



Firefighting in basements

Firefighting in basements can be a high risk activity. Physically demanding conditions caused by extreme temperatures are often encountered, along with risks associated with the thermal barrier and ventilation, high fire loadings and communications difficulties.

Ventilation of the basement must be considered by the incident commander (IC) prior to committing BA teams. This decision must take into account the impact this action may have on people in the premises and the increased potential for uncontrolled fire spread. These risks should be weighed against the potential benefits for firefighters entering or people evacuating the building. Ventilation must only be undertaken on the order of the IC and, under no circumstances, should a building be ventilated whilst BA teams are committed in the basement.

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High rise firefighting

Pre-planning continues to form the foundation for the successful conclusion to any incident. The new high rise procedure reflects this by recommending that training and exercises are included in station and borough training plans. These

plans should take into account issues likely to be experienced, such as the failure or absence of fixed installations.

Any visit to a high rise building should be used as an opportunity to pre-plan; this will include the location of the LFB

premises information box (if fitted) as well as the accuracy and completeness of information provided including evacuation plans. Any high rise buildings which pose a particular risk should be subject to 7(2)d visits. During any visit

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Operational News reflects important operational issues for staff. Topics are identified from our robust audit and review processes which include performance reviews of command and operations, supplemented with articles on new equipment or procedures that reduce risk. Where appropriate training packages on page 4 provide further information on the topics covered.

MULTI-AGENCY LIAISON AT INCIDENTS



During the past year there have been several entries recorded on the Incident Monitoring Process Database regarding liaison with other agencies.

Many comments made related to working with officers of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). It is expected that we will work closely with officers of the MPS because many of the incidents we attend are also attended by the police. A recent example highlighted the importance of accurate and complete information exchange and the need to ensure that information from other agencies is correct, current and valid.

LFB crews were mobilised to a house fire. On arrival, the officer in charge was informed that persons were believed to be involved. Subsequent information from the police revealed that the casualty had been lead from the premises prior to the arrival of the Brigade and was in the care of the London Ambulance Service.

It is imperative that the incident commander makes early contact with the most senior police officer at the scene to share all available information and agree a coordinated approach to resolving an incident.

Comments on the database relate to the interaction between services at incidents involving hazardous substances and the importance of developing a safe system of work that all attending agencies understand and work within.

It should be remembered that LFB have the lead role in resolving incidents involving hazardous materials. This

includes emergency decontamination and assisting health services in the event of mass decontamination. LFB are currently the only agency at this type of incident with an appropriate range of detection identification and monitoring (DIM) equipment to assess that levels are within safe limits and to declare an area safe.

There have been occasions recently when responders have been called to attend chemical suicides where LFB staff have been informed that the area has been declared a crime scene and they cannot enter. It should be noted that, as with any other call to a chemical/hazmat incident where people are involved, the LFB and LAS have primacy to enter and establish a safe environment for the LAS to confirm life extinct. Only when this has been achieved should the scene be handed over to the MPS to proceed with their investigation.

FIRE SURVIVAL GUIDANCE CALLS POLICY

A policy on fire survival guidance (FSG) calls will be published shortly. The following article explains what a FSG call is, the resources mobilised and describes the actions required by personnel on the incident ground.

A FSG call is a call received into control where the caller believes that they are unable to leave their premises due to the effects of fire, and where the control room operator remains on the line providing appropriate advice.

The policy lists the information that control should pass to the incident ground and explains how this information will be recorded and retained for use by the incident commander (IC).

Control will treat a single FSG call to a house or building as persons reported and mobilise that pre-determined attendance (PDA). It is still the IC's responsibility to send a priority and subsequent informative message if the incident involves or is suspected to involve persons.

Two or more FSG calls or a FSG call at a high rise attendance, in addition to attracting a persons reported attendance will attract a further dedicated attendance of a pump ladder, a command unit and a station manager. This attendance is additional to any other resources that have been requested or are en-route.

Control should gather the following information from the caller as it becomes available and pass it to the incident ground:

- Number of flat/house.
- Number of people involved.
- Location of caller within premises and access point.
- Condition of their location, for example heavy smoke, slight smoke.
- Proximity to fire if known.
- Latest advice given by Control.
- Time of FSG call.
- Time updated.

This information will be recorded on the incident ground on a Control information

form which will be available on every front line appliance.

It is vital that Control is kept informed of the actions being taken to resolve each FSG call. The fact that Control is aware of the actions being carried out on the incident ground will greatly enhance the advice given to FSG callers.

As soon as resources allow, the IC should give priority to appointing a dedicated officer (minimum role of SM) to collate, record and retain all the information on FSG calls received and the subsequent actions on the incident ground.

CUs carry a casualty information form to record information on all FSG calls in progress at an incident. The casualty information form will also be available on the incident information board (on trial) for use at a bridgehead or other scene of operations. This will allow accurate information transfer between a CU and scene of operations.

WATCH TRAINING PACKAGES

Training packages, associated with operational news issues, are available for your immediate use. They can be accessed via an ICON on your desktop which links to all the current training materials related to the items below and previous packages. Additionally there are links to trainee packages and support material. Just click on this ICON on your desktop.



Training Support
Shortcut
2 KB

Red represents training themes are mandatory for all watches.

Amber represents training themes are mandatory for all watches to which they are relevant. These will be detailed within the training guidance.

Green represents optional and can be included in the watch training programme at the discretion of the WM based upon identified watch training needs.

Article	Training	Guidance and supporting information	STEP – Recording reference (Create on STEP)
High rise firefighting	Article and package	Training support pack (high rise incidents) available through training support icon – training presentations – operational news training This is an updated package	Lecture/training notes/training/ high rise incidents
Firefighting in basements	Article and package	Training support pack (basement firefighting) available through training support icon – training presentations – operational news training This is an updated package	Lecture/training notes/training/ basement firefighting
Use of Akron Turbojet branch	Article	Policy 632 – Branch Akron 1720 Turbojet Training support pack (BA refresher and real fire training) available through training support icon – training presentations – operational news training	Lecture/assets – equipment/ OPS equipment – hose and hose accessories/branch Akron 1720 Turbojet Lecture/training notes/training/BA refresher and real fire training
Multi-agency liaison at incidents	Article	Policy 65 – Cooperation with the police Policy 408 – Incident command	Lecture/incident management – liaison with other agencies/police/cooperation with the police – 65 Lecture/incident command – command procedures/incident command procedures/incident command – 408

A range of practical drill options for the above subjects are recordable under – drill/*use pull down list for appropriate drill.

SENIOR OFFICER COMPUTER BASED TRAINING (CBT)

Computer based e-learning training packages are available for your immediate use. They can be accessed via an ICON on your Desktop which links to the Brigade's knowledge centre.



Training Support
Shortcut
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Article	Training	Guidance and supporting information	Knowledge Centre – Recording reference
Fireworks	CBT package	Bespoke e-learning modules with support materials are now available through the knowledge centre which is accessible through the training support icon on your desktop. These e-learning packages are mandatory for all group and station managers. They must be completed within three months of the publication of this Operational News.	All package completions will be recorded on individual training records (ITR) which will be updated on a monthly basis allowing managers to monitor progress.
Roof structures	CBT package		
Dealing with roof fires	CBT package		
Fire investigation	CBT package		