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Subject

**Incident Command Review**

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Brief for

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Author

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**Purpose:** To outline a number of issues concerning the Incident Command review and where necessary to provide a number of recommendations to resolve them that require your action, or to recommend the acceptance of a process associated with the future development of incident command training.

## **Background:**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> November Babcocks briefed you on their Incident Command Training Risk Profile and Development Booklet. The booklet contained documents that demonstrated the work undertaken to develop a risk and knowledge profile for each of the four levels of command. It also included the documents to be used to identify and design a piece of incident command training. The process Babcock's wish to adopt to develop their incident command training is based on these documents. They aim to produce a 'menu' from which a training activity may be selected for a particular level of command and developed based on the risk and knowledge profiles.

As you are aware I have had very limited access to the documents Babcocks have been working on, although I have been afforded opportunities to discuss them. Therefore, since that matter appears to have been addressed, what follows is a critique of the booklet and the processes that have been developed to produce its contents. I will highlight a number of issues and make recommendations for you to consider and decide upon to ensure the incident command training provided is as comprehensive as it needs to be.

## **Discussion:**

### **1. Policy led Training:**

- a. The basis for Babcock's review of incident command training has been current policy notes and national guidance issued by the National Operational Guidance Programme or the CFRA. There was no examination of incident command-related training provision within other industries who have to manage risk critical incidents, e.g. aviation, oil and gas, marine, and nuclear power. The resultant is that the vast majority of information that has produced the knowledge and risk profiles is anchored within policy notes. Consequently, if the LFB do not have a policy note about, e.g. leadership, then it is not (and has not been) included in the review.

b. **I recommend** that in future Babcocks training reviews they are directed to horizon scan for training solutions adopted by other FRS's and other industries as a fundamental part of their review. This will assist to ensure future training is modern and up to date. I also recommend that where a policy does not exist for an aspect that is critical for incident command you direct Babcocks to include it for them to develop appropriate training. These critical aspects are:

- i. Human factors of incident command, or the Command Skills to be included in NOG for Incident Command:
  1. Leadership
  2. Decision making (as opposed to the DMM)
  3. Teamwork
  4. Stress management/personal resilience
  5. Situation awareness
  6. Interpersonal communication
- ii. The Decision Control Method as it is to be included in NOG for Incident Command.
- iii. Operational Discretion for which a draft policy note exists and it is to be included in NOG for Incident Command.
- iv. Changes to tactical modes to be included in NOG for Incident Command:
  1. Offensive mode = FRS personnel within the hazard area.
  2. Defensive mode = all FRS personnel outside of the hazard area:
    - a. When moving from offensive to defensive operations: an informative message is needed to declare when the withdrawal of FRS personnel begins (and registers the change in the outcome of the risk assessment) but the incident remains in offensive mode; the declaration of defensive mode later on indicates all FRS personnel are withdrawn from the hazard area.
  3. Removal of transitional mode where sectors are in different modes and replace it with an informative message, declaring the tactical mode of each sector (similar to Fire Scotland).
- v. JESIP doctrine and the Joint Decision Model. If London are to adopt the JESIP doctrine and integrate it into LESLP, then the doctrine and the Joint Decision Model need to be included in this current review. Consideration ought to be given to issuing interim guidance ahead of the adoption and integration into LESLP as Babcocks are currently training SM and GMs about JESIP.

## **2. The roles associated with the levels of command:**

- a. Currently, Babcocks have assigned the roles in accordance with the Edexcel definitions of Initial, Intermediate, Advanced and Strategic (see appendix 1).
- b. **I recommend** that Group Managers (GM) be assigned to the Advanced Level. The learning outcomes best fit the scale of incident commanded by GMs and their role in conducting PRCs (see appendix 1).

## **3. Teaching, training and learning good practice:**

- a. Babcocks have found discussing this difficult. I have asked for, but still await, their template documents for a syllabus, curriculum and lesson plan. I have also yet to see any learning outcomes associated with their training modules. However, there is a set of acquisition and application performance outcomes (see below). From my engagement so far Babcocks have mainly been focused on gaining LFB agreement for the process they wish to undertake to provide a finished training product. This is understandable and will benefit the long-term working relationship. It is important to agree this as soon as possible. However, there being no evidence that

they had set about developing a syllabus for their proposed training programmes, with their agreement I drafted an example for them. I also informed them that such documents would need to be in place for each development programme, i.e. formal and maintenance of competence.

- b. The performance outcomes in relation to knowledge acquisition and skills application appear to be centred on the DMM and existing role maps. However, they do not include outcomes in relation to some key aspects of incident command:
  - i. Leadership including a reference to assertive, effective and safe incident command and the revised fire-fighter maxim as advocated by the NOG for incident command
  - ii. Stress management/personal resilience
  - iii. Situation awareness
  - iv. Teamwork
  - v. Interpersonal communication
  - vi. Decision making (needs to be explicit not implied as in existing outcomes),
  - vii. Inter/intra-operability including JESIP
- c. **I recommend** that performance outcomes in relation to those identified above are added and that the production of training materials does not commence for a training programme, until syllabus and curriculum documents have been produced and agreed by the LFB.

#### 4. Unaccounted for incident command interdependencies:

- a. Command unit staff: there is a clear need for command unit staff (now and under any future working arrangements) to have an awareness of the knowledge and understanding associated with incident command, the role of the incident commander, functional and specialist command roles, non-operational command support roles, and the roles of other agencies. Notwithstanding, a range of key policy notes, e.g. major incident procedure, forward control mobilising, fire survival guidance, etc. Currently, whilst this is acknowledged by Babcocks, they are not proposing to develop a training programme for command unit staff.
- b. Functional command roles: Very few policy notes include detailed information in relation to the knowledge and understanding necessary to perform functional commander roles. Many policy notes only provide limited information about the roles, and many contain little or no practical advice, e.g. Safety Sector for Inner Cordon Control, Fire Survival Guidance SM, Sector Commander Command Support, and Welfare Sector Commander. Notwithstanding that, Policy Note 433, Sector Commander, does detail generic duties and responsibilities for all sector commanders. However, the specialist knowledge that, e.g. a Safety Officer or a Water Officer requires is not apparent.
- c. Strategic command support roles, e.g. Gold Support Officer, Brigade Coordinating Officer, etc: These are reasonably well documented in PN 699. However, the specialist knowledge required to perform them is not apparent. Notwithstanding that there may be security issues to be considered in relation to these roles.
- d. Non-operational command support roles include: Petroleum Inspectors, Radio Officers and Scientific Advisers, Salvation Army canteen van staff, Bulk Water Carrier drivers, Dangerous Structures Engineers, and Euroloo Portable Hygiene Unit reps. Apart from the Salvation Army canteen van staff and dangerous structures engineers, there is good information about the other roles contained within current policy notes.
- e. **I recommend** that the incident command review is an ideal opportunity to develop training for the interdependencies referred to above:

- i. An incident command training programme for Command Unit staff to become part of their initial development programme and maintenance of competence. This would safeguard the training for any future working arrangements.
- ii. Training programme/activities based on the specific knowledge and understanding required to perform all of the functional sector commander roles and roles that are referenced, but not defined, e.g. Welfare Sector Commander and Fire Survival Guidance SM. This would help to compensate for the lack of detail in policy notes and importantly the lack of operational experience in these roles due to the decline in incidents.
- iii. Training activities to inform incident commanders about the non-operational command support roles, including those not defined in policy, and their responsibilities towards them.

## 5. Risk Profile:

- a. The current risk profile appears comprehensive, but is inconsistent in its construct:
  - i. Some categories have a context statement, whereas others do not.
  - ii. Some categories list all risks individually, whereas others group them into one item, or mix the two.
  - iii. Some grouped risks clearly vary due to, for example, the different environments, construction, contents, etc. associated with them. One example would be in the Marine category, where a wide variety of cargo vessels are listed as one risk.
  - iv. Some risks are not recorded, but ought to be, e.g. impalements, unsuitable accommodation and our obligations in the JESIP doctrine.
- b. Overall, the process to identify the make-up of the current risk profile is robust. However, it is based on incident types and locations, but does not include a 'people' element. The behaviour and performance of the incident commander is definitely a risk to personnel as cited in the Garston Mine Incident report to name but one; and poor incident command performance is also used as part of LFB assessments.
- c. A document detailing Borough-based risks is currently being produced to enable Babcocks to design and tailor training based on Area/Borough risks.
- d. I recommend the:
  - i. Risk profile be revised to ensure it is structured consistently by incorporating context statements for each category, and revision of the category lists to overcome the issues raised above, including direction from the LFB to include risks for which no policy note exists, e.g. unsuitable accommodation and JESIP.
  - ii. Risks associated with the behaviour and performance of the incident commander be included.
  - iii. That, subject to the inclusion of the 'people' element, the process to develop the risk profile is suitable.

## 6. Knowledge Profile:

- a. Notwithstanding the limitations of the policy note-led approach to this review I have sampled 20% (40 policy notes) of the documents used to develop the knowledge profiles and utilised their procedure for analysing them. I then quality assured 50% of these with Babcocks and found a high degree of consistency between my outcomes and those derived by Babcocks.
- b. The knowledge profiles are reliant on the NOG Incident Command guidance for legal considerations and Command Skills (human factors of incident command), which are delayed until March 2015. Further, they are also reliant on the adoption of the JESIP doctrine and Joint Decision Model, which has yet to be determined by

the LFB – although LESLP is due to incorporate it the revision of LESLP is not likely to be before the end of this review.

- c. **I recommend** that the process for developing the knowledge profile is suitable and that direction is provided on the inclusion of the NOG Incident Command guidance on legal considerations and command skills. Further the inclusion of the JESIP doctrine and Joint Decision Model.

#### **7. Scenario Builder:**

- a. I have reviewed the process proposed to develop training based on the Scenario Builder. It clearly links to the knowledge and risk profiles and incorporates an incident profile to aid the development of a scenario. However, it lacks any reference to learning domains or outcomes, which are fundamental to the development of training.
- b. Bizarrely it includes within the application profile a 'dedicated training facility (XVR)' as a distinct training activity alongside development and maintenance of skills - competence please – programmes.
- c. The list of training media is also limited and does not include 'practical exercises'. These are essential for incident commanders to demonstrate their command skills (human factors) under pressure and to validate the incident command training provided by Babcocks. I am concerned that Babcocks do not view them as such (much preferring XVR solutions).
- d. **I recommend** that the scenario builder process is acceptable subject to:
  - i. The inclusion of learning domains and learning outcomes sections.
  - ii. The removal of the 'Dedicated training facility (XVR)' category from the application profile.
  - iii. A revision of the term training media to training activity and its options to include all potential training opportunities, e.g. small and large-scale practical exercises.

#### **Conclusion.**

This briefing note describes the areas concerning the incident command review that require some action on your behalf. The areas covered within the note are:

1. Policy led training
2. The roles associated with the levels of command
3. Teaching, training and learning good practice
4. Unaccounted for incident command interdependencies
5. Risk Profile
6. Knowledge Profile
7. Scenario Builder

In total I make 17 recommendations. These range from the acceptance of a process, and the revision of terms within a document; to recommendations to include non-policy incident command areas, and the inclusion of a new development programme for Command Unit staff in the review.

## Appendix 1

### Edexcel Level 3, 4, 5 and 7 Awards in Incident Command

- **Level 3 Initial Incident Command Learning Outcomes** (Task-focused supervisory level incident commanders):
  1. Understand the key principles of the Incident Command System
  2. Understand the role and responsibilities of personnel within the incident command structure
  3. Understand the requirements for successful management of risk at operational incidents
  4. Understand the need for effective lines and methods of communication at incidents
  5. Be able to plan an initial response to an operational incident
  6. Be able to implement actions to meet planned objectives
  7. Be able to close down the operational phase of an incident
  8. Be able to debrief people following incidents
- **Level 4 Intermediate Incident Command Learning Outcomes** (Middle manager level incident commanders):
  1. Understand the roles, responsibilities and limits of authority within the Incident Command System
  2. Understand the importance of successful leadership and the application of effective decision making during operational incidents
  3. Understand the principles of successful risk management at operational incidents
  4. Understand the methods and types of communication systems available at incidents and remotely
  5. Understand the benefits of interoperability and the contribution of other agencies to the provision of specialist advice and support
  6. Be able to review and determine the status of an operational incident
  7. Be able to assume responsibility for implementing action to support those involved in operational incidents
  8. Be able to debrief people following resolution of operational incidents
- **Level 5 Advanced Incident Command Learning Outcomes** (Incident commanders of the largest and most serious incidents with developed command support):
  1. Understand the principles of decision making when leading, monitoring and supporting people to resolve operational incidents
  2. Understand a tactical approach to leading and supporting people to resolve operational incidents
  3. Understand the principles of risk management when leading, monitoring and supporting people to resolve operational incidents
  4. Understand the principles of debriefing following an operational incident
  5. Be able to evaluate the status of an operational incident
  6. Be able to assume responsibility for action to support those involved in operational incidents
  7. Be able to close down the operational phase of an incident
- **Level 6 Strategic Incident Command Learning Outcomes** (Most senior incident commanders with authority to direct and commit resources, including the monitoring, coordination and support of multiple off-site operations within the NCAF):
  1. Understand the roles and responsibilities of people and organisations within the incident command arrangements that exist at local, regional and national levels



2. Understand the technical issues being dealt with at tactical (Fire Silver) level
3. Understand the role of communications within the context of local, regional and national incidents
4. Understand how to manage people involved within local, regional and national contexts
5. Understand how to close down the strategic command phase of the incident within the local, regional and national contexts
6. Be able to lead a strategic response to an incident within local, regional and national contexts
7. Be able to contribute to the debrief following the resolution of an incident