



**CFOA**  
Chief Fire Officers  
Association

The professional voice of the  
UK Fire & Rescue Service

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Mr Ron Dobson  
Commissioner  
London Fire Brigade  
169 Union Street  
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SE1 0LL

7 September 2015

Dear Ron,

### **Incident Command Guidance and Research**

As you will be aware, the new National Operational Guidance for Incident Command was released in early July <http://www.ukfrs.com/> and provides an all hazards approach for incident command to assist with the application of safe systems of work vital to the safe and effective resolution of operational incidents. The value of the guidance is clear when set against the context of unprecedented levels of scrutiny and public expectation, within an often very technical and multi-agency operational environment, but with incident commanders having less operational exposure and experience from which to draw upon. Incident command today is arguably more complex than it has ever has been.

The publication of the guidance represents a significant achievement and is the culmination of a process that has included an in depth literature review, with detailed analysis of previous incidents and lessons learnt; along with CFOA sponsored and academically endorsed sector specific research. The guidance has built on successful and well-rehearsed structures already in place but has ensured it is now firmly evidence based and appropriate for the modern operational environment.

In order to help ensure the guidance acts as a catalyst for all fire and rescue incident commanders to be assertive, effective and safe; CFOA Board has fully endorsed the attached report: *'The Future of Incident Command'* and its associated recommendations. The report is broken down into four key areas: the need for change; taking an evidence led approach through the use of specific incident command research; how the research has then shaped the development of the guidance; and finally the challenges that lie ahead, including a series of recommendations and observations, particularly on how the gap between operational exposure and command competence needs to be bridged.

One of the key recommendations contained within the report is the need for consistency in command development and competence. The CFOA Command Training, Assessment and Qualifications Framework, as part of the overarching Fire Professional Framework (FPF), is cited as a suitable mechanism for achieving this consistency. Working with *Skills for Justice*, (now Skills for Fire and Rescue within Skills for Justice) four levels of command were identified and underpinned by recognised command qualifications. With the focus on command competency itself, rather than specialist areas of operations, the framework offers a recognised path for command development and I would therefore recommend its adoption across all services.

The National Operational Guidance (NOG) programme has been expanded to include Training Specifications and it has been agreed that the first specification to be adopted will be for Incident Command. This will help Services ensure their training and assessment regime is in line with the new guidance and the professional framework.

A national 'go-live' implementation date for 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 was recently agreed by the National Operations Committee, thereby providing sufficient time for all services to advise their operational personnel accordingly. The National Command and Control Working Group will provide support and monitor progress of individual fire and rescue services across the CFOA regions to help ensure a uniformed and consistent approach is applied.

I trust this information is helpful to you. An abridged complementary article for reference purposes can be found in the July/August edition of the *FIRE* magazine.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RW' or 'Wilsher', written in a cursive style.

**Roy Wilsher**  
**CFOA Director of Operations**