



DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Response Policy

The Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (DWFRA) is the combined fire and rescue authority for its area, as defined within sections 1 and 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This document is the Response Policy statement for the Authority. It is underpinned by a set of procedures.

Our core response functions

In accordance with sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Fire and Rescue Authority will fulfil its legal requirements to make provision for the purposes of:

- (a) Extinguishing fires in our area, and
- (b) Protecting life and property in the event of fires in our area.
- (c) Rescuing people in the event of road traffic accidents in our area;
- (d) Protecting people from serious harm, to the extent that it considers reasonable to do so, in the event of road traffic accidents in our area.
- (e) Any other function conferred on us by order from the Secretary of State.

Providing people and training people to respond to emergency calls

We will fulfil our legal requirements under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to secure the provision of all personnel to meet all normal requirements and to train those personnel through our Employee Development policy. We will ensure our response arrangements are effectively and efficiently delivered by competent staff with the necessary skills and equipment to react to the incidents that arise from all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect our communities. This includes those of a cross-border, multi-authority and/or national nature.

We will assist with the training of community and voluntary groups to assist them in preparing for, dealing with and recovering from emergency situations, for example providing Water Awareness training for community Flood Wardens and volunteer search and rescue groups.

Providing services and equipment to respond to emergency calls

We will fulfil our legal requirements under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to secure the provision of services and equipment to meet all normal requirements through our Asset

Management policy.

Handling emergency calls and summoning personnel

We will fulfil our legal requirements under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel. We will do this through our Service Control Centre (SCC) at Potterne and through working in partnership with Devon and Somerset and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authorities through the Networked Fire Control Services Partnership (NFCSP). The three FRAs operate one single mobilising and control system from control centres in Exeter, Eastleigh and Potterne. This arrangement provides us with a modern and resilient means of handling calls and summoning personnel.

Preplanning for specific risk sites

We will fulfil our legal requirements under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to make arrangements for obtaining information needed for the purpose of fulfilling our functions under sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Act, and in line with the national guidance document 'CFRA – Fire and Rescue Service Operational Guidance (Operational Risk Information)'. We will do so through a risk-based approach. Information will be sought and site visits may be carried out to pre-plan for specific risks within our area. Those sites that present the highest risks to public and/or firefighter safety will be looked at more frequently and where appropriate with partner agencies to ensure comprehensive joined up planning is undertaken.

Salvaging property and limiting damage to property resulting from our actions

We will meet our legal requirements under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to make arrangements for ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to prevent or limit damage to property resulting from action taken in fulfilling our functions under section 7, 8 or 9 of the Act. We will do this by ensuring staff have appropriate equipment and training to undertake salvage duties and where appropriate will exercise salvage plans with partners such as the National Trust for heritage premises.

Using our resources in other ways to save lives or to reduce harm to people, animals, or the environment

In accordance with section 11 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, we may take any action we consider appropriate in response to an event or situation that causes or is likely to cause one or more individuals to die, be injured or become ill or that causes or is likely to cause harm to the environment (including the life and health of plants and animals). We may also take any action we consider appropriate for the purpose of enabling action to be taken in response to such an event or situation.

In accordance with section 12 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, we may provide the services of any persons employed by it to any person for any purpose that appears to the authority to be appropriate. This can be outside as well as within the authority's area.

Working with the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) we will provide an initial response to medical emergencies on behalf of, and in areas identified by SWASFT. This arrangement is on a pay-as-you-go basis funded by SWASFT and aims to remain cost neutral to us.

Responding to incidents effectively and efficiently with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Authorities

In accordance with sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, we will secure mutual assistance from and will also provide mutual assistance to Royal Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Avon Fire and Rescue Authorities.

We work in partnership with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority through the Networked Fire Control Services Partnership (NFCSP). A partnership agreement has been signed with those authorities that includes a concept of operations. The concept of operations has now been put into practice and the nearest available asset from any of the NFCSP FRAs will be mobilised to the scene of the incident. This provides the quickest possible response to the incident to improve public and firefighter safety.

Working with others who employ firefighters in our area

In accordance with section 15 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, DWFRA may enter into and maintain arrangements with organisations that employ firefighters in the DWFRA area to discharge our core functions.

Having regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework

In accordance with section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, we will meet our legal requirement to have regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework when carrying out our functions. The Framework sets out the following priorities for fire and rescue authorities:

1. Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their area faces, make provision for protection and prevention activities and respond to incidents appropriately.

We will do this through our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) as captured in our Community Safety Plan. Whilst we will make provision to respond to all normal requirements, as required under the Fire and Rescue Services Act, there are certain circumstances and risks that we would not deem to be normal requirements. Two examples of these are:

- Incidents in mines or other underground risks - we will work closely with Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) for Mines and with site owners and will make clear what we will and won't do at incidents through our preplanning for the specific sites in our area.
- Incidents at sea – we do not attend incidents that are considered to be 'At Sea', i.e. a vessel which is afloat or at anchor in the tidal waterways or on the shore below the low water mark, excluding those alongside established docks or jetties. For vessels alongside established docks and jetties we have no statutory power to extinguish fires on board, nor a 'legal right' to embark a vessel without the Ship's Captain's authorisation. If a Ship's Captain's authority cannot be gained then we will protect surrounding property/vessels and carry out environmental protection.

2. Work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service

Through our Community and Partnership strategies we will work closely with partners to ensure we mitigate, prepare, respond and recover from all foreseeable emergencies as

efficiently and effectively as possible.

The Authority covers two Police Force areas and therefore two Local Resilience Forums (LRF). As a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, we will need to co-operate closely with both the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole LRF and the Wiltshire and Swindon LRF, in order to effectively discharge our duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

3. Be accountable to communities for the service they provide

We will operate robust arrangements to ensure that we are held to account for our performance and our performance information is available to our communities.

Why is this policy needed?

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Satisfy the requirements of all relevant legislation and regulations.
- Satisfy the expectations of Government as laid down in the National Framework document.
- Document and clarify our policy decisions on operational response.
- Ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of our staff and others who may be affected by our activities.

How we will meet the above requirements?

Our assessment of the risks our communities face is undertaken as part of our on-going strategic assessment. This includes analysis of historical incident data, demographics and population profiles, the built environment including our heritage and critical infrastructure and risks that are identified within the Community Risk Registers of both of our Local Resilience Forums.

The purpose of response arrangements is to save life, protect property and also to prevent harm to the environment. Response arrangements are one element within our Integrated Risk Management Plan. We plan our response arrangements to make best use of our resources in order to mitigate identified risks within our communities.

Our target response times to life risk incidents have been developed to reflect the outcomes of research that was undertaken by Exeter University on fire survivability.

Our Health and Safety Policy explains how we achieve a balance between ensuring firefighter safety and carrying out the role of a Fire and Rescue Service.

Success of the Policy – How is this Policy assured?

The effective implementation of this policy will be monitored and assured through:

- A review of our operational effectiveness as part of our work to produce our statement of assurance each year.

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- Being accountable for our performance at a local level through four Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees (LPSCs). These committees have quarterly, public meetings. Each committee covers one of the following areas:
 - Bournemouth Borough Council and Borough of Poole
 - Dorset County Council
 - Swindon Borough Council
 - Wiltshire Council
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy each year and publishing the results within the Annual Statement of Assurance.
- Publishing key corporate information on our website.

We will also:

- Review performance against key indicators and outcomes which are used to direct the development of future improvements and procedural documents
- Ensure operational risk and performance management meetings are held within timescales set out in our procedures.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed every three years and will be brought back to Members if requirements change.