

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: DOWDEN, MICHAEL

Age if under 18: OVER 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: STATION MANAGER

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This statement (consisting of 18 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

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Date: 16/03/2021

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded ☐ (supply witness details on rear)

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This police statement is further to the statement I made on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 regarding the fire at Grenfell Tower. On Wednesday 4th November 2020 I was interviewed as a witness at London Fire Brigade (LFB) Headquarters, Union Street by DC Amanda WEBSTER and CI Paul FULLER regarding training I have received from the LFB.

This statement does not seek to go into any further evidence around the events on the night, but instead details my training, experience and preparedness for the role of Incident Commander at the scene.

Prior to attending, the interview DC Amanda WEBSTER disclosed a number of topics to me through my solicitor Dylan MOSES, in order for me to prepare for the interview as a significant witness.

I have been asked about specific topics, which I shall deal with separately.

At the time of the fire at Grenfell Tower, I was a Watch Manager B. Since then, the LFB has changed the names of our roles to ranks, hence my occupation being shown as Station Officer at the top of this statement. The roles and rank (Watch Manager B and Station Officer) are the same, although the names are different. I still perform the same position as at the time of the fire. I have since been promoted to Temporary Station Commander.

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**Crew Manager Course.**

In 2008, I was promoted from Firefighter to Crew Manager. As a result of that promotion, I attended a four (4) week Incident Command course. The course was a long time ago and to the best of my recollection, the theory and Tactical Decision Exercise parts of the course were held at two (2) venues – Southwark training centre and Skyline House in Union Street (which at the time was a place where leadership courses were facilitated).

The course mainly dealt with Incident Command. It was run by the Leadership Management Development team of the LFB. The course consisted of theoretical and practical elements. The theory was based on LFB policies (only LFB candidates attended the training); I cannot remember the specific policies. The practical elements were Tactical Decision Exercises delivered by way of a desktop model. The models were either a clip of an incident on a computer or a physical model on a table; there were different small scale models of different premises such as transport and road networks. There was an assessor, who gave feedback on the Tactical Decision Exercises.

At the end of that, was a one (1) week residential course at the Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh in Gloucestershire. That week enabled us to put into practice the theory of Incident Command and practically apply it in a range of operational scenarios. The Fire Service College had a range of different venues to facilitate different scenarios, such as industrial, road traffic collisions (RTC), rail, domestic properties, High Rise and marine. Exercises were held in carbonaceous environments where structures were actually set on fire to simulate real life scenarios. At the end of each exercise, the instructors held a debrief which brought out the learning points.

There were around twelve (12) delegates on the course who took turns to act as Incident Commander. I recall that I performed the role of Incident Commander twice during the exercises, and on the other occasions, I assumed a supporting role.

At the start of the course, each delegate was assigned an assessor. At the end of the residential course, my assessor had a one to one debrief with me. The aim of the course is to develop the candidate and then pass

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back areas that are in need of improvement to local management. The course may identify skills that are in need of development, which are included in a local development programme back at the station.

I remember learning a lot during the course and it being a significant step from being a firefighter to a Crew Manager. I was engaged by the process as the learning opened my eyes to the concept of Incident Command. I returned to the station feeling confident in performing a Crew Manager role in charge of a single pumping appliance.

I passed the Incident Command course. Having completed the course, my Line Manager was responsible for assessing me through my development period of between nine to eighteen (9 – 18) months. During that period, I needed to evidence certain skills to satisfy my Line Manager that I was competent. My Line Manager (a Watch Manager A) would ensure my competency by using eight (8) Role Maps and I would have to document my evidence against these.

### *Role Maps*

Role Maps are documented in my Personal Development Record (PDR). I recall for my Crew Manager role my PDR was a hard copy file to which I no longer have access. Role Maps are not specific to the LFB, they are used by other Fire and Rescue Services, they are a national concept set out by National Occupational Standards. They are used to establish competency for each role. At every level of seniority you have to provide evidence against these Role Maps to show that you are competent for that role. The Role Maps for Crew Managers are a combination of firefighter and Watch Manager competencies.

As set out above, as a Crew Manager you are assigned an assessor, who would be your Line Manager (a Watch Manager). If your Line Manager believes that you are showing competency against a role map you will progress onto the next stage - this is a formal assessment period. This involves your assessor monitoring you operationally and at the station. A review meeting of your performance will take place and you will be provided with feedback. If you have provided all the relevant evidence against the skills on your Role Map then you will be signed off as competent. For Crew Manager I believe there were eight competencies, which were as follows:

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F1 Inform and educate your community to improve awareness of safety matters

FF8 Contribute to fire safety solutions to minimise risks to your community

WM1 Lead the work of teams and individuals to achieve their objectives

WM2 Maintain activities to meet requirements

WM4 Take responsibility for effective performance

WM5 Support the development of teams and individuals

WM6 Investigate and report on events to inform future practice

WM7 Lead and support people to resolve operational incidents

These Role Maps are there to ensure that you are competent to perform your role as a Crew Manager. I recall that this process took approximately nine (9) to eighteen (18) months to complete.

Due to the passage of time, I cannot recall whether any development points were raised with my performance, as it has been a number of years since I went through this process. If any areas of development points had been raised, I understand that these would have been entered on my PDR and this would have indicated that I was not ready for a formal assessment. At a review meeting I would have reviewed with my Line Manager my progress through my development in order to determine whether I was ready for my formal assessment.

I found the development process to be supportive and focused on individuals' personal development. When I was a Crew Manager, I was based at a single appliance station. As a result, the Watch Manager that I was assigned would attend all incidents that I did and therefore was able to directly observe and then provide feedback. As I explained previously, feedback is recorded in my PDR and there is a facility in the Personal Development Log (PDL) for documenting formal feedback. All PDLs submitted by the candidate will be reviewed by the assessor and addressed in the review meeting.

After I had successfully completed this Crew Manager process I do not recall being appointed a formal mentor. Once you are signed off as competent in relation to your Role Map the assessor/mentoring role comes to an end unless a conduct/performance issue arises in the future. I recall that for the Watch Managers role there was previously a Performance Review Development System in place however this is no longer used. I am aware that the LFB also has a mentoring system for new firefighters that join.

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**Supervisory Management Incident Command Refresher Course.**

Once I had been signed off from my development period, I was required to attend a two (2) day Supervisory Management Incident Command Refresher course (SMIRC) every two (2) years.

Courses were allocated centrally and I received e-mails with joining instructions. The point of the SMIRC course was to refresh your Incident Command skills.

At the beginning of the course, there was a small section of theory consisting of a knowledge check. The remainder of the course was similar to the practical live exercises in my promotion course. You would play the role of a Crew Manager in an exercise, and would have an assessor present, before being provided with feedback.

If any risk critical points were identified, the delegate would need to re-take the course. Any small development points were sent to the Line Manager to be dealt with locally. The last date of my Incident Command revalidation/refresher course was 15th September 2020. I scored 100 % on the practical exercise and 95% on the knowledge check.

The date of my last refresher course before Grenfell Tower was 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017. This course was titled "Operational Command Skills Training Maintenance" and was held at Harrow Training Centre by a Babcock trainer. There was not a pass or fail element to this course.

**Watch Manager Course.**

In 2010, I was promoted to Watch Manager A.

I attended a week-long residential course at the Fire Service College in Moreton-In-Marsh. The course was similar to the course I attended in 2008, but this time, as I was a role higher, it involved taking more responsibility and dealing with scenarios which required up to four (4) pumps. To the best of my

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recollection, there was a knowledge check at the beginning of the course followed by practical exercises where delegates would apply Incident Command principles.

Following the residential course, the remainder of the training was broken down into “block options” which comprised one (1) or two (2) day courses at Southwark Training Centre. From memory, they focussed on management styles and development of staff.

When I returned to station, my assessor was now my Station Manager, so I underwent a similar development period as before, just a role higher.

I left my Incident Commander courses feeling that they were beneficial in preparing me for the role of Incident Commander.

I attended the Incident Command courses whilst they were run by the LFB and since then, Babcock has taken over running the courses at their Incident Command suites at Harrow and Beckton. The Babcock courses are computer simulated scenarios rather than the live situations (such as those I experienced at Moreton-In-Marsh). In my view the live exercises give a firefighter going into Incident Command better preparation for the role.

### **High Rise Fire Fighting – Incident command experience.**

My first experience of a high rise fire was at Madingley House on the Cambridge Estate in Kingston. I was a Crew Manager at Chiswick Fire Station and we were mobilised when pumps had been made twenty (20) - the incident was protracted. The fire had spread from one compartment to a couple of other compartments. By the time I arrived, the incident was under control.

I was initially tasked with managing a Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) crew at roof level but I was not FRU trained and so I ultimately played a minimal role at the scene as there were a number of resources in attendance. I did not undertake an Incident Command role or an active firefighter role.

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In August 2016, I attended a High Rise fire at Shepherds Court in Shepherds Bush Green. I was mobilised when pumps had been made eight (8) and I undertook a supporting role, taking information from members of the public and handing it on to other senior officers. I was not part of any debrief process.

I also attended a fire at Trellick Tower in April 2017. I was assigned the role of Fire Sector Commander at that fire.

As set out above, I was not Incident Commander at any of the previously mentioned high rise incidents. The fire at Grenfell Tower was the first time that I had operationally performed the role of Incident Commander at a High Rise fire.

At my interview, I was asked of my knowledge of a letter sent to councils about rapid fire spread at incidents, written by AC Daly. I was not aware of this letter and have only since been made aware of it through the Grenfell Tower Inquiry process.

#### **High Rise station based training.**

At a local level, I have regularly been involved in High Rise training. As a firefighter I received station based training and when I was promoted, particularly to Watch Manager, I delivered training. Our station diaries are updated centrally, and tell me what subjects to deliver to my crews.

There is a Development and Maintenance Operational Professionalism (DAMOP) process for station based training.

Before Babcock took over training, it would have been the responsibility of officers to work through policies and deliver training according to the policy/training document. Up until June 2017, I had not received any training on how to deliver station based training. There was ownership put on station based officers to manage, populate and deliver local training.

Each borough was responsible for designing its own training plan. It was then my responsibility to find the appropriate policies to deliver in accordance with that training plan dependant on the subject that I

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was asked to teach. From there I was expected to use a combination of my own experiences and the policy to deliver the training to crews.

High Rise policy is detailed in Policy Note 633 (PN 633). The station based training on High Rise firefighting is theory based and includes procedures such as what to do en route to an incident, on arrival, task delegation and what we need to have in place to implement a safe system of work. It is very difficult to do a full high rise practical, as we do not have the facility at the station. Most stations, including North Kensington, have a drill tower, but those are mainly suitable for practising ladder and hose work. I'm not aware of a station based tower in London where you can apply a practical high rise firefighting drill, because of how they are constructed.

Since the fire at Grenfell Tower, the station training structure has changed and instead of Station Officers relying on policy, there are now pre prepared Computer Based Training (CBT) packages which we deliver.

### **High Rise practical exercises.**

#### **Tolworth Tower.**

I have been involved in two separate high rise practical exercises in my career.

The first was one I managed was at Tolworth Tower when I was a Watch Manager A at Surbiton. The tower was a commercial premises and had a number of unused open plan floors.

I cannot remember whether I was requested to organise the exercise or whether I took it upon myself to do so. I expect there will be an entry in my station diary of the exercise.

There are difficulties in organising such exercises as you need to find an off-station venue that is willing to host the training event and is vacant. There is a lot of administrative work in planning an exercise, such as preparing risk assessments to provide safe training, which need to be submitted to senior management and Health and Safety before the exercise.

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At the Tolworth Tower training exercise, I used four (4) pumping appliances and a Command Unit. It was not possible to use real fire and so I used the training for officers to practice their Incident Command skills, how to implement PN 633, and for firefighters to practice their search and rescue procedures. At the exercise, we had a bridgehead, Entry Control Officers, and safety officers. The exercise did not include Control Room communication, covering jets or FSG procedure.

I have provided officers with a copy of "4 Pump Exercise Tolworth Tower" which I now exhibit as MTD/4 and the risk assessment for Tolworth Tower which I now exhibit MTD/5.

**Hammersmith Fire Station.**

In 2015 or 2016, I was part of a Back to Basics training exercise at Hammersmith Fire Station.

The exercise was a High Rise training scenario with different elements throughout the day.

I was posted at North Kensington at the time and our Borough line management led the exercise. I'm not sure as to why the day was arranged, whether it was centrally tasked or was the idea of local management.

We used the drill tower in the yard at Hammersmith Fire Station and during the day, there was a knowledge test, a Tactical Decision Exercise and a practical exercise. I will speak about the tactical exercise in the FSG section later in this statement.

My team, North Kensington red watch, was taken off the run for the day and we all attended the training, as did the other stations in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. I performed the role of Incident Commander for the day.

From my memory, I recall the tower represented a hotel and the purpose of the drill was for me, as an Incident Commander, to set up the Bridgehead at the base of the tower. Two (2) floors above that was the fire floor and the aim was to test and practice the setting up of a safe system of work on the Bridgehead. There were two (2) appliances and we used entry control officers and boards and Breathing Apparatus

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crews. I cannot remember this exercise including search and rescue due to the size limitations of the drill tower.

The exercise did not include all of the elements that may arise at a High Rise fire. It is difficult to simulate a realistic High Rise response on a drill tower due to the small size of it. To the best of my recollection, the exercise did not include a Command Unit nor did it include the functions of an Incident Command Pump (ICP) or the Control Room. As set out above, due to limitations of the venue we did not practice having to move a Bridgehead or what to do if communications fail such as radios not working.

**7 (2) (d) Familiarisation visits.**

Section 7 (2) (d) is a section within the Fire Service Rescue Act 2004. The system exists in order for crews to familiarise themselves with a building and also gather operational intelligence on it.

The system allows us to gather information and load it onto the LFB Operational Risk Database (ORD). With appropriate training and supervision, any officer or firefighter can update the ORD. Guidance on the process is provided through Policy Note 800 (Management of Operational Risk Information). There is a checklist in PN 800 and you can also print out the pre-existing ORD entry for the building to identify the risks and tactical plans that have been identified previously.

There is a matrix scoring system and depending on how high a building scores, will determine how frequently the building is visited. Visits are managed through our station diary and come into our work queue. From there officers are expected to make contact with the premises and inform them of our visit.

Once a visit is conducted, risks are loaded onto the ORD. For high rise residential premises, crews could use an Electronic Personal Information Plate (EPIP) to see a snap shot of the building including dimensions, the footprint, stairs, entrances, fire lifts and hydrant and dry riser locations. For some reason, there was not an EPIP for Grenfell Tower although I do not know the reasons for that.

Before the fire at Grenfell Tower, the risks to high rise buildings were considered to be low. High rise buildings would have been subject to PN 800 and a premises risk assessment taken. If the building scored

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low on the risk assessment, it may not have had a full ORD tactical plan. However, if buildings are high rise and residential, an EPIP should automatically be triggered.

I learnt how to conduct the visits through PN 800, familiarity with the ORD and practical experience of the 7(2)(d) process. PN 800 contains details on how to carry out these visits. Station based training, delivered as part of the DAMOP process and the station diary would include these topics along with other policy notes.

The information collected on the ORD might also be considered within an Incident Command refresher exercise which would relate to a high rise premises.

Prior to Grenfell Tower I felt that I had adequate knowledge to conduct 7(2)(d) visits from my past learning and experience. Knowing the importance of the visits, I am now of the view that formal training on the practical application of PN 800 and PN 633 to a 7(2) (d) visit would be beneficial and this should be for officers and firefighters. I understand that there are new training packages addressing this topic which will be in the form of CBT packages.

### **Performance Review Of Command.**

A Performance Review of Command (PRC) is a process where all Incident Commanders and significant support officers of an incident meet to scrutinise performance. PRCs are mandatory for incidents involving six (6) pumps or above, at the discretion of the Deputy Assistant Commissioner, or incidents subject to a Senior Accident Investigation. They should be completed within twenty –eight (28) days of the incident.

The process will identify both positive points and development points. The process is chaired by a senior officer, who is supported by an Operation Review Team (ORT) officer who had either been attached to the incident or briefed around it.

During the PRC, officers are given the opportunity to explain their actions and go through their thought processes. If a trend is recognised, learning can be implemented by the organisation, often communicated

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by way of the Operational News bulletin (a bulletin which comes out quarterly). Operational News is a way of facilitating identified organisational learning to station based staff. If an Operational News bulletin requires additional training, the process goes through the normal station diary to ensure that it is delivered and audited. In addition, if the learning is significant, the PRC can trigger a change on policy. However this is a rigorous process as changes in policy need to go through quality assurance and other LFB departments.

Any comments from a PRC are put on the Incident Monitoring Process Database and feedback can also be entered on Individual Training Record (ITR).

Prior to Grenfell, the only PRC that I've been involved in was when I was based at Surbiton Fire Station and attended an eight (8) pump office fire in Kingston town centre. I was an Incident Commander. I found the process supportive, it was not an uncomfortable process but it can be daunting if you are the most junior officer in the room.

From this particular PRC I received positive feedback on a number of items, including my situational awareness and resource allocation. Also I received positive feedback for my use of a firefighter who had previous knowledge of the building and the support I provided to the Sector Commander during the incident. In terms of possible areas of improvement, I was encouraged to consider the validity of sources that I used; this comment related to information I had received from a passer-by. I recall the PRC dissected the decision making around these points in the PRC meeting, and did not require any further personal development follow up with my Line Manager. I had the opportunity to review and reflect on this feedback through my ITR.

### **Specialist roles and Tags.**

Tags are defined support role at a senior officer level (from Station Manager and above), and can include a Fire Safety Officer, Hazardous Material and Environmental Protection Officer (HMEPO), Tactical Rescue Advisor, Bulk Firefighting Media, Press Officer and National Inter-Liaison Officers. In order to obtain a Tag, senior officers are trained in the specific subject.

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Prior to Grenfell, I do not recall having received any training on how to recognise which officers had which Tags at an incident. However, I would have identified them by their role specific tabard. Additionally, the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) list will ensure officers with the appropriate skills and Tags are deployed to the scene as an incident gets larger. So, for example, at Grenfell, when I made pumps six (6), the PDA system would have automatically deployed a Fire Safety Officer.

**Communication – Radios.**

As a Watch Manger, I am equipped with a fire ground radio, which enables me to communicate with crews on the fire ground. I do not have an Airwave radio.

My communication with Control is either by way of the ICP or via the Command Unit at larger incidents.

As a level 1 commander, dealing with four (4) pumps fires, not having an Airwave radio is not a problem. I have the resources to staff an ICP and the system of using an ICP works well.

At an event such as Grenfell Tower, access to a main scheme Airwave radio, as an Incident Commander, would absolutely have been beneficial. With the benefit of hindsight, it would have been useful for me to have had access to a main scheme Airwave radio at Grenfell Tower because the fire escalated rapidly, to the point where I was in charge of a bigger fire than a Watch Manager should be. Because of the rapid escalation of the fire, I was not able to go to the ICP and therefore an Airwave radio to Control would have been helpful so that I would not have had to remove myself from my Command position to communicate a message.

There are two policies, which cover radio communication, Policy Note 518 (Messages from Incidents) and Policy Note 488 (Incident Communications). PN 518 gives us an understanding of how to structure communication and the types of messages we need to give.

I have knowledge and understanding of those two policies, which provide detail on the main Incident Command channels. Channel 1 is the main channel that facilitates the traffic on the fire ground, channel 6

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facilitates the BA traffic when the traffic on channel 1 becomes busy and channel 3 is used for specific tasks.

I cannot remember receiving practising training on how to respond when radio communications fail (such as leaky feeders and repeaters). My knowledge is gained from familiarising myself with the following policies: PN 488 (dealing with Incident Command communication and structures of messages) and PN 760 (dealing with the use of telemetry and how the BA sets communicate).

We are not supposed to take our personal mobile phones onto a fire ground but each pump does have its own mobile phone for us to use. My experience of the reliability of communication and radios prior to Grenfell Tower are that fire ground hand held radios are sufficient for transmitting a small amount of radio traffic but are less reliable transmitting over long distances either horizontally or vertically. Radio transmissions can be affected by solid structures such as concrete. We do have equipment that can increase and boost radio signals at larger or more complex incidents or if a building premise requires an increased signal using a leaky feeder. I do not have experience of using a leaky feeder in an operational incident. I cannot recall any particular operational incidents when this happened before Grenfell Tower. It is not uncommon for BA communications sets to fail at an incident and I believe this was highlighted on a number of occasions before Grenfell Tower. I do not have any further knowledge on this, although I understand that this is currently under review and a project team is looking to replace the current BA communication sets. I am unaware when this is due for completion.

**Communications.**

Prior to Grenfell, as a level 1 Incident Commander I had not used CSS (Command Support System) operationally to run an incident because it is intended to be a support mechanism for larger scale incidents with more resources in attendance, which usually have level two (2) and three (3) commanders in charge. Level 1 Incident Commanders generally use the ICP and run incidents from the fire ground. Level 1 Incident Commanders are not expected to be an Incident Commander of beyond a four (4) pump incidents for a protracted period, where the CSS would be expected to assist the Incident Commander.

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I've had no additional training on CSS aside from the Command Support policy note, nor have I had practical training on how a Command Unit could facilitate Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls. As a result of that, it is difficult for me to say whether such training would have been of help at Grenfell.

I've been asked about the communication loop between Control, Incident Commander and Command Unit. I have an awareness of the policies behind the communication loop such as the questions Control will ask of a caller, the messages that I need to send back to Control and the radio channels. PN 518 has given me an understanding of the messages that I need to communicate back to the Control Room.

My personal development and training to become a Watch Manager would have included training on having a joined up approach on how messages and information is transferred from the incident ground to Control and the structure required for that transformation, but beyond that there would not have been additional formal training.

**Lifts.**

In PN 633 (High Rise Firefighting), there's a section about lifts and my knowledge of fire lifts comes from that PN 633. I've not received any practical or face to face training around the use of lifts. There are a number of types of lifts across London and so it is difficult to do formal training on lifts. When I visit premises, I make myself aware of how the lifts operate.

At an incident, the plan would be that the LFB control the firefighting lift. A firefighter would operate the lift and use it for transporting personnel and equipment up to floors on a building. The firefighter would be at the Bridgehead and assist with taking any casualties to the ground. Taking control of the lift prevents occupants from using it, particularly above the fire floor. Lifts should not be used above the Bridgehead.

I cannot remember having had any training around the lift express keys. They are held on the appliances and are not personally issued. Keys occasionally go missing and there has been a recent instruction from the LFB that crews should not buy their own lift express keys. There is a difference between a fireman's lift and a firefighting lift. The differences I am aware of are that firefighting lifts must have fire

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protection, a weight limit and an uninterrupted power supply - a fireman's lift does not have the same specifications. I am aware of the difference between firefighting and fireman's lifts. I did not receive training on the different types of lifts prior to the fire at Grenfell Tower, however, I understand that it has been included in the new CBT packages on High Rise firefighting.

I do not know what type of lift was fitted at Grenfell Tower and how this can affect the lift capabilities.

**Operational Discretion.**

**To the best of my recollection, I have not received training on Operational Discretion during the Incident Command courses I have attended, however, there was a Babcock led station-based training session at North Kensington on the subject. A Babcock trainer came to our station and delivered a half-day session on Operational Discretion to my Watch through a CBT package in the form of a PowerPoint. Babcock trained us on when Operational Discretion should be applied, when you need to step outside procedures and how decisions are captured.**

I had previous knowledge of Operational Discretion as there is policy on it and appliances have key decision logs on board. In my experience, the policy is not widely used. The Babcock training reminded me of the principles in policy.

I arrived at North Kensington in February 2015, and I think the Babcock session was delivered before Grenfell.

Apart from the Babcock session, I cannot remember any other theoretical or practical training around Operational Discretion.

Prior to Grenfell, I had not used Operational Discretion at an incident. I would be confident to step outside of policy and I have the skills to justify my actions, however, it is generally not promoted by the LFB for officers to step outside of policy, as policies are intended to provide the framework and safe systems of work which protect firefighters and members of the public. I believe it is a difficult area for

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the LFB as we are as an organisation heavily led by policy, so the concept of asking officers to step outside of policy at an incident can become an anomaly.

I do not recall colleagues discussing Operational Discretion on any of the Watches I have served on. I do not consider that this is a cultural issue as such, but rather it is due to a lack of awareness as it is assumed that firefighters and officers will always follow policy when at an incident. The concept of Operational Discretion is not promoted by LFB.

As stated earlier I attended a training session on Operational Discretion delivered by Babcock. This training could be enhanced by using situational examples which set out when it can be appropriate to step outside of policy. It is important for officers to have experience to draw upon when making these decisions; this could be included in refresher or revalidation training. Training could be particularly helpful for Level 1 Incident Commanders who attend an incident in the most dynamic stages and where there is a possibility you are under resourced.

**Bridgehead and Sectorisation.**

The incident ground is divided up through sectorisation. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to put the sectors in place. Sectors include the Fire Sector, which includes the Bridgehead.

I have received training in sectorisation both at local station level and on my Incident Command Courses. There is a standalone sectorisation policy. Sectorisation applies to a number of different incidents, including incidents at high rise buildings.

As stated previously, I was the Fire Sector Commander at the Trellick Tower incident (as a Watch Manager at the time) and so my role would have involved management of resources at the Bridgehead.

When I arrived, the initial response was already there and I was assigned the role of Fire Sector Commander and to communicate with the Incident Commander that we had our safe system of work in place.

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I have not assumed the role of Fire Sector Commander during my practical Incident Command training. Bridgehead training is included in the on arrival tactics within station based training, which includes the minimum resource requirements for setting up the incident and a safe system of work, which includes PN 633. The training includes, but is not limited to, setting up of the Entry Control Officer and Entry Control Boards. The Entry Control Officer is responsible for the safety of BA wearers as information is being captured on the Entry Control Board.

Bridgeheads are incorporated into practical training exercises. In addition I have delivered the theoretical training involving bridgeheads at the station. There was no specific course that covers the role of Fire Sector Commander, however, the role of Fire Sector Commander is featured in Incident Command exercises. There is local training which covers the PN 633, which includes setting up the Bridgehead.

At the Bridgehead, there is also a Forward Information Board (FIB), which captures casualty information. They were introduced after a fire at Lakanal House. However, I understand that FIBs were not designed to capture the scale of FSG calls we encountered at the fire at Grenfell Tower.

After the fire at Lakanal House, a training package was developed, which was drafted centrally and sent to stations to deliver. The training was based on a time line of the fire, the decisions made by crews and included Bridgehead issues. During this training you could pause and have a group discussion based on the different points of the timeline. The training also included the introduction of the FIBs which had been incorporated into policy. I think I was at Surbiton at the time and I delivered the PowerPoint package to my Watch. This has now been incorporated into DAMOP training.

There is no specific additional training on moving the Bridgehead nor on the limitations of writing on walls. I do not recall any realism introduced into training such as smoke spreading.

**Incident Command Pump.**

The ICP is the focal point of incidents up to four (4) pumps. Once a Command Unit arrives, they take over the role of the ICP.

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I have delivered station based training on the set up and use of the ICP and although I have been part of practical exercise which included ICPs, I've not attended training that involved the Control Room.

At the beginning of a shift there is a roll call and during that, a crew member is delegated the post of ICP operative at two (2) pump incidents. Ideally there are two separate functions for the two appliances in initial attendance at an incident. The first appliance will provide water to the fire ground, which creates noise, and because of that, the ICP will be run from the second appliance.

Appliances have a main scheme radio on board, enabling them to communicate with Control. At larger incidents, when a Command Unit arrives, the Command Unit operative is briefed by the Incident Commander. Previous messages are handed to the Command Unit operator and they take over the role of the ICP and communications with Control. This is in policy and I have received training on this.

I have quite a lot of experience in the use of the ICP. I use it at most incidents we go to on a day to day basis.

**Brief - Debrief – Handover – Decision Making Model.**

Briefing, debriefing and handover is factored in through the Decision Making Model (DMM).

The model enables me to supply the correct information to the officer who is taking over from me. It includes the objectives and the plan to achieve those within safe systems of work.

Training on the DMM is heavily incorporated both within the Incident Command courses and regularly features in station based training.

There is a flow chart diagram of the DMM, which guides the reader through the steps to making decisions. I carry a laminated copy of it in my tunic should I need to refer to it; this was not an official aid memoire issued to staff but a guide I created myself.

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In addition, LFB policies can be accessed through the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) on appliances. So if I need to refresh my memory on a specific policy, I can access them through the MDT.

I had not heard of the National Decision Control Process at the time of the Grenfell Tower fire.

As a Level 1 commander I've not been trained to write down my decision making process and I do not capture my decision making on the incident ground. When I declare a tactical mode, the message that is sent through the ICP to Control captures that decision, but apart from that, there is not a decision log that I've been trained to complete. Similarly, at the time of the Grenfell Tower fire I had not been trained to record a handover between Incident Commanders.

**Monitoring Officer.**

Up until May last year, when role to rank came in I knew the purpose and role of a Monitoring Officer, but I had not received training around it. The attendance of a Monitoring Officer forms part of the PDA so the system automatically deploys one at certain stages of an incident.

*Role to Rank*

Role to rank was a change in the management/officer framework. We previously operated within a role-based framework, and we have now returned to a rank-based system. For example we now refer to "leading firefighters" rather than "Crew Managers". I believe that this change has come about because there was a large reliance on standby staff which was proving difficult. Under the role system there was a role of "Crew Manager +" who had been deemed competent to be in charge of a station and do the job of a Watch Manager in his/her absence. I recall that there was only a very small pool of these individuals and if they are on standby regularly the resource becomes limited. The change of structure to a rank – based system provides more individuals who can adopt the supervisory roles if necessary. This was an organisational change and I can only speak from my personal experience.

**Declaration of a Major Incident.**

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I cannot recall having training on my Incident Command courses around the decision to call a Major Incident. I have though, delivered some METHANE message training at station level.

There is a Major Incident policy, which goes into the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) principles. As a level 1 Incident Commander, it is not something I'm trained on. It is a more strategic area for level 2 and above commanders.

Multi-agency training exercises do happen but I've not attended one.

**Fire Survival Guidance.**

Prior to the fire at Grenfell Tower, I had not had operational experience of dealing with FSG.

FSG is covered in Policy Note 790 (PN 790) (Fire Survival Guidance Calls). I cannot remember either delivering or receiving any CBT training packages on FSG.

I cannot remember managing FSG on any of my Incident Command courses, however, at the Back To Basics training exercise at Hammersmith there was a Tactical Decision Exercise where I assumed the role of Incident Commander and was tested around my tactical decisions. I remember the scenario being a high rise and that it included FSG. From memory, I was required to deal with two (2) FSG calls. It was a classroom based exercise with my staff taken to different areas of the fire station. The information came from Control to myself by way of handheld radio and I was required to manage my resources and send them to the Bridgehead in order to deal with the FSG calls. I have not received any practical training involving more than two (2) FSG calls.

Separately, I ran a small scale exercise when I was at Surbiton fire station, which involved two (2) appliances and used the Control Information Forms to deal with FSG calls that we simulated. I now produce a copy of this briefing sheet "3 Pump Exercise at Surbiton" as exhibit MTD/6. I have delivered training on the Control Information Forms, regarding what it looks like, references in PN 790 and the connection between the FIB and the Control Information Forms. Training on information from PN 790 would directly correlate to the Control Information Form.

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I've been asked about the role of FSG Coordinator. That post is mentioned in PN 790 but is a role for a Station Commander or above who is deployed as a result of the PDA. As a level 1 Incident Commander, I would not have exposure to the FSG Coordinator role and I do not know whether the role attracts a Tag for senior officers.

**Stay Put.**

Stay put is not an LFB policy, however, it is a principle referenced in the High Rise policy (PN 633) where it is referenced that stay put guidance may need to be revoked.

At the time of the fire at Grenfell Tower, I had an awareness that stay put guidance could be revoked but I was not trained as to how to come to that decision or how to implement it. Nor had I had any training as to how to communicate to residents any change of stay put advice.

**Evacuation.**

I've not had any operational experience of a mass evacuation or emergency rescue of a high rise residential building prior to Grenfell. I have had local station based training around the policy on the phased evacuation of office buildings.

I am aware that the responsible person for a high rise building may have knowledge of evacuation plans from my Incident Command training. Any information gathered from the responsible person should filter into your DMM and the incident plan.

I've been told that my training record shows an emergency evacuation and tactical withdrawal theory session. That applies to a firefighter emergency where a crew member is unaccounted for. It is not related to mass evacuation of a domestic building.

**Compartmentation and Building Construction.**

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There was a compartment firefighting package within my Incident Command courses but that was about firefighting tactics in a compartment, where the fire behaves as expected. Compartment failure is referenced in the PN 633, which deals with minor compartmentation failures. The fire at Grenfell Tower involved mass compartmentation failure and building failure of a scale that I had not seen before.

I have operational experience of a high rise fire where the fire has breached compartments and travelled out of the compartment of origin. However, I have not been trained on how to tackle a fire of total compartment and building failure which results in fire spread throughout a building, nor have I had any operational experience in dealing with such a failure. I understand that the LFB has developed a mass evacuation policy, which includes triggers for when there may be an opportunity for a mass evacuation, and sets out the safe system of work to be implemented.

We are taught modern methods of building construction, particularly timber framed buildings and sandwich panels, installed on industrial sites. But I was not trained to identify nor how to deal with flammable cladding panels.

I've had theory training on the Coanda effect where the higher you go up, the more opportunity the wind has of pushing fire back into the building. However to practically apply this in training is difficult as you cannot easily simulate this effect.

Again, PN 633 details fire behaviour and development in high rise buildings but I've not had any specific practical training nor any exercises on the Coanda effect. It is a concept I am aware of and I understand how to respond to it through PN 633.

I can confirm that I was not aware that "Coanda effect" was on ORD for Grenfell Tower in 2015.

I've been asked about a presentation called "Tall Building Facades". Before the Grenfell Tower fire, I had not heard of this presentation but I was told about it during the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

I can also confirm that I had not been trained or informed about incidents abroad such as international high rise fires.

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I have been asked to clarify whether I feel that the LFB informed their staff sufficiently about how building construction and subsequent failing could/would affect rapid fire spread. There are policies in place, but as stated previously, these cover areas such as building construction and potential failings related to timber frames. For example Policy Note 818 covers "Fires in Timber Framed Buildings under Construction". PN 633 notes that an Incident Commander should consider the impact of building materials and building design in the information gathering stage of an incident and I have received station based training on both PN 818 and PN 633. However I have not received training in relation to rapid fire spread through a high rise residential building. It was not a known risk at the time of the Grenfell Fire and therefore I would not have expected to receive training on an area that had not been contemplated as a risk.

**Search and Rescue.**

I am well trained as to how to complete systematic searches of premises through my regular BA training. The BA refresher training courses include realistic sessions on control procedures and the risks arising from using BA including putting you in a carbonaceous environment. The training does not include dealing with people who have vulnerabilities such as residents with mobility issues, elderly and children. The training does not address that search and rescue may differ in a high rise building with more residents in comparison to in a residential house.

**Conclusion.**

My training as a whole was sufficient to carry out my role as a level 1 Incident Commander managing an incident of up to four (4) pumps. I have always felt comfortable managing situations at that level. I was not trained to be a level 1 Incident Commander in charge of a twenty five (25) pump fire with catastrophic building failure such as happened at Grenfell Tower.

I am told by the officers taking this statement that Commissioner ROE has said since Grenfell of Incident Command Training;

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“We’d simply not prepared them as incident Commanders for the circumstances and that is what we must do now”.

I agree that is a true statement as we were not prepared to deal with that unforeseen risk. For me as an individual, I had no prior knowledge or experience of the risk the cladding and building posed and so could not have foreseen what actually happened. However, now that the unforeseen has happened we need to adapt and consider how we would respond to a similar incident in future.

At Grenfell Tower we did not have the policies or procedures to allow an effective operational plan at an unforeseen event. There was no training to teach me how to respond to a situation like Grenfell.

In my view the policies and procedures that we had in place at the time of Grenfell were sufficient to deal with what we knew at that time. For example, the policies to deal with a single compartment fire in a high rise were sufficient. There are now more specific training packages, whereas before there was the process and the policy and it was down to local interpretation. There are now more guided, specific packages. As I have set out above, those learnings were captured through my understanding of policies and procedures.

There was no training to teach me how to respond to a catastrophic, mass compartmentation and building failure in a residential premises like Grenfell.

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