BOSS.	19/10/2016

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Command Support	Vector
Incident Management	Post Incident Action
CU	Incident command/management
CSS	Command unit

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification