



# DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

## ED 7 - Operational Competence/Operational Licence

To be used in conjunction with the [People Policy Statement](#)

### Employee Development (ED)

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| <b>Ref No:</b>        | ED 7       | <b>FRS:</b>              | DWFRS      |
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| <b>Version No:</b>    | V11.0      | <b>Review Completed:</b> | 22/07/2019 |

## 1 Purpose & Definition

- 1.1 All operational members of staff are required to maintain competence for their respective roles. This procedure ensures competence is maintained and legislation, policy and guidance are adhered to through a combination of training and assessment activities.
- 1.2 This Operational Competence Framework is designed to make sure a consistent standard is delivered and maintained across all Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue (DWFRS) workplaces.
- 1.3 This procedure links to the overarching People Policy, [Operational Licence](#) and the [Quality Assurance Framework procedure ED 10](#).

## 2 Procedure Principles

- 2.1 Operational Competence is demonstrated by satisfactory performance at real incidents, during simulations, exercises, drills, or centrally run training courses. Assessments may be summative or formative.
- 2.2 All operational members of staff maintain an Operational Licence appropriate to their role. See Section 3, [Operational Licence](#).
- 2.3 **Training and Response Co-ordinating Group (TRCG)**
  - 2.3.1 This group has a standing agenda item: Develop, monitor and deliver the Annual Service Training plan. The purpose of this agenda item is to:

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- examine progress and effectiveness of planned Operational Training activities
- identify reactive Operational Training needs and devise potential solutions delivered centrally and within areas through the quarterly training programme.

- 2.3.2 Papers submitted to TRCG describe reactive operational training needs and potential solutions. The TRCG decides the preferred solution.
- 2.3.3 The Geographic Group Managers Chair TRCG meetings or nominates the Head of Operational Training to deputise.
- 2.3.4 TRCG reviews progress and effectiveness of planned Operational Training activities, identifies reactive Operational Training needs, and devises solutions to be delivered centrally and within Areas.
- 2.3.5 The TRCG meeting held in July drafts an Annual Service Training Plan for the next financial year to fit in with the Service's planning cycle and allow time for draft a budget bid for September.
- 2.3.6 Annual Service Training Plan activities are identified by TRCG and Operational Licence needs.
- 2.3.7 TRCG reviews the draft plan in December when budget allocation is known and if necessary reprioritises the plan.

### 2.4 **Design of Training**

- 2.4.1 These activities will be prioritised and costed to form a zero-based budget bid which is written by the Head of Operational Training and submitted to the Director of Finance for approval or modification. Other resource needs may be identified and communicated to the relevant department for action.

### 2.5 **Records**

- 2.5.1 The DWFRS Competency Recording system records and reports when competencies are achieved and when they will need to be refreshed.
- 2.5.2 The system contains details of competencies for each role.
- 2.5.3 Training planned and delivered in Areas or at Stations is entered by the line manager.
- 2.5.4 Centrally organised training is recorded by Operational Training Administration.
- 2.5.5 Incident competence will be detailed by the individual and signed off by the Officer in Charge of the appliance.

### 2.6 **Planned Training**

- 2.6.1 Operational Training Administration maintains the course prospectus and publish course dates. In addition, they make sure the competency recording system is kept current.
- 2.6.2 Operational Training Administration will make and keep appropriate records and send out course joining instructions and study material as necessary.

### 2.7 Station Training

2.7.1 Station Managers, working with their local management teams arrange training to ensure competence in areas not covered by core operational licenses.

2.7.2 When developing this training Station Managers consider:

- existing or emerging risk in the Station area
- specialist skills within the Station
- specialist vehicles, equipment, or PPE
- staff succession planning
- partnership working within the Station area.

2.7.3 Service Exercises and station-based training form an integral part of the learning and confirmation process. A procedure has been developed to ensure that a consistent, structured approach is adopted. Please see [PRM 16 – Service Exercise](#) for additional information.

### 2.8 Non-attendance

2.8.1 Operational members of staff who are unable to attend an event for a legitimate reason inform the Operational Training Administration Team and their line manager as soon as possible. This allows the opportunity to be passed to another member of staff or for the booking to be cancelled without incurring costs.

2.8.2 Operational members of staff who fail to attend an event and have not given reasonable notice or a legitimate reason for not attending, are reported to their line manager and Station Manager who will investigate the matter and take action as appropriate. This may be treated as a performance issue.

### 2.9 Return to work

2.9.1 When operational members of staff have been absent for three months or more from their normal duties a Skills Gap Analysis (SGA) must be undertaken by their line manager. This is to identify if any training is needed to achieve competency.

2.9.2 Form [T040 – Skills Gap Analysis on Return to Operational Duties](#) should be completed for Firefighters, Crew Managers and Watch Managers. If a Crew Manager or Watch Manager has been absent for six months or longer, they should refer to [ED 13 – Incident Command Development Procedure](#).

2.9.3 A General Trainer should be requested from the nearest training centre to quality assure and oversee any technical aspects of the SGA.

2.9.4 Station Managers and Group Managers who have been absent from three months and up to six months should have a professional discussion with their line manager to identify any training required to achieve competency. Additionally, they should arrange to meet with the leads for any specialisms they hold to highlight any updates they have missed. This should be recorded on form [T041 – Skills Gap Analysis Professional Discussion](#). If they have been absent for six months or longer, they should refer to [ED 13 – Incident Command Development Procedure](#).

- 2.9.5 Area Managers and Brigade Managers who have been absent from three months and up to six months should have a professional discussion with their line manager or peer to identify any training required. This should be recorded on form [T041 – Skills Gap Analysis Professional Discussion](#). If they have been absent for six months or longer, they should refer to [ED 13 – Incident Command Development Procedure](#).
- 2.9.6 All SGAs for operational staff are stored in the individuals Gartner Expert 'Attachments' section. The document will be titled with the persons last name and date of SGA, such as; 'Smith SGA 191004'.

### 2.10 Transfer in

- 2.10.1 Operational members of staff transferring into the Service may be able to demonstrate their competence by accredited prior learning. Proof of this will need to be provided by either their previous employer or an examining body. A Skills Gap Analysis will be completed in order to confirm levels of competence.
- 2.10.2 If evidence cannot be provided, or is insufficient, the Skills Gap Analysis will be undertaken by the Training Centre managers to identify what training is needed to achieve competency.

## 3 Operational Licence

- 3.1 An Operational Licence details the minimum standard that all operational members of staff must achieve for their role to be safe.
- 3.1.1 Where the Equalities Act applies reasonable adjustments are considered.
- 3.1.2 When an individual fails to maintain an Operational License, they are 'off the run' for that discipline.
- 3.1.3 Failure to maintain an Operational License without sufficient reason, is treated as a performance management issue.
- 3.1.4 Operational License standards are risk critical, because of this they are trained and assessed more rigorously.
- 3.1.5 All Operational License courses are controlled and coordinated by the Operational Training Department to enable all operational staff to maintain their competence.
- 3.1.6 Line Managers will make sure their members of staff are nominated onto Operational License Courses in good time to ensure that competency does not lapse.
- 3.1.7 More information on command operational license requirements can be found within [ED 13 – Command Development Procedure](#).
- 3.2 The **core Operational Licence subjects** to be met by all operational members of staff are:
- Incident command
  - Breathing apparatus
  - Fire behaviour training
  - Casualty Care.

### 3.3 Additional specialist subjects:

- Emergency response driving (large goods vehicle and car)
- Technical rescue (water and rope)
- Aerial appliance operator
- Hazardous Material and Environmental Protection (Station Officers and above)
- National Incident Liaison (Station Officers and above).
- Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles (JESIP).

### 3.4 Operational course detail and sanctions

| Operational Licence – Sanctions Event                                     | Duration             | Expiry             | Relevance                            | Consequences of not achieving   |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| BA refresh & assessment   | 1 day                | 2 years            | FF- WM                               | Taken off-the-run for BA*   |
| FBT refresh & assessment  | 1 day                | 2 years            | FF - WM                              | Taken off-the-run for BA*   |
| Incident Command Assessment Level 1                                       | ½ day                | 2 years            | Acting CM, CM & WM                   | Not permitted to ride in charge or undertake an operational command role* |
| Incident command level 2 & 3  | ½ day                | 2 years            | SM & GM                              | Not permitted to undertake an operational command role*                   |
| Incident command level 4  | 1 day                | 2 years            | AM & BM                              | Not permitted to undertake an operational command role*                   |
| Incident Command Level 3+   | ½ Day                | 2 years            | AM                                   | Not permitted to undertake an operational command role*                   |
| Driver ERD (relevant to all vehicles such as appliances, cars & specials) | 1 day                | 5 years            | Emergency response drivers           | Unable to drive to emergencies using blue lights and two-tones            |
| Operational Licence – Sanctions Event                                     | Duration             | Expiry             | Relevance                            | Consequences of not achieving   |
| Working at height level 3 assessment                                      | 3 days               | 2 years            | Technical rescue supervisors         | Unable to undertake supervisor's role                                     |
| Water rescue level 3 class 2 swim & assessment                            | 3 days               | 3 years            | Technical rescue supervisors         | Unable to undertake supervisor's role                                     |
| Aerial appliance operator assessment                                      | ½ day                | 1 year             | Aerial appliance operators           | Unable to crew the aerial appliance as an operator                        |
| Forklift Truck refresher & assessment                                     | ½ day                | 3 years            | Forklift Truck drivers & supervisors | Unable to operate/ supervise the fork lift                                |
| Casualty Care Refresher   | 4 modules<br>+ 2-day | 2 years<br>3 years | FF- WM                               | Taken off the run for Casualty Care                                       |

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|                     | course   |         |                        |  |
| Emergency First Aid | 1 day<br><br>+ 2-hour<br>annual skills<br>update | 2 years | Flexi-duty<br>officers | Reviewed alongside<br>Command<br>Assessments |

\* Where the scheduling of courses or assessments falls outside of the expiry of the Operational Licence this will be considered on a case by case basis.

| <b>Role Critical Functions – Sanctions Role Critical</b> |  |                        |                                 |  |
|--|--|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Event</b>   | <b>Duration</b>  | <b>Expiry</b>          | <b>Relevance</b>                | <b>Consequences of not achieving</b>   |
| Incident command refresher                               | 1 day or equivalent  | 2 year                 | CM&WM                           | Unable to take command at an Incident  |
| Rota Group training days<br><br>Flexi update OTD         | 85% SM/GM<br>50% Strategic Managers<br>X2 1-day (x4 run per year)<br>sessions per year | Rolling                | SM-BM                           | Unable to take command at an Incident if more than two sessions are missed in any 12-month period. |
| JESIP multi-agency training<br><br>JESIP eLearning       | 1 day<br><br>As required   | 3 years<br><br>2 years | SM-BM<br><br>Acting CM, CM & WM | Reviewed alongside Command Assessments<br>Reviewed alongside Command refresher training            |

## 4 Responsibilities

- 4.1 **All operational members of staff** actively monitor their own operational competence and make sure all competencies are within date. They take responsibility for their own development and actively seek out opportunities. They request training through their line management team.
- 4.2 **All line managers** actively monitor the competence of the staff they are responsible for and ensure all competencies are in date. Before and after training opportunities occur, discuss their expectations with the employee undertaking the training. They undertake Skills Gap Analysis (SGA) where necessary. They request support from Training Centre as required giving as much notice as possible.
- 4.3 The **Director of People Service** gives strategic direction and leadership.
- 4.4 The **Head of Operational Training**:
- maintains this procedure
  - undertakes strategic planning
  - liaises with the geographic Group Managers who chair the TRCG meetings or deputise when required

- sets and monitors budgets
- audits and reviews Operational Training activities
- seeks out suitable outsourced solutions where necessary
- audits training centre courses periodically.

- 4.5 The **Incident Command Development Manager** maintains the Command Development Procedure. Manages delivery of all Incident Command Training and Assessments activity. Designs and delivers Operational Managers Training Days. Attends meetings and conferences as required.
- 4.6 **Training Centre Managers** develop the Annual Operational Training Schedule. They manage delivery of all Training Centre activities, analyse and report course evaluations. They audit training centre courses, Operational Training and Development activities periodically. They attend meetings and conferences as required.
- 4.7 The **Training Centre Facilitators** programme learning events; allocate resources and manage the diaries of the training team. They programme learning events for external customers. They ensure records are kept up to date in management information systems. They monitor the admin arrangements for course bookings and record keeping. They attend meetings and conferences as required.
- 4.8 All **Instructors** design and develop training, learning, and development opportunities in their line of expertise. They develop themselves to maintain competence in their line of expertise. They deliver and undertake training and assessments as identified in the training plan. They undertake course reviews and peer reviews. They attend meetings and conferences as required.
- 4.9 **Technical Writers** design and develop training, learning, and development opportunities in their line of expertise. They develop themselves to maintain competence in their line of expertise. They assist with training, assessment, and support and undertake course reviews. They attend meetings and conferences as required.
- 4.10 **The Operational Training Administration Team** coordinate and control all operational training course bookings and publishes course dates. They keep accurate and thorough records of all centrally organised operational training activities. They send out course joining instructions and details of pre- course study material required where necessary. They produce reports as required regarding all operational training activities. They liaise with members of staff or their line managers directly to agree dates and bookings. They conduct surveys to audit effectiveness.

## 5 Monitoring & Assurance

### 5.1 Procedure Management

- 5.1.1 DWFRS keeps records of competency for all operational members of staff. Each competence will have a refresh period attached to it. These records are monitored periodically by the Area Management Teams and other relevant stakeholders, such as; Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), Area Managers Service Delivery, Station Managers.



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- 5.1.2 All operational members of staff are responsible for monitoring and maintaining their own competence and reporting to their line manager when competencies are anticipated to expire, or any other development needs they have.
- 5.1.3 All Line Managers are responsible for monitoring their members of staff to make sure they remain competent in their role. Expiry of competence should be anticipated in good time and sufficient opportunities provided for the operational members of staff to refresh their competence. Group Management teams have the discretion to extend competence refresh dates on a risk-based approach appropriate to the needs of the station and individual. For expired command competencies refer to section 3.2.2 of [ED 13 - Command Development procedure](#) and complete the attached risk assessment. Any personnel working on an expired competence in an operational license aspect must be reported the Training Centre manager or Command Training Manager to ensure appropriate training is facilitated in a timely manner and the records updated as appropriate.

### 5.2 **Assessment & Verification**

- 5.2.1 The Service has a network of Assessors and Verifiers to assure operational competence.

### 5.3 **Evaluation**

- 5.3.1 All operational members of staff who have benefitted from training and development are required to complete a course evaluation.
- 5.3.2 This evaluation is analysed by the Operational Training Management Team to determine whether the training and development has been effective and direct improvements as necessary. They also determine whether a return on investment was achieved.

### 5.4 **Feedback**

- 5.4.1 All instructors/assessors give timely feedback to operational members of staff receiving training and development. If this is written feedback, Line Managers are copied in.

### 5.5 **Review**

- 5.5.1 This procedure will be reviewed:
- annually
  - in light of new information, such as:
    - changes to National Guidance
    - a Coroners ruling
    - new duties being given to operational members of staff.
    - Changes to Legislation

## 6 **Competency amendment or application**

- 6.1 Any request for a new competency or amendment to an existing one needs to be controlled. A process has been put into place to control the number of competencies, descriptions and frequency of maintenance. The Operational Training Department will have overall control of this process. To enable them to

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make a balanced judgement whether a new competency needs to be created or an existing one amended, a form has been produced to document such a request.

- 6.2 Applications need to be submitted by the subject matter lead using [form T039](#). This will need to be supported by an updated Operational Maintenance of Skills statement for operational staff or Flexi Duty Maintenance of Skills statement for Flexi Officers. Applications will not be processed unless all supporting documentation or information is provided.
- 6.3 New competencies will need to be submitted to one of two 'Competency Review Panels' held each year. The panel will review requests in April and October each year and will need to be submitted at least one month prior to the Panel's meeting to be considered at the next meeting. To submit such a request, please use the [form T039](#) which needs to be submitted to the Operational Training Department.
- 6.4 Urgent requests can be submitted at any time throughout the year using the relevant paperwork provided. An urgent request is one that needs to be reflected in competency recording immediately to cover a specific risk to the individual or organisation.
- 6.5 On submission of a request, the Operational Training Team will consult the Knowledge Management Team to determine the timescale for the request to be processed. The requests will be placed in order of importance and an indication of the time to complete the request will be given to the applicant.

## 7 Document Reference

### 7.1 Supporting Information

[People Policy Statement](#)

Competence Management System – Supporting Information – Under Development

[ED 10 – Quality Assurance Framework Procedure and supporting information](#)

[ED 13 – Command Development Procedure](#)

[PRM 16 – Service Exercise](#)

### 7.2 Forms

[T039 – Application for a new competency request or existing competency amendment](#)

[T040 - Skills Gap Analysis on Return to Operational Duties](#)

[T041 - Skills Gap Analysis Professional Discussion](#)

## 8 Document Management

**Policy Statement Reference:** [People](#)

| Owner           | Review Date | Author          | Status    |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Jason Moncrieff | 01/06/2021  | Jason Moncrieff | Published |

### 8.1 Version Control:

## ED 7 – Operational Competence

| Version | Page & Par Ref   | Date       | Changes Made   | Authorised By                  |
|---------|--|------------|--|--------------------------------|
| V11.0   | Page 6 par 3.4   | 06/04/2020 | Change ERD expiry from 3 years to 5 years. This change was made due to the Covid-19.                                   | Andy Mitchell                  |
| V10.0   | First and last pages   | 06/04/2020 | Updated links within Relevant Document section to point from BrigadeHQ3 to pandp.dwfire.org.uk. No other changes made. | Tonya Saben                    |
| V9.0    | Page 4 all of section 2.9  | 26/11/2019 | Process for Return to work after prolonged absence and two supporting forms added T040, T041.                          | Jason Moncrieff                |
| V8.0    | Entire document  | 18/11/2019 | Final check of links prior to publication  | Tonya Saben                    |
| V7.1    | Various pages and sections throughout<br><br>Page 10 / Section 7 | 13/11/2019 | Minor amendments to various sections<br><br>Added ED13 – Command Development Procedure to the document reference.      | Antony Bholah                  |
| V7.0    | Page 8 section 5.1.3   | 13/11/2019 | Insertion of text for a Risk Assessment within ED13  | Antony Bholah                  |
| V7.0    | Page 6 & 7 Table 3.4   | 13/11/2019 | Changes to competency requirements for command. Aligned to ED13 – Command Development Procedure                        | Antony Bholah                  |
| V7.0    | Page 5 section 3   | 13/11/2019 | Link to ED13 – Command Development Procedure   | Antony Bholah                  |
| V7.0    | Page 4 section 2.10  | 13/11/2019 | Addition of text on Skills Gap Analysis  | Antony Bholah                  |
| V7.0    | Page 4 section 2.9   | 13/11/2019 | Changes to 'return to work' section to include timescales  | Antony Bholah                  |
| V7.0    | Page 4 Section 2.7   | 13/11/2019 | Addition of paragraph and link to Exercise Procedure   | Antony Bholah                  |
| V7.0    | Page 9 Section 6.5   | 19/09/2019 | Added new section. No  | Tonya Saben / Paul Ticehurst / |

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|------|-----------------|------------|---|--|
|      |                 |            | other changes made.   | Jason Moncrieff                                |
| V6.0 | Page 1 and 9    | 22/07/2019 | Added new section (6) Competency amendment or application, finalised form T039 and created links.   | Tonya Saben / Paul Ticehurst / Jason Moncrieff |
| V5.0 | 5, Para 3.4     | 15/05/2019 | Minor formatting throughout.<br>Para 3.4 Addition of taken off the run for BA only if no BA/FBT refresher. Finalised link to ED 10 as previously under development.   | Jason Moncrieff                                |
| V4.0 | Pages 2, 3 & 5  | 16/10/2018 | Section 1.3 – replace Internal Quality Assurance (Assessor Verifier) procedure with Quality Assurance Framework ED10.<br>Section 2.3.4 – replace districts with Areas.<br>Section 2.3.5 – replace Strategic Training Plan with Annual Service Training Plan. Section 2.3.6 – as above<br>Section 2.5.1 – Insert the word The before DWFRS<br>Section 3.2 – Bullet point Additional Specialist Subjects should be a heading not a bullet point please change to bold writing. Section 3.3 – Casualty Care Refresher – Duration – change from 8 modules to 4. | Kathy Collis                                   |
| V3.0 | Page 1 & 9      | 18/06/2018 | Updated Policy reference in accordance to new framework.  | Tonya Saben                                    |
| V2.0 | Entire document | 05/06/2018 | Incorporated Supporting Information, Operational Licence into the main procedure creating a new Section 3.  | Kathy Collis                                   |
| V1.0 | Entire Document | 12/12/2016 | Document Drafted  | Chris Smith                                    |

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