

## Emergency call management

---



---

New policy number: **539**  
 Old instruction number: **OPS:A070:a3**  
 Issue date: **14 November 2007**  
 Reviewed as current: **17 July 2018**  
 Owner: **Assistant Director, Control and Mobilising**  
 Responsible work team: **Mobilising**

---

### Contents

1	Introduction.....	2
2	General.....	2
3	Configuration of the Brigade's emergency call management system communications network.....	2
4	Emergency call management procedures.....	4
5	Calls received to incidents out of the Greater London area.....	10
6	Performance management.....	13
	Appendix 1 – Requests for assistance from other FRS control rooms.....	14
	Appendix 2 - Calls from members of the public requiring rescue from non-fire situations.....	15
	Appendix 3 - Fire survival guidance.....	16
	Appendix 4 - Calls to chemical biological radiological nuclear (CBRN) incidents.....	18
	Appendix 5 - Shut in lift.....	19
	Appendix 6 - AFA call filtering process.....	20
	Appendix 7 - Call challenge.....	21
	Document history.....	22
	Subject list.....	23

---

 Review date: **17 July 2021**

Last amended date:

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The London Fire Brigade has a responsibility to make arrangements for dealing with emergency calls and making an appropriate response under the provisions of the Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004).

## Function of the Control Room

- 1.2 The Fire Service Manual (Volume 1 - Chapter 2, 2.1) (1998) states that the primary function of a Control Centre is to provide the essential communications link which enables the provision of emergency firefighting, rescue and humanitarian services to the public when they call for assistance.
- 1.3 Brigade Control seeks to promptly answer emergency calls and to provide an appropriate operational response. In addition to speed in answering emergency calls, the highest standards of efficiency, accuracy and quality in the service provided are maintained.

# 2 General

- 2.1 Control is the hub of the Brigade's emergency communications network, providing emergency call handling facilities, mobilisation of operational resources, liaising with external agencies and having a strategic overview of operations.

## Emergency call rates

- 2.2 Currently millions of emergency calls are made to British Telecom and other service providers each year. About 50% of this figure are filtered and do not require connection.
- 2.3 Over 180,000 emergency calls are received by Brigade Control each year which vary in seriousness from non-urgent to major incidents. Call rates are reducing through the use of many 'call challenge' initiatives in the control room and proactive preventative community safety work.

## Increases in demand

- 2.4 Throughout the course of the 24 hour period, there are clearly identified peaks and troughs for the receipt of emergency calls. However, demands upon resources can vary significantly due to abnormal weather conditions, sustained dry weather conditions and other events. These have the potential to cause sudden and dramatic surges in the number of emergency calls received, resulting in high demand.
- 2.5 Arrangements are in place to monitor events and occurrences likely to result in increased demand, including regular updates from the Meteorological Office. This and other information is used to support the mobilising Business Continuity plans.

# 3 Configuration of the Brigade's emergency call management system communications network

## Public telecommunications operators (PTO)

- 3.1 The public telecommunications operators (PTO) are obliged under the terms of their licences to provide a public emergency call service, by which any member of the public (without charge) can communicate as quickly as practicable with any of the local emergency authorities to communicate an emergency.

## **Audio recording of emergency calls**

- 3.2 All emergency calls are audio-recorded. The current retention strategy requires that these recordings are kept for a period of at least five years.
- 3.3 Where it is identified that this period should be extended, e.g. calls associated with public enquiries, the appropriate arrangements will be made by the Technical Support Group to ensure their continued retention.

## **Integrated control and communications system**

- 3.4 Emergency calls for the assistance of the Brigade are received through its integrated control and communications system (ICCS) or fallback phones.
- 3.5 The ICCS controls all incoming and outgoing telecommunications and radio traffic.

## **Automatic call distribution (ACD)**

- 3.6 To ensure emergency calls are answered with the minimum of delay, a system of automatic call distribution (ACD) is used. All control room officers (CROs) available to answer emergency calls will be logged into the ACD system. This will ensure that calls are distributed evenly and the highest priority call waiting the longest will be the first to be answered.
- 3.7 ACD provides significant benefits and advantages for emergency call management and speed of answering.

## **Spate conditions**

- 3.8 It is accepted that in periods of spate, where there is a sudden or sustained increase in the number of emergency calls, call numbers exceed the numbers of CROs available. This surge in the incoming number of calls may be due to:
- multiple calls to multiple incidents;
  - multiple calls to a single incident.
- 3.9 In these circumstances operations managers (OMs) can make the decision to queue non urgent calls, i.e. not attend a call immediately
- 3.10 When it is identified that these conditions apply, the operations manager will consider:
- Recall all on duty shift related personnel to Brigade Control.
  - Notify the duty Brigade Control senior manager.
  - Liaise with British Telecom and Cable and Wireless and establish critical contact arrangements.
  - The introduction of Batch Mobilising Procedure.
- 3.11 If the risk is considered to be low the call can be queued. Under these circumstances callers must be informed of a possible delay in attending the call and asked to re-contact the Brigade if the situation worsens or they no longer require assistance.

## **Critical contact arrangements**

- 3.12 For emergency communication purposes a 'Critical' line (a standalone telephone on the supervisory team's workstations) is available to British Telecom (BT) and the Metropolitan Police.
- 3.13 This will be used by British Telecom (BT) to advise the OM that problems are being experienced in connecting emergency calls to the Brigade or in the event of wide-scale communication failures.

- 3.14 It is also used by the MPS to notify the Brigade that particular MPS operations have been initiated and also feedback information from the duty inter-agency liaison officer to the OM when notified of such events.

## **4 Emergency call management procedures**

- 4.1 Emergency calls are answered promptly by trained CROs with the appropriate skills.

### **Salutation**

- 4.2 When receiving an emergency call, the CRO will answer "FIRE BRIGADE".

### **Calls through the 999/112 system**

- 4.3 Emergency calls through the 999/112 system are received from British Telecom (BT). Running calls from Fire Stations, i.e. where the caller reports direct to the fire station, may also be received through the 999/112 system (if the running call telephone outside the fire station is used).
- 4.4 When an emergency call is connected to the Brigade through the 999/112 system (including those made from Running Call telephone boxes outside Fire Stations), the caller's telephone number will be automatically inserted into the mobilising system 'telephone number' field by caller line identification (CLI).
- 4.5 Calls are also received through the 999/112 system from auto-dialler devices which provide voice recordings giving details of the incident and location.
- 4.6 If the emergency call is made from a 'fixed' telephone, the EISEC information for the 'billing' address for the telephone will be displayed.

### **Interpreter service**

- 4.7 English may not be the first language of a person attempting to pass an emergency call.
- 4.8 Agreements are in place for the use of an interpreter service (Language Line).

### **Calls from the hard of hearing or speech-impaired members of the public**

- 4.9 Emergency calls from the public who have hearing or speech difficulties (including the use of electronic speech devices) are normally received through the SMS Text Relay service which is a 24 hour nationwide telephone service operated by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf and funded by British Telecom.
- 4.10 The SMS Text Relay operator will obtain the information from the caller, use the BT 999 service, and ask for the Emergency Service requested by the caller and for the area in which the telephone number is situated.
- 4.11 When connected with the Emergency Service, the details will be passed by the SMS Text Relay operator.

### **Calls from other authorities and external agencies**

- 4.12 Calls from some external agencies and authorities, e.g. Metropolitan Police (MPS), London Ambulance Service (LAS), Central Fire Alarm Centres and other Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms are received on dedicated ex-directory telephone numbers.

## **Calls received from Brigade premises (including Fire Stations) by the internal telephone system**

- 4.13 Emergency calls from Brigade premises are received on priority number internal extensions in Brigade Control. In addition to Fire Stations, this may include the Brigade Headquarters Switchboard and the Home Fire Safety Risk Assessment Call centre (HFSRA).
- 4.14 The R/T operator will receive details of running calls and process in accordance with normal call handling procedures.

## **Calls from organisations using special risk/automatic fire alarm (SR/AFA) reference numbers**

- 4.15 In order to facilitate the fast, accurate and complete receipt of information for emergency calls, certain external agencies and organisations have been given the facility to use special risk/automatic fire alarm (SR/AFA) reference numbers.
- 4.16 These SR/AFA reference numbers relate to the address records for the premises of these organisations held on the mobilising system.
- 4.17 On receipt of an emergency call, the person passing the emergency call will provide a SR/AFA number applicable to the location of the incident and the type of the incident, e.g. "LFB REFERENCE HLUL [LFB reference number]".

## **Call handling**

- 4.18 For every emergency call received, the CRO must:
  - Obtain the address of the incident.
  - Establish the reason for the Brigade's attendance.
  - Record the key details.
  - Decide upon the action to be taken if not already in the plan items.
  - Record any additional information that supports safe systems of work for responding operational personnel.
- 4.19 [Policy number 412](#) - Mobilising policy directs the Brigade's response to emergency calls and this is mirrored in the mobilising system. Where it is inappropriate for a Brigade attendance, the caller will be referred to a service, authority or external agency that may be able to assist.

## **Emergency call handling skills**

- 4.20 Quality of emergency call handling in Brigade Control has emerged as an important requirement recognised for its effect on both the public's perception of the Fire and Rescue Service (customer satisfaction) and on efficiency and effectiveness. How effectively the emergency call is handled in terms of questioning and listening skills, capturing information accurately, creating a caring and professional experience are just some of the critical skills required for CROs.
- 4.21 For many members of the public, the making of an emergency call is a major step and can be an unnerving experience for many people.
- 4.22 The CRO is the public's first contact with the Fire and Rescue Service. Good and effective communication skills are essential. This initial point of contact can have a direct bearing upon the manner in which the call is handled and speed of response.
- 4.23 CROs manage emergency calls in a calm, polite and tactful manner using a helpful and empathetic approach. They will vary their style of call handling and questioning skills dependent

upon the origin of the call, e.g. member of the public, other emergency service personnel, etc. The skills required of the CRO are to:

- **Listen** – not to make assumptions.
- **Talk** - to maintain a dialogue.
- **Record** – key the relevant details accurately in the appropriate place on the mobilising system.
- **Think** – what information is/is not being given and/or what information is required.
- **Make decisions** – Is this call appropriate for the Brigade to attend and if so what attendance is required?

Assistant Operations Managers (AOMs) will support CROs, or direct other staff members to support a colleague, with difficult or challenging calls using the tools available to them or in person at the appropriate workstation.

4.24 There are a number of basic concepts and principles used when receiving calls from members of the public:

- Be aware that each call could be a real emergency for the caller.
- Question the caller fully using 'open' questions.
- Maintain control of the conversation, i.e. take control of the call, control the pace, structure questions accordingly and get the answers needed.
- Be polite and courteous, treating the caller as you would like to be treated.
- Sound positive and interested in what the caller is saying.
- Actively listen and communicate, providing callers with feedback.
- Be firm but polite with abusive or aggressive callers (their situation could be the cause of their behaviour).
- Be empathetic and reassuring (especially with distressed callers).
- End the call on a positive note.

### Questioning protocols

4.25 The type and style of questioning skills used will vary according to the information required. Careful use of questions will normally result in the required information. The use of 'open' questions will normally provide the necessary level of information, whereas 'closed' questions may (due to the circumstances in which the caller finds themselves) lead to inaccurate or inconclusive information.

4.26 For example:

- **What** - What is the address?
- What road do we come to?
- What road comes off this road?
- What district is it?
- What part of London is this in? (although care may be needed if the incident is located on the periphery of the London area)
- What is the Postal District?
- What is the problem?
- **Where** - Where do we come to?
- **Why** - Why do you need the Fire Brigade?

4.27 Although the task of the CRO is to gather information concerning details of the incident, a caller will also often seek information. Therefore generic statements such as "the Brigade are on the way", "the Brigade will arrive shortly/as soon as possible" may be used.

## **Completion of call**

- 4.28 Once complete, the CRO will repeat back to the caller the address of the call that the Brigade are required to attend and the reason as confirmation that the correct details have been recorded.

## **Abusive language**

- 4.29 CROs are aware that callers may use abusive language due to the nature of calls received and the severity of the situation in which the caller may find themselves. However, continual gratuitous use of abusive language should not be tolerated and advice sought from an AOM as to whether any further details are required and the action to be taken.
- 4.30 The Health and Safety Executive's definition of work-related violence is "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work", and this explicitly states it includes verbal abuse.
- 4.31 The Brigade does not expect its staff to be subjected to abusive, obscene or aggressive language. However, this needs to be considered in relation to the circumstances affecting the caller at the time.
- 4.32 There are no clear criteria as to what constitutes an abusive call as some CROs may feel less threatened than others by callers shouting, swearing and making insulting and aggressive comments. Individuals may also vary over time as to how they cope with these calls and how long it takes them to recover. In these circumstances, following consultation with an AOM, it may be appropriate to take a short break or speak to a colleague or AOM.
- 4.33 In dealing with calls of this nature, the following advice should be considered:
- Not to panic or terminate the call immediately.
  - Not to lose your temper or be tempted to react with a similar response.
  - Not to take the remarks personally and try not to become upset.
  - Be patient as the abuse may shortly stop.
  - If the caller does not calm down or their behaviour does not improve, providing sufficient information has been received to conclude the call, clearly advise them that unless they are able to continue the discussion in a civil manner, the call will be terminated.
  - Following the call, arrangements should be made with an AOM to listen to an audio-recording of the call as this may identify alternative options in dealing with similar calls in the future.
- 4.34 CROs will not be penalised for terminating calls under the above circumstances, providing they do so in the correct manner and after giving sufficient warning to callers.

## **Fire alarm sounders**

- 4.35 There may be occasions where emergency calls are received where the caller is located adjacent to or in close proximity to the fire alarm sounder. This may cause difficulties to the control room officer receiving the call.
- 4.36 The headsets issued on a personal basis to CROs are equipped with limiters that are designed to mitigate any undue increase in volume of extraneous noise near the caller.
- 4.37 In the event that a CRO experiences difficulties in obtaining call information under these circumstances, they are to immediately alert an AOM.
- 4.38 On being notified of such an event, an AOM will:
- Request a second CRO to monitor the call and assist in ascertaining the details and process the call accordingly.

- If it is still not possible to obtain the details, the CRO will be instructed to cease the call and either use the EISEC information for the incident location or contact the PTO for the address information and process the call accordingly. The instant replay facility may also be used in an attempt to verify the address.
- Ensure that the CRO has not suffered any adverse effects from the alarm sounding and contact Occupation Health, at a convenient time, to provide the officer with a hearing test.
- Impound the CRO's headset for testing at radio workshops.
- Report the address of the alarm sounder to the relevant department for investigation.

### **Validation of emergency call address details**

- 4.39 On obtaining an address, the CRO will validate the details against the database of address records held on the mobilising system.
- 4.40 The CRO will question the caller, making the necessary amendments and carrying out further validations until the correct address has been identified. The aim is to obtain a satisfactory address without unnecessary questioning.
- 4.41 As a guide, the following sequence indicates the type of information to be sought. It must be remembered that the information required will not always be given in the sequence as contained on the mobilising system. This may include:
- SR/AFA Number (if appropriate).
  - Name of the thoroughfare.
  - Number and/or name of premises.
  - Name of the district and/or the postal district e.g. Pimlico, Romford, W2 or Brixton SW4.
  - Name of an adjacent thoroughfare.
  - Nearby landmark or prominent building that may assist in identifying the location.
- 4.42 The caller should always be asked to spell the name of the thoroughfare, as it could be mistaken for a similar sounding name, e.g., Dury/Jury, Karoline/Caroline, Arygl/Argyle, Ingestone/Gatestone, Gordon/Gauden, Colt Street/Three Colt Street, Belvue/Bellvue.

### **Aids to mobilising**

- 4.43 As part of the address validation process, a CRO may also utilise the following:
- Geographical Information System (GIS).
  - Quick Address System (QAS).
  - Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC).
  - Reference Information Files (RIF).
  - Information Folders.
  - Brigade Atlas
- 4.44 Any problems experienced with the validation of addresses in connection with emergency calls are to be immediately brought to the attention of an AOM.
- 4.45 If the problem is around the actual address of the premises (database queries), then it will be forwarded on to pre determined attendance (PDA) for resolution.
- 4.46 If the system fails to offer up the correct address or the problem is system orientated then an Observation Report is to be raised and sent to the IT Bridge Engineers and copied to the Technical Support Group.



## **Specific risks**

- 4.47 Calls to specific risks, e.g. airports, the River Thames, motorways, may include information not included above, e.g. direction of travel, rendezvous points, etc. This information is to be recorded in accordance with current procedures.

## **Nature of incident**

- 4.48 The nature of incident being reported, i.e. why the Brigade is required to attend is to be recorded.
- 4.49 This information will enable the CRO to dispatch the appropriate attendance.
- 4.50 If during the call, the caller states that there are gas cylinders or other similar hazards present or involved that could constitute a risk to responding operational personnel, the CRO will include this information as additional Information, e.g. "CYLINDERS STORED INSIDE PREMISES" or "PERSON BELIEVED INVOLVED".

## **Duplicate calls**

- 4.51 A duplicate call is an additional call to the same incident.
- 4.52 The mobilising system is able to display to the CRO details of other incidents being attended in close proximity to their call.
- 4.53 The CRO will decide whether their call is a duplicate based on the following:
- Information received from mobilising system.
  - Information received through questioning the caller.
  - Information received from other sources e.g. GIS, colleague in control room.
  - Confirmation from the incident already being attended.
- 4.54 If the CRO determines their call is the same, this call will be processed as a duplicate and the caller informed that an attendance is on way. Any additional information they feel is of use to the incident commander, e.g. a landmark, is to be passed by radio.

## **Further actions resulting from duplicate calls**

- 4.55 Information received from the caller or by the number of duplicate calls received may require further actions including the mobilisation of additional resources.

## **Doubtful addresses and incomplete calls**

- 4.56 A doubtful address is where the details supplied by the caller cannot be exactly matched with the information held on the mobilising system.
- 4.57 An incomplete call is where the caller has cleared the line, replaced the receiver or left the line open before a complete address can be obtained.
- 4.58 The CRO will record the details that have been received and (if available) use the EISEC information as the incident location.
- 4.59 If the level of detail is insufficient to make an attendance or is attended, the AOM will:
- Gather all the facts available.
  - Use any CLI information that is available.
  - Instruct the CRO to attempt to re-contact the caller. This will only be providing it can be established the call is not a fire call.

- Instruct the CRO to contact the PTO for any further information.
  - Study the address for the possibility of phonetic and/or spelling error.
  - Locate the nearest main/side road or landmark using electronic and/or hard copy facilities, e.g. GIS, QAS, Brigade Atlas, etc.
  - Refer to the ICCS recording equipment in order to replay and hear the call (if now terminated).
  - Contact the station(s) covering the area (if a locality was stated).
- 4.60 If the AOM considers that more than one address could equally well apply, they are to arrange for an attendance to be mobilised accordingly.
- 4.61 In the absence of any incident description details being provided by a caller the assumption will be made that the incident could be a fire.

### **Abandoned calls**

- 4.62 An abandoned call is where the caller has dialled 999/112, requested to speak to the Brigade but abandons the call before the PTO is able to connect to the Brigade.
- 4.63 The PTO will advise Brigade Control of all abandoned calls. All calls are to be recorded.
- 4.64 The response to abandoned calls from fixed, cellular telephones or public call-boxes will be in accordance with [Policy number 412](#) - Mobilising Policy.

### **Late calls**

- 4.65 A late call is where a fire has occurred, is now completely extinguished and notification has been made to the Brigade.
- 4.66 Calls are to be recorded including all available information, e.g. when the fire occurred and a response made in accordance with the Brigade's Mobilising Policy.

## **5 Calls received to incidents out of the Greater London area**

- 5.1 When a call is received to an incident in the area of another Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), the address will be validated and if an address record exists it will be selected.

### **Address record exists on the mobilising system - LFB resources recommended**

- 5.2 If a LFB call sign is proposed it will be dispatched (if appropriate).
- 5.3 The FRS Control Room within whose area the incident is located is to be informed of the call with the identity of any LFB resources mobilised.
- 5.4 Should the FRS 'owning' the address also mobilise its own resources, the identities are to be obtained, their call sign(s) attached to the incident and details passed to the LFB resource(s) that have been mobilised.

### **Address record exists - LFB resources not recommended**

- 5.5 If no LFB resources are recommended, the details of the call are to be passed to the FRS control room appropriate to the address.
- 5.6 Information passed should include that no LFB resource(s) have been mobilised.
- 5.7 Should the FRS request a LFB resource (and it is available), it is to be dispatched in accordance with any Fire and Rescue Services Act (FRSA) 2004, Section 13/16 agreements.

### **Address record does not exist**

- 5.8 Where no address record exists for the address on the mobilising system, other information available including the Great Britain Atlas, QAS, etc will be used to identify the location.
- 5.9 The appropriate FRS Control Room will be identified, contacted and passed details of the call, confirming that no attendance has been dispatched.

### **Misrouted emergency calls**

- 5.10 The Code of Practice for The Public Emergency Call Service (PECS) between communications providers and the emergency services outlines the circumstances under which misrouted calls may be received in control rooms. A misrouted 999/112 call is one which is routed to a control room for which there is no prior arrangement for the reception of 999/112 calls from that calling location.
- 5.11 OMs are to ensure that emergency calls which have been apparently misrouted are notified to the appropriate PTO for investigation. However, it should be remembered that the BT and Authority boundaries are not co-terminus and a similar situation applies to cellular telephones.

### **Requests for assistance from other FRS Control Rooms**

- 5.12 To support the Brigade's local, regional and national mutual assistance arrangements (FRSA 2004 Sect 13/16 Agreements), requests for assistance from other FRS are to be met irrespective of whether a Restricted Attendance is in force at the time.
- 5.13 National mutual assistance requests would normally come via the FRS National Coordination Centre
- 5.14 Procedures for the receipt of calls, the determination of resources and rendezvous arrangements utilised in connection with New Dimension incidents are as per Appendix 1.

### **Calls from members of the public requiring rescue from non-fire situations**

- 5.15 There may be occasions where during the course of handling an emergency call, it is apparent that the caller is trapped inside premises, machinery or confined spaces and is unable to escape.
- 5.16 Reference Information Files (RIF's) are on the computer-aided mobilising system to assist the CRO in these situations.
- 5.17 The RIF's are designed to assist the CRO in assessing the situation.
- 5.18 Detailed information, advice and guidance for CROs concerning calls from members of the public trapped in non-fire situations will be found in appendix '2' of this policy and RIF "NON-FIRE RESCUE".

### **Fire survival guidance**

- 5.19 Detailed information, advice and guidance for CROs is set out in accordance with Fire Service Circular 10/93 appendix A. Guidance can also be found in appendix '3' of this policy and RIF "FIRE SURVIVAL GUIDANCE".

## **Calls to chemical biological radiological nuclear (CBRN) incidents**

- 5.20 Detailed information, advice and guidance for CROs concerning calls to CBRN incidents will be found in appendix '4' of this policy and RIF "CBRN".

## **Calls to persons shut in lift**

- 5.21 Calls received concerning a person shut in lift are filtered to establish if an attendance is required and detailed in appendix '5'.

## **Calls to automatic fire alarms – filtering procedure**

- 5.22 AFA Call Filtering applies to emergency calls received through the 999 system. The policy applies between the hours of 06:00 and 21:00 only. The procedure applies a filtering process, this process follows agreed questions to the caller, which at the end of a decision is made whether the Brigade's attendance is required or not. The caller is advised accordingly. If an attendance is to be ordered the filtering process also determines whether a reduced attendance or full attendance is dispatched. Appendix '6' refers. Authority's [Policy number 412](#) – Mobilising Policy refers.

## **Call challenge**

- 5.23 Call challenge aims to reduce the unnecessary movement of appliances by challenging calls that CROs deem to be malicious or hoax, in origin, thereby enabling operational resources to be used more effectively, available to attend genuine emergencies and engage in community preventative work.
- 5.24 The CRO will use an agreed set of questions and statements. Detailed information, advice and guidance for control room officers concerning calls subject to Call Challenge will be found in appendix '7' of this policy and Reference Information File "CALL CHALLENGE".
- 5.25 If any doubt exists concerning the validity of the call then a mobilisation is to be made.

## **Malicious calls**

- 5.26 The Brigade has worked with mobile networks and arrangements are in place for the OM to contact the appropriate company and request the disconnection of mobile phones that have been used to make malicious calls (where three malicious calls have been made).

## **Inappropriate calls**

- 5.27 Emergency calls involving actual or potential risk to life or property, life threatening or saving, rescue operations, humanitarian services and services in the public interest are to be accepted and attended (as appropriate).
- 5.28 However, some calls are received which do not fall within the categories detailed above, or where it is doubtful or proper for the Brigade to attend or are inappropriate for an attendance.
- 5.29 Calls that fall within this category are to be referred to an appropriate service, authority or external agency that may be able to assist. They are also handled in a positive, helpful and sensitive manner. Examples of inappropriate calls include, requesting the brigade to fill a swimming pool up or to remove bees from a premises.

## **Divulging of names**

- 5.30 It is inappropriate for CROs to divulge their names if requested by a caller. Should the caller wish to make a complaint and requires a point of reference, the matter should be immediately referred to an AOM.
- 5.31 The OM/AOM will supply the caller with their role title, e.g. 'operations manager', 'assistant operations manager', together with an incident number (if the complaint concerns an operational incident) and ensure the matter is handled in accordance with the Brigade's Compliments and Complaints Procedure.

## **6 Performance management**

### **Performance management**

- 6.1 Brigade Control aims to answer emergency calls within set target times and provide an appropriate response. The percentage of emergency calls answered within 7, 10 and 20 seconds are monitored to ensure the Brigade's 's LPI 204 '92% of all emergency calls answered in 7 seconds' is achieved.
- 6.2 Brigade Control monitors a range of call answering and handling data which is reported on monthly.
- 6.3 The Brigade's ' Call Quality system 'Call Coach' is the main tool used within Brigade Control to quality-assure call handling against an agreed standard.

## Appendix 1 – Requests for assistance from other FRS control rooms

### Example of an assistance request form:

#### Protocol for assistance requests to FRSNCC (Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre).

Where a FRS requires NR and associated conventional resources to a major incident, the FRSNCC should be contacted by telephone with the following information, immediately followed by a confirmatory e-mail or fax of this form.

Date and Time .....

Originator's name and rank .....

Address of incident .....

Nature of incident .....

What resources have already been mobilised .....

Name and rank of incident commander .....

Additional resources required: -

Mass .....	USAR module 1 .....
Decontamination Unit .....	USAR module 2 .....
.....	USAR module 3 .....
.....	USAR module 4 .....
DIM equipment .....	USAR module 5 .....
HVP unit .....	Canine support .....
Double hose box .....	Command Support .....
Water rescue .....	Other (specify) .....
Appliances only .....	
Prime Mover only .....	

Rendezvous point for additional resources .....

Name and contact number of caller and alternative.....  
(This line to be kept clear following request).

1st call Principal Officer and contact number .....

Local Police control room contact number .....

## Appendix 2 - Calls from members of the public requiring rescue from non-fire situations

There may be occasions where during the course of handling an emergency call, it is apparent that the caller is physically trapped and unable to free themselves from :

- Transport.
- Machinery.
- Wreckage.
- Environment.
- Confined Spaces.
- Humanitarian.

**If this is the first call to the incident, complete the call and immediately alert an AOM . If this is a subsequent call to the incident, record the details pass to the R/T operator.**

For both of the above instances where the caller is unable to escape, the CRO will use the following information to provide guidance, reassurance and support to the caller. If the caller cannot escape using the following positive suggested phrases to use:

- "The Fire Brigade is on the way"
- "The firefighters will be with you very soon"
- "Listen to me, I'm going to help you"
- "I'm going to talk to you until the firefighters arrive"
- "What happened?"

### Assist in rescue

- "Can you free yourself?"
- "What is trapping you in the wreckage?"
- "Are you injured and/or are you in pain?"
- "Is what is trapping you stable?"
- "Are you on your own or are there others involved?"
- "If yes, are they conscious?"
- "Everyone is coming to help you"

It should be sensitively established if the caller have any disability that may affect them effecting their own rescue or carrying out any of these actions.

### Medical advice

If the caller asks for medical advice, stay calm and reassure them that medical assistance, i.e. an ambulance will be with them shortly. However, they can be told to breathe slowly, stay calm stay awake and keep talking

## Appendix 3 - Fire survival guidance

The London Fire Brigade define a Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) call as being a call to Brigade Control where the caller believes that they are unable to leave their premises due to the effects of fire, and where the CRO remains on the line providing appropriate advice until either the caller is able to leave by their own means, is rescued by the Fire brigade or the line is cleared.

There is specific guidance for CROs to follow when taking calls to fire situations in domestic accommodation, where callers have indicated they are unable to leave their premises. This guidance follows Fire Service Circular 10/93 Fire survival guidance and employs the principles of Escape, Assist, Protect and Rescue.

Brigade Control advise callers to 'Get out and Stay out', however if a call is received from a High rise building where Fire, Heat and Smoke are not affecting the caller, LFB would advise that:

You are usually safest to remain in your premises unless affected by fire, heat or smoke. If the situation changes, you should leave your premises and dial 999, if you need further assistance.'

Should the caller be unable to escape, a RIF containing prompts are in place on the computer-aided mobilising system to assist the CRO in:

- Providing guidance to assist the caller to safety.
- Provide timely and relevant information to the attending resources.
- Provide reassurance to the caller that help and assistance is forthcoming.

If this is the first call to the incident, complete the call and immediately alert an AOM. Support to the CRO will be provided in person by either a supervisor or colleague dependant on staff availability and control room activity at the time.

If this is a subsequent call to the incident, ensure the details are recorded and passed to the R/T operator.

The CRO will ascertain through initial questioning, the type of premises the caller is in and use the link on the Reference Information File 'Fire Survival Guidance' to take them to the appropriate area of information to use, to assist the caller.

CROs will always use the four principles of Escape, Assess, Protect and Rescue to provide guidance to these callers.

Firstly by assisting the caller to help identify a safe, alternative **ESCAPE** route for them to leave their premises.

If this is not possible, then **ASSESS** the situation by asking the caller direct questions:

Example questions are:

Do you know where the fire is?

What room are you in?

Is anyone with you?

Begin to **PROTECT** the caller by providing current Fire safety advice to attempt to keep the caller safe

Reassure the caller and **REASSESS** the callers situation:

Example questions are:

Has that stopped the smoke coming in?

Let me know if the smoke gets thicker?



What's happening now?

CROs will remain on the telephone with the caller and assist with **RESCUE**

Instructions on how to break a window and escape from a first floor window are available to CROs on the RIF should the caller be in a situation where this is required or they are in imminent danger.

### **General**

Other CROs and supervisory staff will assist the CRO carrying out the Fire Survival Guidance call by ensuring all relevant information regarding the caller's situation is passed via both the airwave radio and via telephone when a command unit is in attendance.

Relevant information to be passed to the incident ground:

- Number of persons involved
- Names if known (by telephone only, not by radio)
- Condition of their location i.e. heavy smoke, thick smoke
- Location of caller within premises
- Callers proximity to fire
- Latest FSG advice given by Control
- Time of FSG call

The callers premises number will be used as the single reference for each circumstance where guidance is provided to avoid confusion with names.

## Appendix 4 - Calls to chemical biological radiological nuclear (CBRN) incidents

It is critical that the CRO receiving an emergency call is able to identify at an early stage whether the incident has the potential to be of a CBRN nature due to the information received, e.g. explosion, smell of chemicals, gas cloud and powder release.

The call may also include information that persons are collapsing or having breathing difficulties.

An AOM is to be alerted. After dispatching the attendance Brigade Control should gather as much information as possible from the caller and provide them with appropriate advice to keep them safe.

Ask the callers to remain alert as the situation could change very quickly.

The following questions should be asked and relayed to attending resources:

Tell me what is happening?

How is the caller being affected?

- Are they inside/outside the building? Provide STEP 3 advice now if caller is being affected.

Do you know the source of the release?

What is the effect?

### Step Three Advice for incident in open air

Instruct caller to do the following and to encourage others in the vicinity to do the same:

- Move away from the source – upwind and preferably uphill (walk into the wind).
- Assist others who are either injured or less able to carry out tasks, if possible.
- Avoid eating, drinking, smoking or touching the face and eyes.
- Remove outer clothing but do not pull clothing over the head unless absolutely necessary.
- Once clothing is removed, if possible use absorbent tissue or paper towels to first blot and then rub exposed skin.
- Wash with water if there are signs of exposure to caustic substances (e.g. itching or pain).
- Then move away again upwind and preferably uphill.
- Avoid seeking hospital care – inform the caller that medical assistance is on its way.
- Wait for the emergency services to arrive and act upon their instruction

### Step Three Advice for incidents inside buildings :

- Evacuate the affected area – consider use of the fire alarm system (where appropriate).
- Consider route out of the building and that the majority of gases are heavier than air.
- Consider shutting down air-conditioning, fans and air recirculation systems but only where this action would not delay evacuation.
- If unable to leave, close all doors and windows and seal them where possible. Monitor TV and Radio for further information

Once outside follow Step 3 open air advice above

## Appendix 5 - Shut in lift

There are three outcomes following receipt of call to person shut in lift

(a) Emergency mobilisation

A person in the lift is seriously ill, likely to be seriously ill or cannot be contacted.

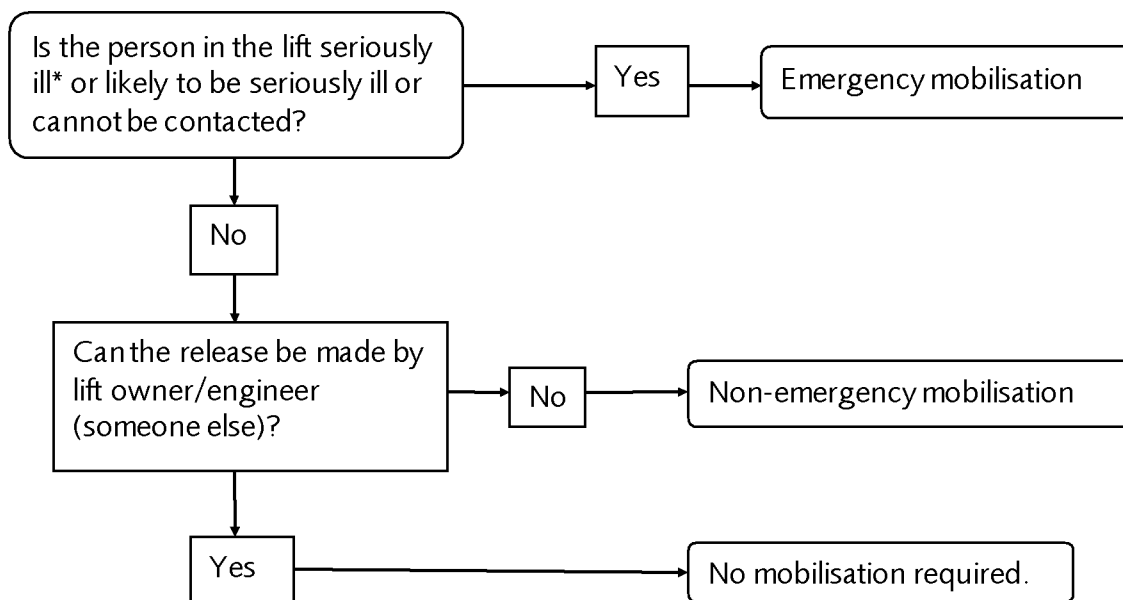
(b) Non-emergency mobilisation

Release cannot be made by lift engineer or someone else responsible for the lift and none of the circumstances in (a) above apply.

(c) No mobilisation

Release can be made by a lift engineer or someone else responsible for the lift and none of the circumstances in (a) above apply.

These outcomes are illustrated in the flow chart below



\* The meaning of "seriously ill" is open to interpretation on a case by case basis, but any condition that requires immediate medical treatment (e.g. where an ambulance would be required to attend) comes into this category.

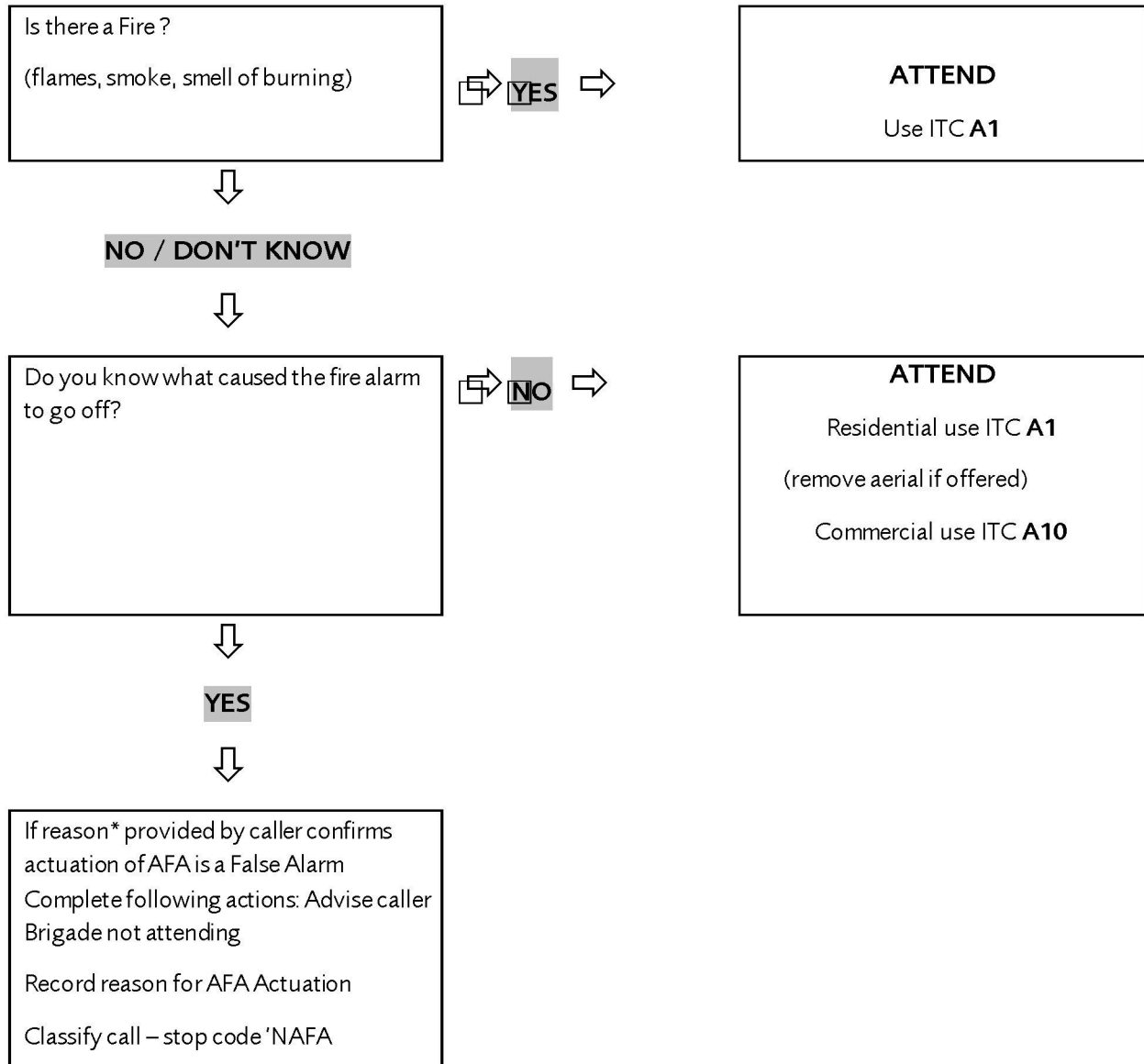
The length of time that a person is confined in the lift is not, on its own, reason to send a LFB attendance.

CROs will question the caller to gather information. The questions will vary according to the circumstances and there is no set script. As a general rule, they will try to avoid asking leading questions; for example, "Are you seriously ill?" The person in the lift should have the opportunity to raise the alarm about their state of health either to the caller or directly to the CRO.

## Appendix 6 - AFA call filtering process

CALL RECEIVED TO AFA ACTUATING via 999 system ((0600 – 2100 ONLY\*)

(Excluding calls from Alarm Receiving Centres and Telecare services)



\*Examples of reasons call maybe considered a False Alarm:

Accidental or Malicious actuation of AFA

Fault condition

Reset of AFA

Burnt toast / cooking

Smoke from cigarette

\*All AFA calls are attended by the Brigade between 2100 and 0600, regardless of what has caused the alarm to actuate.

## Appendix 7 - Call challenge

Call challenge aims to reduce the unnecessary movement of appliances thereby enabling operational resources to be used more effectively, available to attend genuine emergencies and engage in community preventative work.

Call challenge consists of a number of pre-determined questions and statements made to the caller by the CRO in order to ascertain authenticity if it is believed the call may be a hoax or not genuine.

- I believe this is a hoax call. Do you wish to continue?
- Hoax calls are taken seriously. Do you know that your voice is being recorded and if this is a hoax call may be made available to the Police?
- If this is a hoax call, the Police will play a recording of this call in the local schools (where this is appropriate) in order to attempt to identify who made the call.
- Do you realise that if this is a hoax call you may be prosecuted?
- I have information that you are calling from telephone number [as displayed in the CLI information] and that this telephone number is situated at [as displayed in the EISEC information - if available]. This is a long distance from the address that you are reporting. Do you wish to continue?
- What is your name?
- (If a Public Call box) - Do you know that many public call boxes are covered by Closed Circuit Television Cameras and, if this is a hoax call, the pictures may be used in court?
- A number of calls have been made from this mobile telephone number (if appropriate) and it is believed this is a hoax call. Do you wish to continue?

It is not mandatory for the CRO to go through any or all of the questions/statements; it will depend on the circumstances and their professional judgement.

There may be a number of reasons that the CRO suspects that the call is a hoax including:

- The caller states they are 'phoning from one area when it is known that they are calling from elsewhere.
- Multiple addresses in multiple locations are given.
- The caller simply shouts and replaces the handset.
- The caller states there is a fire but refuses to give an address or gives an address that is some miles from where the call originates the caller has been connected but does not speak to the Brigade when questioned, the caller discontinues the call.
- Information is provided by the mobilising system indicating that a number of malicious calls have been received from that telephone number or that the telephone number has been subject to call challenge within the last twelve months. The information will include the telephone number, EISEC information (if call through BT), incident address, nature of the incident, date, time and incident number together with the stop classification.
- Information is provided by the mobilising system indicating that calls previously received to the validated address given have been malicious within the last fourteen days. The information will include the telephone number, EISEC information (if call through BT), incident address, nature of the incident, date, time and incident number together with the stop classification.

If the caller makes an admission during the call that the call is a hoax, the requirement to make an attendance is discharged unless the CRO believes that an attendance is appropriate.

## Document history

### Assessments

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

EIA	17/09/2008	SDIA		HSWIA		RA	
-----	------------	------	--	-------	--	----	--

### 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	Control commander, control officers and supervisory staff have been replaced by operations manager, control room officers and team leaders as appropriate.	07/06/2010
Throughout	Whole document reviewed as current and updated throughout. Additional and amended Appendices. Statistics quoted for Emergency Calls taken from January to December 2009.	03/09/2010
Throughout	The term 'team leader' has been replaced by 'assistant operations manager'.	25/11/2010
Appendix 3	Altered to reflect the latest Reference information file on FSG and outcomes from internal investigations.	03/02/2011
Appendix 6	Altered to reflect new call filtering times.	03/02/2011
Page 1	Updated the owner from Head of Operations and Mobilising to Head of Mobilising.	09/07/2012
Throughout	The word premise has been replaced with premises throughout.	16/05/2013
Throughout	Various minor updates. Removal of references to Cable and Wireless. Update on call rates. Textual additions to references to Call Handling and Fire Survival Guidance explaining how call handlers will be supported in the control room.	28/03/2014
Page 22	'Subjects list' table updated.	29/01/2015
Page 13, para 6.1	Call answering response rates updated from '91%' to '92%'.	24/03/2015
Appendix 4	Appendix has been updated throughout.	06/04/2017
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current with major changes made throughout to reflect the abolition of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. This has been replaced with The London Fire Commissioner. Please re-read to familiarise yourself with the content.	17/07/2018

## Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Communication	Messages
Control room	Emergency calls

## Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

<b>Considered by:</b> (responsible work team)	<b>FOIA exemption</b>	<b>Security marking classification</b>