

FSIGN 423

Alleged Fire Risks

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400 Series: Occupancy & hazards

Summary

This Note is intended for internal use, providing information and guidance on how to deal with alleged fire risks.

This Note is one of a series produced by Fire Safety Regulation HQ Policy Groups to provide additional advice and guidance to officers and Fire Safety Teams on various subjects related to their role.

Where appropriate this Note should be used for learning and staff development purposes.

Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	2
2 Investigating an AFR	2
3 AFR during working hours	2
4 AFR out of hours	4
5 Action to be taken on site	4
6 Administration	4
7 Further information	5
Appendix 1 – AFR Chart	6
Document History	7

1 Introduction

- 1.1 An Alleged Fire Risk (AFR) is a notification from an individual to the Brigade reporting their concerns about the fire safety arrangements at a particular premises. It may be received in a number of ways, either through Brigade Control, Brigade Headquarters (BHQ), the Resource Mobilising Centre (RMC), Fire Safety Teams, local fire stations or any other Brigade establishment.

2 Investigating an AFR

- 2.1 The investigation of an AFR should be treated as urgent. Where this initial investigation indicates that there are persons at risk, then an inspection of the premises should be undertaken as soon as practical and within a maximum of 3 hours.
- 2.2 If the initial investigation reveals that there are no persons at risk to warrant immediate attendance or no attendance is required, then the incident should no longer be considered an AFR. In these cases the advice provided and action taken should be recorded through the normal procedures (E.g.: a goodwill advice job for Inspecting Officers and an FS20 job for Senior Fire Safety Officers), detailing any follow-up action required.
- 2.3 The 3 hour period starts from the first point of contact with a Brigade member of staff. Where the AFR is made via telephone or in person, then the 3 hour period starts on receipt of this call or meeting. Where the AFR is made via an alternative method (email, letter, social media etc.) then the time period starts from when staff become aware of the AFR within their normal operating procedures. All email enquiries sent to FSR Admin Support automatically prompt the sender to call the Brigade Duty Fire Safety Officer (BDFSO) if the enquiry relates to an AFR.
- 2.4 When investigating an AFR, the information should be risk assessed to decide on an appropriate response and where persons are deemed not at risk, then a 3 hour response is not required. The decision and risk assessment is significant and should only be taken by a Fire Safety Team Leader (FSTL), Deputy FSTL, or Senior Fire Safety Officer (SFSO). The decision, and the rationale behind the decision, should be recorded on the premises case file within the Fire Safety database using the form S200_FS20_01 (SFSOs) or FSIGN423_01 (Inspecting Officers).
- 2.5 During working hours (0900 to 1700 hours) AFRs should be passed to the BDFSO for initial investigation and onward transmission to the Team Contact Officer (TCO) from the local fire safety team for action.
- 2.6 "Out of hours" calls will normally be passed to Brigade Control/Resource Management Centre. They will follow their guidance/information documents and inform the nearest SFSO.
- 2.7 Wherever possible, AFRs are to be addressed by an Inspecting Officer or SFSO. In the event the AFR involves petroleum premises, the petroleum inspector is to be notified. It may be, in exceptional instances, that an IO or SFSO is not able or best placed to deal with the AFR. It may then be resolved by Operational Crew (under the G01 procedure) or a petroleum officer (using E1 procedure) or a member of the PAT team (using E1 procedure).
- 2.8 It is important that the identity of the person alleging the AFR should not be disclosed to persons outside the Brigade for any reason.

3 AFR during working hours

- 3.1 An AFR received during working hours (0900 to 1700 hours) should be dealt with by FSR staff wherever possible and local crews should not be used, unless the situation is time critical and the

premises cannot be investigated by an Inspecting Officer within the 3 hour period or within their normal contracted hours.

- 3.2 An AFR received during working hours at any Brigade establishment should be passed to the BDFSO, which is a role taken by a Fire Safety Inspecting Officer (IO), based at BHQ.
- 3.3 The BDFSO should collate all information relevant to the AFR and should, where necessary, contact the person alleging the AFR, to reassure them that their concerns are being dealt with and confirm the key details. There may be occasions where this information gathering confirms that the concern is clearly not an AFR and does not require referral to the local team. In this instance the details should be recorded on the BDFSO enquiry log.
- 3.4 The BDFSO should pass all AFR details to the Team Contact Officer (TCO) for the area concerned. On every occasion the BDFSO should communicate the AFR via a phone call, to ensure there is no delay. The form FSIGN423_01 should be completed as much as possible by the BDFSO and sent through to the TCO, FSTL and Deputy of the local team by email immediately following this phone call. The TCO will handle the call and inform their FSTL or Deputy of the AFR.
- 3.5 The TCO will normally be the first point of contact due their availability, but direct contact with the TL or Deputy TL is also acceptable.
- 3.6 On receipt of the AFR details, the FSTL or Deputy will ensure that premises details stored in the fire safety database (Farynor) are examined. In the first instance, an IO should be allocated the AFR. In the event that the FSTL or Deputy cannot be contacted then the TCO or other IO must deal with the AFR.
- 3.7 The IO dealing with the AFR should note any information held in Brigade systems. They should contact the person alleging the AFR where possible, to reassure them that their concerns are being dealt with and confirm the key details. Where persons are considered to be at risk, then a visit to the premises should be made as soon as practical and within a maximum of 3 hours of receipt of the information into the Brigade.
- 3.8 The FSTL or IO dealing with the AFR should request an E01 job to be raised on the premises file and detail the outcome of their actions and time spent as they would for any other job type. The actions undertaken should be detailed on the FSIGN423_01 and sent to FSR Admin to be placed on the premises file.
- 3.9 Following an immediate investigation of the AFR, normal practice should be to complete an audit of the premises, particularly where management issues have been identified.
- 3.10 If the AFR involves a licensed premises where a recorded safe capacity figure is held, this figure should be noted so that it can be checked against any numbers present during an inspection.
- 3.11 If the AFR involves allegations concerning petroleum, then the duty Petroleum Inspector should be consulted, who is available via Brigade Control 24/7.
- 3.12 If an IO requires a SFSO at the premises to make an assessment of the risk to persons, then the IO should contact Brigade Control to request their attendance. They should remain on site until the SFSO arrives. Every effort should be made to utilise FSR Team Leaders within their Area, to make this assessment, prior to requesting a SFSO who may be a considerable distance away.

4 AFR out of hours

- 4.1 An 'out of hours' AFR will normally be received via Brigade Control/Resource management Centre. They will follow their guidance/information documents and inform the nearest SFSO.
- 4.2 Where possible the SFSO should contact the person alleging the AFR to reassure them that their concerns are being dealt with and confirm the key details. Where persons are deemed at risk then an inspection of the premises should be undertaken as soon as practical and within a maximum of 3 hours of receipt of the information into the Brigade.
- 4.3 This inspection may be undertaken by the SFSO, local fire station crew or out of hours IO (Peak Activity Team or local team). A local fire station crew should only be used in certain circumstances e.g. if the risk is so severe that an immediate attendance is required prior to attendance of the SFSO, travel distances for the SFSO are excessive or the AFR can be dealt with by the local station under the guidance of the SFSO due to its straightforward nature.
- 4.4 Where persons are not deemed to be at risk, the SFSO should record their actions on the SFSO report S200_FS20_01 and send to the standard recipients with their recommendations.
- 4.5 If the AFR involves a licensed premises where a recorded safe capacity figure is held, this figure should be noted so that it can be checked against any numbers present during an inspection.
- 4.6 If the AFR involves allegations concerning petroleum, then the duty Petroleum Inspector should be consulted, who is available via Brigade Control 24/7.
- 4.7 The SFSO allocated the AFR is responsible for reporting actions taken and further recommendations. The SFSO should complete form S200_FS20_01 and if attending, form FSIGN208_02. Where an Article 31 Prohibition Notice is issued or a prosecution considered, then normal protocols should be followed as per FSIGN 309.
- 4.8 When a local station crew investigates the AFR and inspects the premises, then an entry should be made in the Station Diary by the appliance commander, under the Fire Safety Regulation and AFR appointment type. The appliance commander must also complete FSIGN423_01 to report the outcome of their investigation. To ensure the 3 hour time limit is met and recorded, the SFSO must inform the appliance commander of the time the AFR was received into the Brigade.

5 Action to be taken on site

- 5.1 On arrival at the premises, the Responsible Person or their nominated representative should be contacted. The purpose of the visit should be explained and identification cards should be produced.
- 5.2 The AFR is to be investigated and any risk critical failings rectified whilst the person or crew is in attendance and any additional advice considered necessary should be given.
- 5.3 If a fire crew or IO has made an attendance on the instruction of the SFSO then they should continually update the SFSO regarding the failings and action taken.
- 5.4 Where the person alleging the fire risk has requested confirmation of action or the investigating officer deems a reply necessary, then the letter FSIGN423_02 should be used.

6 Administration

- 6.1 This FSIGN and the Procedural Notes that accompany it (E1 and G1 procedures), detail the response required from Authority staff when dealing with alleged fire risks. It is important to note

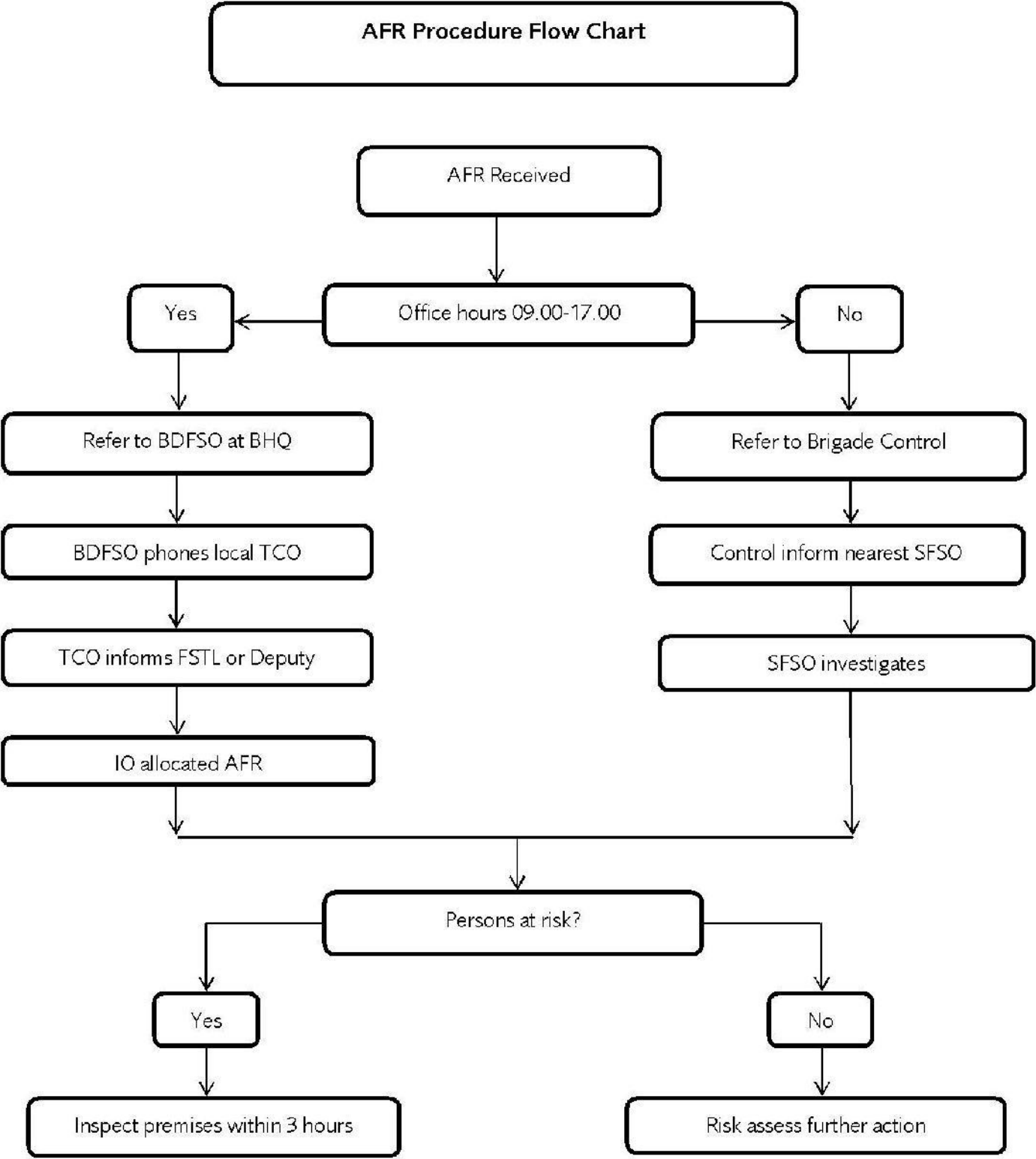
that during working hours the responsibility lies with the local FSTL and out of hours with the nominated SFSO to ensure the duty assigned to the Authority through this FSIGN has been actioned.

7 Further information

7.1 This FSIGN should be read in conjunction with:

FSRP400, FSIGN 604, FSIGN 208, the Brigade Control Note on AFRs, and S400-E1 and G1 documents.

Appendix 1 – AFR Chart



NB: Exceptional circumstances may result in AFR being resolved by Petroleum Inspectors/PAT staff (E1 procedure) or Operational Crew (G1 Procedure)

Document History

Impact assessments

An Equality or Sustainability Impact Assessment was completed on:

Equality Impact Assessment	01/05/2014	Sustainability Impact Assessment	01/05/2014
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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
Aug 2014	Full review and comprehensive update	01/08/2014
All	Review for draft interim area	01/10/2014
All	Reviewed and updated	15/10/2015
2.2	New paragraph added	04/12/2015