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## National Operational Guidance – Incident Command

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Meeting

Corporate Management Board

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Report by

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### Summary

This paper provides an overview of the organisational impact of the publication of National Operational Guidance (NOG) for Incident Command (IC) and specifically highlights change requirements within Incident Management Policy.

### Recommendations

- Head of Operational Assurance to establish a working group to review the current Incident Command policies and guidance in light of the publication of the NOG IC guidance. (CMB to propose membership of the group)
- Head of Operational Assurance to consider the necessity for an LFB critical incident policy.
- Changes to LFB Command Support policies added to scope of project implementing CU changes.
- Incident Management Policy team change name to Incident Command and Operations Review Team.

### For Noting

- Ops Policy to establish corporate project team to co-ordinate implementation of National Operational Guidance products.
- Development and Learning to incorporate non technical skills and leadership behaviours within Incident Command review.
- Incident management Policy to incorporate policy changes within current framework.

### Background

1. National Operational Guidance (NOG) – Incident Command was published on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The guidance is published in two parts:
  - Incident Command policy – for FRS policy writers <https://fireandrescue-public.sharepoint.com/Pages/Guidance-Catalogue.aspx?guidanceid=120>

- Foundation – knowledge and understanding for Incident Commanders for individuals and FRS learning & development teams. <https://fireandrescue-public.sharepoint.com/Pages/Guidance-Catalogue.aspx?guidanceid=121>
- 2. The policy document 'Introduction' states ... *"Other Emergency Services will base their expectation of the fire service response to multi agency incidents on the incident command system contained within this guidance. For this reason fire and rescue services are expected to adopt this guidance. This guidance is likely to be considered as national best practice in any review or inquiry following a significant incident."*
- 3. The Health, Safety and Welfare Framework in the Operational Environment (Section 5, sub section 4) states ... *"Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure adequate systems and processes are in place to identify the implications of national guidance"*  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-safety-and-welfare-framework-for-the-operational-environment>.
- 4. These two statements are supported by LGA Fire and Rescue Service Operational Assurance, in relation to services ensuring their response arrangements are organised to reflect the changes in key legislation and guidance.
- 5. The NOG – Incident Command documents are further supported by a recent CFOA paper 'The Future of Incident Command' (August 2015). This paper re-enforces the learning outcomes from the research that influenced the development of the National Guidance. It highlights as good practice LFB's Dynamic and Intelligent Operational Training (DIOT) process including Performance Reviews of Operations and Command.
- 6. It is therefore clear that LFB need to review, identify the impact of the new guidance and make any necessary changes to their policy framework and training requirements.

### **National Operational Guidance**

- 7. The Incident Command Guidance was developed by a project team led by CFO Simon Pilling (WYFRS) in consultation with the fire and rescue service, representative bodies and HSE it was approved by NOG Programme Strategy Board (including LGA, CFOA and DCLG).
- 8. Whilst there will be some impact on Incident Management Policy (IMP) and Operational Policy (OP) departments the most significant impact will be organisational changes around services principles, culture, selection and development to deliver safe, assertive and effective incident commanders.
- 9. The NOG Programme Implementation Forum have suggested a 'go live' date of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 for the Incident Command guidance to assist cross border working arrangements.
- 10. LFB Operational Policy are in discussions with the NOG Programme regarding implementation arrangements for the whole activity framework, in view of the wide ranging impact of the guidance, arrangements are being established to provide oversight of the internal implementation process.

### **Organisational impact**

11. The Foundation for Incident Command document predominantly details the qualities and skill requirements for Incident Commanders and strategic arrangements that need to be implemented regarding selection, development and assessment in order to achieve command competence.
12. The contents of this document will need to be considered as part of the LFB review of incident command competence. The Head of Learning and Development is leading the LFB review, Recruitment and Selection should be involved in due to the future impact on selection processes.
13. The Foundation and Policy documents both include sections on Safety Management including the following areas:
  - Positive Safety Culture – this introduces the concept of five principles that fire and rescue services should adopt together with a new firefighter safety maxim which will need to be considered by H&S Dept.
  - Dynamic, Analytical and Personal Risk Assessment including the concept of operational discretion – Ops Policy have developed and are currently training station based personnel on LFB Operational Risk Assessment policy and will review the impact of the new guidance.
14. The guidance refers to joint decision making with other agencies and signposts the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). LFB Incident Management and Major Incident policies will be reviewed to ensure compliance.
15. The guidance also highlights the requirement for policy in respect of emergency evacuation and firefighter emergency. Whilst LFB have extant policy in place, it is recommended that the Head of Operational Assurance & Health and Safety considers the necessity for an LFB critical incident policy to support these and detail strategic procedures in case of such an event.
16. By far the most significant organisational impact is in respect of the introduction of the 'Decision Control Process' and its relationship with the Decision Making Model (DMM). The DMM is engrained with LFB managerial and response systems and processes, it is therefore proposed to incorporate the research and learning which led to the development of the Decision Control Process together with other recent models (JESIP) into the DMM to provide clarity of organisational expectations at each stage of the model.
17. Therefore it is recommended that a working group is established to include all the strands involved in the review. The membership of the group could be established from LFB Ops policy implementation arrangements (see 10 above) or nominated by CMB.

### **Incident Management Policy**

18. The publication of the guidance has provided an opportunity to review the LFB Incident Management policy framework:
  - It is suggested for consideration that in order to change the focus from 'management' to 'command' and to better reflect the nature of the work that as part of the changes following the top management review the team name is changed to Incident Command and Operations Review Team.
  - It has been identified that there is duplication in a number of areas and that the total number of policies could be reduced to provide clarity and consistency.
  - The most significant change for IM policy is in respect of tactical modes with the removal of transitional and clarification of offensive and defensive modes – which whilst simplified and will improve identification of hazard zones, is contrary to current LFB application and



will have implications for training requirements. It is proposed that a CBT package is developed by Babcock and issued as mandatory training with Ops News (Dec) which already includes an article on NOG. Existing IC training courses can also then be updated.

- Throughout the documents there are references to messages in relation to sectorisation, tactical mode and firefighter emergency these will be dealt within the Incident Management policy review and will be reflected in the LFB messages policy and captured within the CBT package.
- Command support at incidents and appropriate training is covered within the guidance and there is a CFA national working group looking at Command Support qualifications. In view of the recent CMB decision regarding Command Support Units it is recommended that any changes to these policies is included within the scope of the project responsible for implementing these changes.
- The Performance Review of Command policy will be updated in order to reflect the principles of a positive safety culture, in particular in respect of Principle 4 which states that a decision shall be judged on the quality of the decision making not the outcome (ref: HSE striking the balance).

19. The review of effected IM policies will be complete by end Oct 2015, which will be followed by a period of Head of service and Staff side consultations. It is therefore anticipated that implementation of changes as detailed above (18) could be complete by end Dec 2015.

#### Comment from National Operational Guidance Programme

20. The National Operational Guidance Programme commissioned a project to review the incident command guidance for the fire and rescue service within its first phase of projects. The revised guidance was published, along with a supporting foundation paper and research in July 2015. The guidance replaces the existing Fire and Rescue Manual, Volume 2: Fire Service Operations, Incident Command, (third edition 2008).
21. Whilst the revised guidance is not mandatory it is considered to be industry good practice, and as such a fire authority may find it difficult to justify not adopting it into their local policies and procedures. The principle changes to the third edition are as follows:
  - Focus on Command Skills
  - New research on decision making processes
  - Clarification on Operational Discretion
  - Reduction of tactical modes to two
  - Clarification on how to interpret the two remaining modes
  - Explanation of firefighter emergency and evacuation procedures
  - Introduction of safety principles
  - Revised safety maxim
22. The command skills section has been given a greater emphasis within the NOG guidance as it is recognised that the skills of command will be one of the more significant factors in the ability of an individual to bring an incident to a successful conclusion. This has an impact on how services select and train commanders.
23. As part of the command skills section there is a recognition of the importance of developing a high level of situational awareness. In doing so, research conducted by the project team showed that level 1 and 2 commanders rarely achieved a high level of situational awareness. More commonly they acted in a rehearsed way, according to the situation presented to them and their prior experiences. In order to overcome this, a process of applying decision controls was tested and showed improved understanding of the situation. The use of decision controls

is likely to feature in the JESIP joint doctrine review. There is a strong argument for including decision controls in any command training.

24. There has been growing criticism of commanders failing to act or being risk averse when faced with situations where local doctrine sets hard and fast rules. This has introduced the need for commanders to act outside of policy in order to affect rescues. In order to give commanders the confidence to act outside of agreed procedures on occasion is encapsulated within . The need for operational discretion however, would be largely mitigated by the production of intelligent local procedures that, coupled with sound technical knowledge, would allow the commander to put in place appropriate control measures and carry out lifesaving rescues without breaching any local policies or procedures. The NOGP team are working with LFB Operational Procedures team to ensure LFB have flexible policies and procedures. This is probably the most difficult and important aspect of the revised guidance.
25. Whilst the operational policies are being revised within LFB the changes to tactical mode, risk assessment and evacuation procedures should also be incorporated, there will then be some fairly straight forward training required.
26. Roy Wilsher, as CFOA Director of Operations, has asked services to set a date for a single coordinated change to the new guidance. This was put to a forum of policy writers which represented every Fire and Rescue Service in England and Wales. The first working day of January was agreed, with Scotland changing ahead of this by one month.

#### Head of Legal and Democratic Services comments

The proposals set out in this report are consistent with the Authority's obligations under health and safety and fire and rescue services legislation. While the subject of the report includes compliance with guidance, and therefore no legal obligation to follow it, any departure from the guidance needs to be carefully risk assessed as justifiable in the circumstances.

#### Director of Finance and Contractual Services comments

This report includes the proposal that a computer based training package is developed and issued as mandatory training. This package will be developed by subject matter advisers working in liaison with Learning & Development and Babcock. Any resulting costs will be contained within existing budgets.

#### Sustainable development implications

There are no specific sustainability implications from this report.

#### Staff Side consultations undertaken

National FBU & FOA representatives were consulted on the National Operational Guidance – Incident Command through NOGP governance structure.

Local informal discussions have taken place and a meeting is arranged for 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

#### Equalities implications

At this stage, there are no specific equalities implications from this report. Any subsequent changes that may include equalities implications will be included in future reports.