

## Home fire safety visits – individual risk

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Owner:	<b>Head of Operations Prevention and Response</b>
Responsible work team:	<b>Community Safety Development Team</b>

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# Summary

This policy outlines the actions to be taken leading up to and following home fire safety visits (HFSVs) carried out in cases of identified individual risk.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Before reading this policy, it is essential to have placed it in context by first reading [Policy number 741](#) – Home fire safety visits and all associated policies as listed in that policy.

1.2 For the purposes of HFSV, a high risk individual (HRI) is a person who has a particular profile which LFB believe:

- fits the characteristics that can be associated with an increased risk of experiencing an accidental fire in the home;
- and/or has a reduced ability to escape in the event of a fire occurring.

These characteristics are likely to consist of a combination of factors which individually do not present a heightened risk but which, when considered together, create a significant increase in risk. A description of the personal profiles which would identify a high risk individual is set out in Appendix 1.

1.3 Visits to HRI's will be arranged by the Area HFSV call centre. Consideration of the high risk characteristics of the individual will be applied to prioritise the allocation of the visit in line with available time slots provided by stations. Where concerns warrant an urgent HFSV to be carried out immediately, the Area HFSV call centre will liaise with the relevant Station or Watch Manager to ensure this is progressed. When station personnel are unavailable, light duty staff or the Area CS team will carry out the visit.

1.4 A HRI can be referred to the Area HFSV call centre by a partner organisation as a result of their increased risk of fire. Where several unsuccessful attempts have been made to contact or carry out a HFSV, and to avoid the referral being subject to the suspend/abort procedure, the Area HFSV call centre must discuss the situation with the referring agency and relevant Station Manager to agree a way forward.

## 2 Providing time slots

2.1 Watch managers are required to proactively provide HFSV time slots via station diary to which visits to HRI's may be allocated by the Area HFSV call centre. The number of slots that must be provided by watches is not generally prescribed but must be sufficient to meet demand in a timely fashion. Provision will be monitored by station managers and the Area CS Team Leader. Failure to provide slots proactively and/or if requested by the Area HFSV Call Centre, will result in a direct report to the area deputy assistant commissioner (DAC) and a slot minimum being imposed on the station for the remainder of the financial year.

2.2 Watch managers will ensure slots are entered onto the HFSV database via the station diary in accordance with the HFSV manual

<http://edms/bwd/organisation/IMTec/IT%20systems/HFSV%20-%20Home%20fire%20safety%20visit%20manual.doc>.

2.3 Although it is for watch managers to determine the timing of the slots, there is an increasing demand for evening and weekend HFSVs and this must be taken into consideration. Watch managers should consider the following points when identifying time slots:

- One and a half hours is to be allowed for each visit;

- Training events, station based or otherwise;
  - Appliance and staff stand-bys;
  - Strategic Resource
  - Pre-determined station routines;
  - Other pre-booked commitments such as fire safety inspections, other community safety activities, and visitors to stations.
- 2.4 Prior to the allocation of a referral, an empty slot can be changed/deleted in station diary by the watch manager. However, slots cannot be changed once they have a referral allocated to them, as an appointment will already have been made with a member of the public by the Area HFSV Call Centre.

### 3 Allocation of visits by the call centre

- 3.1 Referrals made to the Area HFSV call centre will be recorded on the HFSV database. Call centre staff will make contact with the resident or their representative to identify any high risk characteristics and arrange a mutually convenient time for a HFSV. This assessment will determine if a third party is required to be present, eg family member, carer, social worker Interpreter (language or BSL).
- 3.2 The Area HFSV call centre will allocate the visit to a station diary HFSV time slot supplied by the appropriate station. If there are any specific issues that station personnel need to be aware of, the Area HFSV call centre will record the details on to the HFSV database so that station personnel are made aware. Watch managers must monitor station diary to ensure they are aware of any visits allocated to them.

### 4 Preparing for the visit

- 4.1 The watch manager is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate resources are available to complete the visit, including sufficient smoke alarms, fitting pole, fitting platform, 'Fire Safety in the Home' booklet (see Appendix 2), 'Sorry we missed you' card (see Appendix 3) and that staff completing the visit are familiar with the technical notes for the equipment they are using.
- 4.2 The smoke alarm fitting kit must also be checked prior to the visit to ensure that it is properly stocked in accordance with Policy Number 586 Home Fire Safety Visits – Selection, Sitting and Fitting of Smoke Alarms.
- 4.3 The watch manager must also ensure that, **on the day** of the appointment, the appropriate forms are printed and taken to the visit. These consist of 2 indemnity forms, data collection sheet and aide memoire and are printed directly from the appointment in station diary.

### 5 Gaining entry to the property

- 5.1 If the resident does not respond when staff first call at the door, it should not immediately be assumed the occupier is not in. An appointment has been made both verbally and in writing and the assumption should be that the resident will keep the appointment. First re-consult the documentation to discover if there is a recorded reason that the resident may take some time to respond or fail to respond to normal calling methods. Further appropriate action should then be taken to discover if the resident is at home but is detained or unable to respond. After this, staff should then wait a period of ten minutes before re-attempting to raise a response. Finally, if the resident fails to answer the door, a 'Sorry we missed you' card should be deposited through the letter box. The visit should be rescheduled on the HFSV database and recorded as 'client unavailable' in accordance with the guidance given in HFSV database guidance manual



<http://edms/bwd/organisation/IMTec/IT%20systems/HFSV%20-%20Home%20fire%20safety%20visit%20manual.doc>.

- 5.2 LFB photographic identity cards must be carried at all times and must be presented to the resident when they open the door.
- 5.3 The purpose of the visit must be explained to the resident at the door and permission sought before entering the premises. If a password has been pre-arranged by the Area HFSV call centre, it should be utilised.

#### **Advice visits**

- 5.4 If the resident refuses entry, this decision must be respected and the visit recorded as "declined" on the station diary. The resident may be willing, however, to accept some general fire safety advice and a copy of the 'Fire Safety in the Home' booklet should be left with the resident. The resident should also be asked if they have existing working smoke alarms installed in the house and if there are none fitted, a single smoke alarm should be left with the resident. An alarm should also be provided if the existing alarm installed is a one-year battery alarm. The importance of the resident installing the alarm as a matter of urgency and in the correct place, needs to be emphasised. Name, address and alarm details need to be recorded on the HFSV database, both the HFSV manual and Policy Number 455 - Home Fire Safety Visits – Smoke Alarm Ordering and Stock Control refer.
- 5.5 Residents are advised in writing (or by telephone where an urgent appointment has been arranged) that they should not smoke in their home during the HFSV or in the hour prior to visit. This is to protect staff completing the visit from the dangers of second hand smoke. Where it is evident that residents are or have recently been smoking, an officer must make a risk assessment and withdraw from the visit if necessary.
- 5.6 The reason for withdrawing from a visit due to smoking, must be explained to the resident. Information should also be gathered to check whether the resident is prepared to keep the property free of smoke for a re-booked appointment.
- 5.7 The Area HFSV Call Centre must be notified of any visit that is not completed due to smoking, whether the appointment is to be re-booked or not.
- 5.8 The resident may not wish anyone to enter their home wearing footwear. This can be for religious reasons or simply reasons of personal preference. Staff should not remove their shoes but offer to wear shoe covers as an alternative. Guidance on the use of shoe covers is at Appendix 4.

## **6 Home fire safety visit (HFSV)**

- 6.1 The HFSV should be carried out in accordance with Policy Number 744 - Home fire safety visits – carrying out the visit and Policy Number 586 - Home fire safety visits – selection, siting and fitting of smoke alarms.

## Appendix 1 - High risk individuals

High risk individuals (informally referred to as 'P1' people) are people or households exhibiting the common risk factors associated with fire. The factors we are looking for are those which indicate an increased risk in the likelihood of a fire starting or, should a fire happen, increased likelihood of the fire causing an injury or fatality. We know that combinations of factors significantly increase the risk and so the working definition of a high risk Individual or P1 person is:

- Any person within a household who exhibits three or more of the following risk factors (listed a - f below)

Or

- Any person who is referred to us by a specific partnership agency (listed g - j below)

### 1 **A person within a household who exhibits three or more of the following risk factors are P1.**

- (a) Live alone.
- (b) Have any disability (physical, or self declared mental health or learning disability issues).
- (c) Live in social housing (social landlord or local authority).
- (d) Any person over 60 years of age.
- (e) A single parent (with a child under 15).
- (f) A smoker.

Note: These HFSVs are identified as P1 when visit details are completed on the database based on the risk factors above (a - f). When completing the HFSV database, if more than one disability exists it will still be only classed as one risk factor.

### 2 **Partnership referrals – A referral received from a specific partnership agency working in the following areas will automatically qualify as a P1 person ( where that partnership has or can be allocated an appropriate 'P1 partnership initiative code' by the Area HFSV call centre manager in liaison with the borough commander).**

- (g) Alcohol or drug treatment.
- (h) Mental health.
- (i) Social care.
- (j) Daily domiciliary care provision.

Note: These HFSVs are identified as P1 based on the P1 partnership initiative code, and therefore the risk factors (g-j) are not applied.

## Appendix 2 - 'Fire Safety in the Home' booklet

The front and back covers of the 'Fire Safety in the Home' booklet depicted below are from the current version (Version 2, as specified at the bottom left of the back cover). Only this version should be used. Any booklets with the same title but different cover or version number should be recycled. Current versions of the booklet can be obtained through Area CS Team

### Front and back cover of 'Fire Safety in the Home' booklet



## Appendix 3 - Sorry we missed you card

IMPORTANT  
THIS IS NOT A CIRCULAR  
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY  
THANK YOU



### Sorry we missed you

The London Fire Brigade called at your home today to offer you a free home fire safety visit.  
Unfortunately there was no reply.

Home fire safety visits, and fitting of smoke alarms, are available free to everyone whatever type of property you live in.

Remember, you are 4 times less likely to die from a fire in a home fitted with working smoke alarms

If you would like a free home fire safety visit, please ring **Freephone no.**



and we will be happy to make an appointment to visit at a convenient time for you.



## Appendix 4 - Use of shoe covers (overshoes) during home fire safety visits

Residents may request that personnel completing a HFSV remove their shoes before entering the premises. This could be due to religious reasons or for reasons of personal preference. Staff engaging in HFSV must not remove their shoes, for health and safety reasons, but can offer to wear shoe covers during the visit as an alternative.

### Availability of shoe covers

Two pairs of shoe covers are to be kept in the smoke alarm fitting kit and are to be replenished from station stock when no longer serviceable. Before use the shoe covers should be inspected to ensure the outer cover is clean and are showing no signs of wear and tear.

### Fitting of shoe covers

Shoe covers are provided in a single size that is suitable for all shoe sizes. They have an elastic top to secure the cover in position. There may be some excess material when they are worn over smaller shoe sizes. This can be pulled together and tucked into the under shoe to reduce the risk of it catching on any protrusions and to reduce tripping hazard. Staff should exercise extra caution when wearing shoe covers, regularly checking that they have not become loose or ill fitting. It is **particularly important** to make a specific check before using the smoke alarm fitting platform.

### Use during the visit

Staff should check with the resident whether shoe covers are an acceptable alternative to removal of shoes. If the resident agrees, the shoe covers should be placed over normal work wear shoes on entry to the premises. The shoe covers should remain in place throughout the visit.



## Document history

### Assessments

An equality or sustainability impact assessment and/or a risk assessment were last completed on:

EIA	24/06/2010	SIA	23/06/2010	RA	
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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
Pages 2, 3, 4	References to the Home Fire Safety Manual updated.	11/01/2012
Page 5	Appendix 1 has been rewritten, please read to familiarise yourself with the updated content.	13/07/2012
Appendix 1	The old appendix 1 has been replaced with a new version.	15/10/2012
Whole policy	Minor changes made to update references and encompass existing custom and practice as part of 3 year review process.	12/02/2014
Page 9	'Subjects list' table - template updated.	05/01/2015

### Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Community fire safety	Education
Home fire safety	Risk assessments
Visiting non LFB premises	

### Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

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