

Arson reduction letterbox policy

Official

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Owner: **Assistant Commissioner, Prevention and Protection (Fire Safety)**

Responsible work team: **Prevention & Protection Policy and Strategy Team**

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1 Summary

- 1.1 This policy provides guidance for dealing with requests for arson reduction letterboxes (ARLs). It outlines the provision when a person at risk is identified by either the London Fire Brigade (the Brigade) or an external agency.
- 1.2 The policy sets out roles and responsibilities regarding the referral process, eligibility criteria, the triage process, funding, stock management and provision, delivery, and fitting considerations.
- 1.3 The LFB Values and Behaviours Framework underpins every aspect of organisational activity. Here are some suggestions as to how values and behaviours can be applied when fitting an arson reduction letterbox (these suggestions are not exhaustive):

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Service | Providing a professional and compassionate approach on every occasion where an ARL is installed in a resident's home and taking careful consideration in how I represent the LFB. I ensure I show my ID when introducing myself to residents before I enter so they feel safe, being mindful individuals could be vulnerable or have already been a victim of an arson attack. |
| Courage | Taking personal responsibility for conduct whilst in a resident's home and challenging any inappropriate behaviour or language. I can navigate difficult situations, such as a resident not wanting to interact if they have an unwelcome visitor in their home, and I can speak up if I believe the person needs support with a safeguarding referral. Actively promoting opportunities for feedback from residents after each ARL is installed. |
| Learning | Positively responding to any feedback, even if it is uncomfortable, and I am humble enough to understand I can still learn from others. Identifying opportunities for growth by sharing best practice with watch members and providing positive support for FFDs or new members of the watch/staff when installing ARLs. |
| Teamwork | I hold myself and others to high standards when installing ARLs and take a professional approach to the resident's and team's welfare by not attending visits alone. Working alongside partner agencies that work with victims of arson making sure information has been shared with everyone in the team to ensure that they maintain empathy, confidentiality and respect for the resident. I demonstrate an understanding of how Prevention activity protects Londoners and how this aligns with local risk management plans. |
| Equity | Taking time to understand local demographics and community groups within Prevention work and taking a person-centred approach. Engaging with each resident in a respectful manner and providing accessible fire safety literature in different languages. Taking a kind and compassionate approach when installing ARLs at all times, being mindful individuals could be vulnerable or have already been a victim of an arson attack. |
| Integrity | Taking time to talk to the resident to reassure and inform them of any actions I am about to take. Ensure that I have taken time to consider and implement any risk reduction methods to ensure the safety of the resident. Understanding that individuals or families who require an ARL may have been impacted by the threat of arson or a previous attack and taking all steps I can to build trust with them. |

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The provision of arson reduction letterboxes to those at risk from arson attacks contributes to the Brigade's aim of reducing the number of deaths and injuries caused by deliberate fires.
- 2.2 This document provides details of three types of arson reduction letterboxes available from two different suppliers for internal ordering and describes the procedure to be followed when providing and fitting them.
- 2.3 The provision of an arson reduction letterbox (ARL) may be recommended by an external referral from a partner agency, a result of a risk identified during the triage process, a home fire safety visit (HFSV), or as an internal referral that is not part of a HFSV. Where an internal referral for the provision of an ARL is made, a HFSV should also be provided.

3 Provision of arson reduction letterboxes

- 3.1 Letterbox openings in doors can provide easy access to the inside of properties. Before an arson reduction letterbox is considered as a means of reducing the risk of fire, other means that may help reduce the risk of fire could be explored, such as:
 - Securing the existing letterbox by means of a blanking plate, preventing access except at times determined by the resident.
 - Sealing the letterbox opening entirely. An externally mounted letter box removes the risk of this type of attack.
- 3.2 If neither of these options are appropriate, and the door is deemed suitable to have an ARL fitted, provision of an ARL should be considered.

4 Qualification for provision of an arson reduction letterbox

- 4.1 The need for an ARL is usually identified in the following ways:
 - As a result of an arson attack attended by the Brigade.
 - As a result of information gained from a HFSV.
 - Through a referral from an external agency.
- 4.2 ARLs are provided for individuals deemed at risk or vulnerable to an arson attack. This includes victims of:
 - Domestic violence.
 - Hate crime (e.g. racist, transphobic or homophobic attacks).
 - Intimidation.
 - Revenge.
 - Gang violence/feuds.

5 Roles and responsibilities

- 5.1 The Brigade will fund the provision of arson letterboxes where vulnerable individuals are identified, and they meet the eligibility criteria.
- 5.2 An ARL will be fitted and HFSV carried out (if the resident has not had a previous HFSV).

5.3 All identified arson threats will be treated as very high risk (VHR) and will receive a HFSV within the specified 4 hour timeframe unless the resident is unable to accommodate this. In these instances, control will hand back to the area teams to arrange a mutually convenient time for the HFSV to take place.

5.4 Station staff will usually fit ARLs however, there may be occasions where it is agreed that a partner agency is best placed to fit the ARL. See paragraphs 6.23 and 6.24 for details.

5.5 Every station has a stock of three horizontal ARLs, it is the station staff's responsibility to inform the local area team when an ARL has been fitted. The area team will then place an order on SAP and replenish ARLs accordingly.

5.6 If a station does not have an ARL, in normal circumstances efforts should be made to source it themselves from a neighbouring station, the area team or a borough hub.

5.7 Each area has a designated fire station where a stock of horizontal, vertical, and bottom of the door letterboxes are held. They are:

- SW - 1st Floor, Hammersmith Fire Station (Station Manager's Office).
- SE - Lewisham Fire Station (2nd Floor Conference Room (Storeroom) SM will need a swipe card to gain access to the storeroom out of hours).
- NE – Store No. 4 (G12) on the Ground Floor of the NE Area Offices, r/o Stratford Fire Station.
- NW – Finchley, Wembley, and Hillingdon fire stations (Station Managers' Offices).

5.8 If in exceptional circumstances an ARL cannot be sourced from the places above the London Operations Centre (LOC) in Merton will provide the ARL. The following procedure can be followed:

- London Operations Centre (LOC) holds an emergency reserve of 1 x Horizontal and 1 x vertical ARL.
- Upon receiving a request for an ARL the nearest station commander or station should be located, dependent on location it can then be collected from the London Operations Centre (LOC).

5.9 The area community safety team is responsible for:

- Ensuring out of hours accessibility to area hubs and managing this facility.
- Maintaining the records relating to ARLs held in the area, types fitted and who by for auditing and stock control purposes.
- Replenishment of stock.
- Keeping records of funding bids and the signed indemnity forms.

5.10 If the threat of arson and consequent referral has not come through to the Brigade via the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) consideration should be given to informing the MPS if appropriate. A CAD number should be noted and a record kept on the HFSV database notes section.

5.11 If the referral is not made as a result of a HFSV, a very high risk (VHR) HFSV must be conducted within the specified timeframe i.e. within 4 hours at the same time as the fitting of the ARL.

5.12 Prior to an ARL being fitted a check should be made, if practicable, with Prevention and Protection to ascertain if any enforcement action is being taken by FSR or the local authority in relation to the premises concerned. Outside of office hours this information can be obtained via

the senior fire safety officer. This should not prevent or delay the fitting of an ARL. In addition, consideration must be given to whether the door is suitable to have an ARL fitted.

- 5.13 The additional advice for residents (see link at end of policy) must be explained to the recipient at the time of fitting, regardless of whether a HFSV has/is being carried out.
- 5.14 All ARLs that are fitted by the Brigade should be recorded on the HFSV database. The HFSV record should also include all details of the HFSV and the Person at Risk box should be ticked. Crews should then complete a PAR form as per Policy number 736 – Safeguarding adults at risk policy.

6 Procurement

- 6.1 The relevant area team are responsible for maintaining a minimum stock in their local hubs and for placing orders on SAP to replenish station stock as required.
- 6.2 Station staff should inform the relevant area team when an ARL has been fitted. The area team will place an order on SAP and arrange for replenishment of station stock.

Types of arson reduction letterbox

- 6.3 As part of the procurement process, two companies provide three types of arson reduction letterboxes that have been tested by the Brigade's scientific advisors and selected as a result. These are:
 - The Mailguard - Horizontal type.
 - The Envirograf - Horizontal and Vertical types.

The cost for each arson reduction letterbox can be found on SAP.

It should be noted that there are other suppliers of arson reduction letterboxes on the market and the above is not exhaustive. London Fire Brigade makes no warranty towards nor endorses in any way the companies or products.

- 6.4 The table below provides a summary of how the two types of arson proof letterbox compared when tested:

| Key: | * | Poor |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| | ** | Average |
| | *** | Good |
| | Envirograf | Mailguard |
| Ease of installation | *** | ** |
| Ease of posting mail | ** | *** |
| Ease of retrieving mail | *** | ** |
| Ease of reinstatement | ** | *** |
| Effectiveness of extinguishing fire | *** | *** |
| Effectiveness of containing fuel | ** | *** |
| Effectiveness of reducing fire spread | *** | *** |

- 6.5 Both products conform to BS476 "Fire resistance of materials used in construction", or European equivalent. There is no performance standard for their use.
- 6.6 The ARLs are flexible when fitted. If the door is situated in a corridor the letterbox will fold against the wall when the door is opened so that access is unaffected.
- 6.7 These types of ARLs are the ones provided by the Brigade. If neither of these types of arson reduction letterbox is suitable for the property, then other means of reducing the risk of fire must be considered in accordance with paragraph 3.1. A partner agency should then be contacted to provide the best solution to ensure the safety of the resident.
- 6.8 A full description of the above-mentioned letterboxes, together with guidance on their fitting, use, testing, care, and maintenance can be found in Appendix 2.
- 6.9 A table showing frequently asked questions in relation to the types of door which can and cannot support the fitting of arson reduction letterboxes can be found at Appendix 3.

Fitting arson reduction letterboxes

- 6.10 ARLs must be fitted following the manufacturers' instructions using a screwdriver and a bradawl both of which are included in the HFSV fixing kit. The ARL should be sealed using the fire reduction silicone supplied with the ARL.
- 6.11 However, this fitting method might not be suitable for certain door types (see Appendix 3). In these instances, the area team/SC should liaise with a partner agency to find out if they are able to supply an arson reduction letterbox suitable for that door type.
- 6.12 If a partner agency cannot supply an ARL suitable for that door type, then the options set out in paragraph 3.1 apply. A partner agency should then be contacted to provide the best solution to ensure the safety of the resident.
- 6.13 A Milwaukee Drill is used when stations fit ARLs that require drilling into a metal door.
- 6.14 A request can be made by crews at the scene who were unaware of the need for a pilot drill at the time of triage or by Control when gathering information during out of hours service.
- 6.15 The drills are located at the following area team hubs:
 - NE Area (F21) – Access code #56* or swipe card. Located in Store No. 4 (Door G12) on the Ground Floor of the area offices.
 - NW Area (G30) – Access via swipe card. Located on the 1st Floor, LD Room opposite the kitchen.
 - SE Area (E21) – Access via street entrance #379*, from appliance bay C1560, car park gates 612112#. Located on the 2nd Floor, Lewisham Fire Station, in the storeroom opposite the BC's office.
 - SW Area (G36) – Access code 1362 on the left under the arch. Located in the BC's office on the 1st Floor of Hammersmith Fire Station.
- 6.16 It should be noted station commanders can be utilised inside and outside of office hours if required to collect a drill from an area team or the London Operations Centre (LOC).
- 6.17 Both Control and the area teams have their own processes in place for monitoring the requests/returning of drills.

Procedure to be followed when fitting an ARL

- 6.18 The station will use one of the ARLs held in their stores.
- 6.19 ID cards must be shown to the resident on arrival.
- 6.20 The Indemnity Forms must be signed by the resident before an arson reduction letterbox can be fitted. A template for this can be found in the links provided at the end of the policy.
- 6.21 Brigade staff fitting the ARL will give advice to the resident regarding the correct guidance to be followed in the use of the arson reduction letterbox, maintenance and what to do in the event of an arson attack.
- 6.22 Brigade staff will send the signed Indemnity Form to the area team once the arson reduction letterbox has been fitted.
- 6.23 If it has been agreed that the ARL should be fitted by a partner agency, the area team will contact the partner agency and provide an arson reduction letterbox and arrange for them to do the fitting.
- 6.24 The Partner Agreement should be signed by the SM or an appointed person with the necessary authority and the partner agency or its representative. You can access a link for the Partner Agreement at the end of this policy.
- 6.25 Station staff should update the HFSV database with all details of the HFSV ensuring all the details of the ARL fitting are also recorded in the relevant section.
- 6.26 Station staff will inform the area team that they have fitted an ARL to replenish the station's stock.
- 6.27 If used, the drill must be returned to the relevant area hub.

7 Indemnity form

- 7.1 A template for the indemnity form can be found in the link at the end of this policy.
- 7.2 Where the arson reduction letterbox is fitted by LFB staff, the indemnity form must be explained to the resident and they must sign two copies of the form before the arson reduction letterbox can be fitted.
- 7.3 In cases where the resident does not own their own property, it is the resident's responsibility to liaise with their landlord in order to obtain prior approval for the fitting of an arson reduction letterbox in their property. Where it has not been possible to obtain approval before or at the time of fitting, the resident must contact the landlord as soon as reasonably practicable to advise that an arson reduction letterbox has been fitted.
- 7.4 If the resident refuses to sign the indemnity form, an ARL cannot be provided and Brigade staff should leave the premises immediately and contact the referral agency.
- 7.5 The resident should be given a copy of the signed form along with additional HFSV guidance (see link at end of policy) at the same time as the letterbox is fitted.
- 7.6 The same process is to be followed when the Brigade provide the arson reduction letterbox but another agency is doing the fitting. If the arson reduction letterbox is provided and fitted by another agency, the other agency should use their own indemnity forms.
- 7.7 The other copy is to be sent to the local area team. The form should be filed and kept securely in the area community safety team office. Indemnity forms should be kept for a period of six years from the date in which the form was signed.

7.8 It is the area community safety team's responsibility to maintain and dispose of the indemnity forms in accordance with Policy number 351 - Data protection and privacy policy and following the guidance provided in Policy number 578 - Records management strategy 4: storage of non-active records.

8 Health and safety

- 8.1 The three types of letterboxes approved by the Brigade have been assessed by Bureau Veritas (B.V.).
- 8.2 LFB staff should complete an Arson Reduction Letterbox Installation Hazard Checklist on arrival at the resident's home. A link for this template can be found at the end of the policy.
- 8.3 Doors manufactured before 1990 may possibly contain asbestos and arson reduction letterboxes should not be fitted. If the door was manufactured before 1990, the area fire safety team should be informed, and they will then liaise with the partner agency.
- 8.4 Fitting of arson reduction letterboxes must follow the manufacturer's instructions provided with each arson reduction letterbox.

9 Safeguarding

- 9.1 If it is considered that the case involves an 'adult at risk', the matter would automatically become a safeguarding adults at risk issue and should be dealt with accordingly. Policy number 736 – Safeguarding adults at risk policy applies. A referral can be made through entering details in the Person at Risk form (PAR).
- 9.2 In cases where persons under the age of 18 are identified as being at risk at any point during this process, the matter would automatically become a child protection issue and should be dealt with accordingly. Policy number 305 – Safeguarding children policy applies.

10 Accessing the templates

- 10.1 The templates referred to within this policy can be accessed by following the link below:

Templates & Resources App > Fire Safety category

Click on Fire Safety then select the relevant template:

Arson Reduction Letterbox - Funding Bid

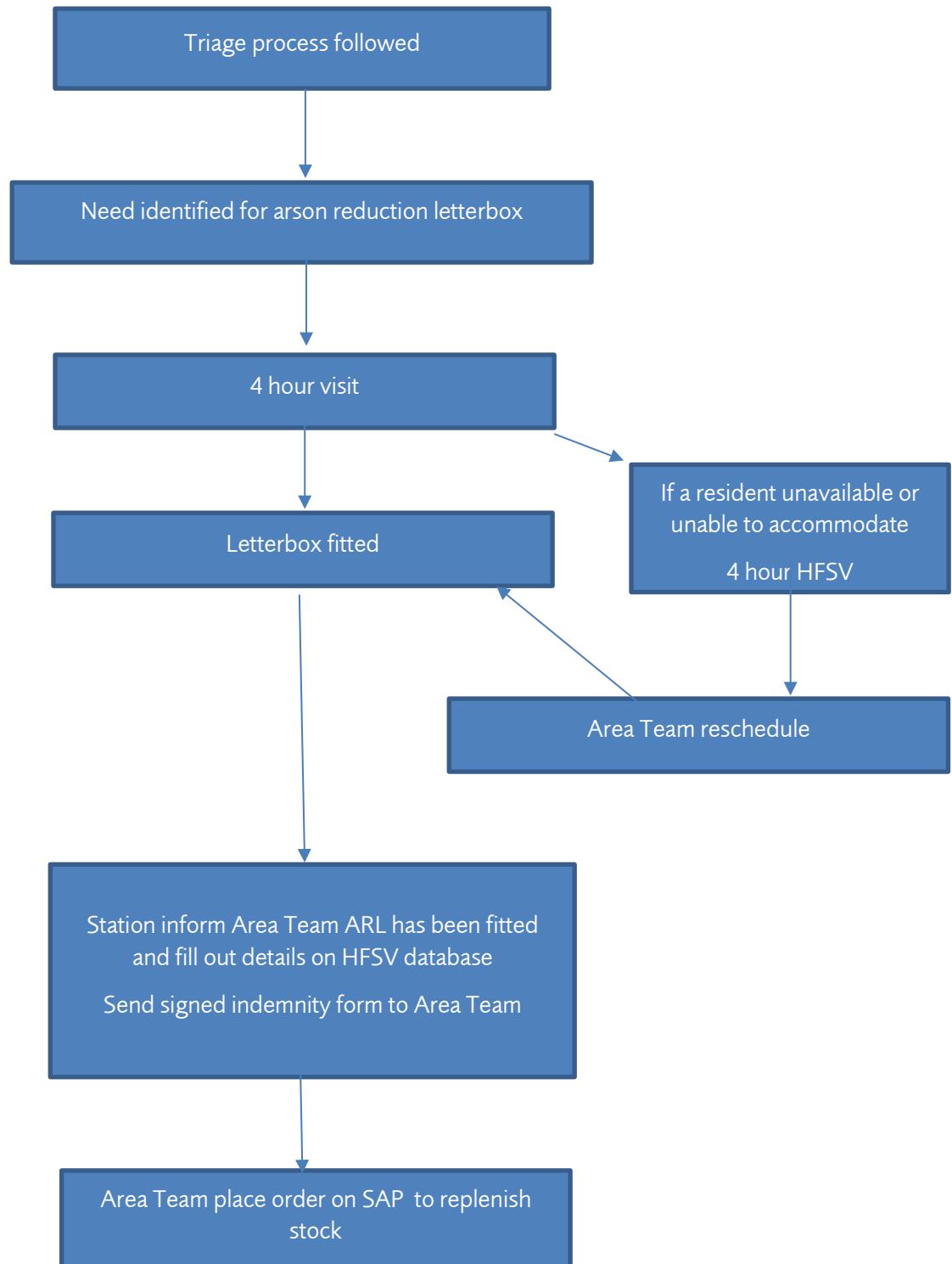
Arson Reduction Letterbox - Partner Agreement

Arson Reduction Letterbox - Indemnity form

Arson Reduction Letterbox - Additional Guidance for Residents

Arson Reduction Letterbox - Hazard Checklist

Appendix 1 - Flowchart for process to obtain ARL



Appendix 2 - Description of the approved letterboxes

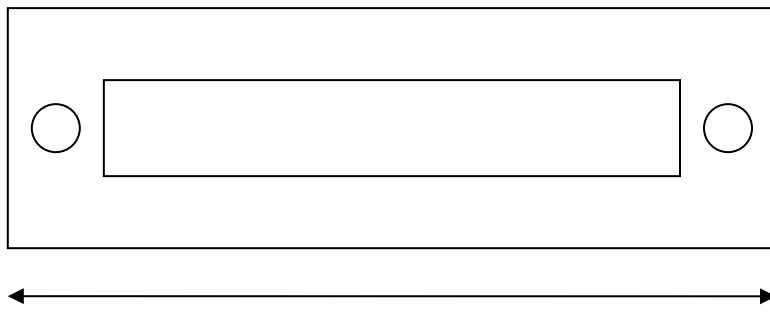
The Envirograf letterbox

The Envirograf letterbox consists of the following parts:

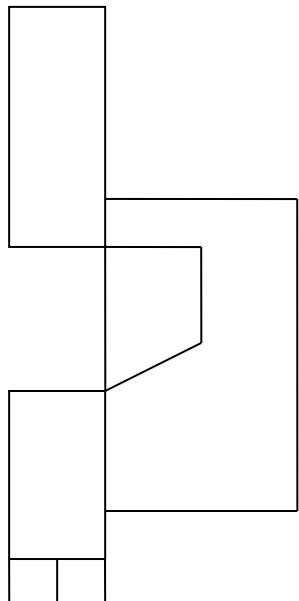
- Fire proof bag and back plate.
- Fixing screws.
- Silicon sealant.
- Fixing instructions

Fitting instructions

- Open lid by turning the button and separating the Velcro straps.
- Hold the metal plate in the position where it will be fitted.
- Use a bradawl to make holes in the door through the screw holes in the metal plate.
- Use the small tube of fire proof silicone to seal the Envirograf letterbox by squeezing it over the external side of the plate or around the internal letter box opening.
- Screw the letterbox to the door with a screwdriver using the screws supplied.



Screw Hole Centres – 335mm



Ensure the lid is sealed every time after it has been opened



LFB image id 1736061



LFB image id 1736062

Method of use

Posting of mail from the outside of the front door is unaffected when the bag is fitted.

To retrieve mail from the inside of the door, open the lid by turning the clips and separating the Velcro® tape. Mail can then be retrieved from the bag.



LFB image id 1736063

When closing, always ensure the lid has been secured using the Velcro® tape and clips.

Care and maintenance

At least once a month the bag must be checked in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to ensure there is no damage to the bag and the fixing screws are secure.

While the Velcro® on the bags is important, it is additionally held with the turn button clips. If for any reason the Velcro® is damaged or worn, it is recommended that this is replaced. In the event of a fire the bag will still work as the top is held with the turn button clips.

If the material of the bag is damaged in any way, e.g. by a resident's dog, they must ensure that the glass fibre strands are intact. Sometimes it is possible to make a small hole in the material without actually breaking the strands but if they are broken, the bag will need replacing.

If a fire occurs, the bag may turn black and form a crust on the surface of the material. If this occurs, the bag should be replaced. After a fire, the bag may only continue to be used if the material does not remain blackened after cleaning.



LFB image id 1736064

The Mailguard letterbox

Each Mailguard letterbox comes with a fitting template, an instructions leaflet, a pack of screws and a tube of silicone. A screwdriver is required to fit the letterbox in place at the resident's extant letterbox aperture.

Fitting instructions

The instructions below should be followed closely whenever fitting of a Mailguard letterbox is required.

1. Fit the template centrally over the letterbox on the inside of the residents' front door.
2. Using the template as a guide, mark the four fixing screw holes through the template and onto the front door.
3. Remove the template.
4. Using a bradawl, make four small pilot holes in the door where marked.
5. Screw the four self-tapping fixing screws (supplied) into the pilot holes in the door stopping halfway through the holes.
6. Mount the Mailguard letterbox onto the fixing screws via the keyhole slots in the frame.
7. Open zip in the bag and lift up the bag and the metal flap to expose the fixing screws.
8. Tighten up the fixing screws fully with a screwdriver to secure Mailguard letterbox in place.
9. From inside the mailbag, apply a bed of silicone sealant around the inside edge of the metal mail opening as shown on page 13.
10. Once the silicone has cured, the Mailguard letterbox is ready for use.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

The Mailguard letterbox offers the added benefit of locking off the resident's letterbox. Instructions on how to use this feature is shown in the leaflet accompanying every letterbox and are as follows:

- Turn black T bar screws on each side of Mailguard letterbox clockwise to lock steel plate shut.
- To open it, turn black T bar screws anti-clockwise until steel plate swings free.

Explain to the resident that this should be carried out outside normal mail delivery times.

Arson Mailguard letterbox Drilling Template



For the 'Envirograph' Horizontal letterbox the two holes are 335 mm apart. Below is an example only.





LFB image id 1736065

Method of use

Mail posting from the outside of a front door is unaffected when the bag is fitted unless the flap is locked to restrict access. This can be done by turning the thumb screws in each side of the metal frame clockwise, so the screw engages with the flap locking holes inside the bag. To unlock the flap, turn the thumb screws anti-clockwise to release the screws.



LFB image id 1736066



LFB image id 1736067

To retrieve mail from the inside of the door, unlock the padlock, if fitted, and open the zip at the bottom of the bag. Mail can then be retrieved from the bag.

Always ensure the zip is fully fastened after mail has been retrieved from the bag.

Care and maintenance

At least once a month the bag must be checked in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to ensure there is no damage to the bag and that the zip and the fixing screws are secure.

If the material of the bag is torn, or the zip broken the whole letterbox should be replaced.

After a fire, the bag may only continue to be used if the material does not remain blackened after cleaning. The whole letterbox must be replaced if the bag material remains blackened after cleaning or if the zip is inoperable.

Appendix 3 - Frequently asked questions

| Questions | Envirograf – Horizontal and Vertical letterbox | Mailguard – Horizontal letterbox |
|--|--|--|
| What type of door can the product be fitted to? | Wood / PVC | Wood / PVC / MDF |
| Which type of doors are not suitable for an arson letterbox? | Hollow made doors and MDF doors | Doors with vertical letterboxes Doors with the letterbox at the bottom Hollow doors - unless there is a middle internal support bar. NB this must be checked by the fixing team. |
| Is the product suitable for letterboxes that are sited at the bottom of the door or narrow letter boxes at the side? | No | No |
| Are bespoke items available? | Yes | No |

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|------------|------|------------|-------|------------|----|-----|
| EIA | 02/04/2024 | SDIA | 16/06/2015 | HSWIA | 03/04/2018 | RA | N/A |
|-----|------------|------|------------|-------|------------|----|-----|

Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

| Page/para nos. | Brief description of change | Date |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| Page 10 | Subjects list and Freedom of Information Act exemptions tables updated. | 28/01/2015 |
| Throughout | Top Management Review changes. | 04/06/2015 |
| Throughout | This policy has been reviewed as current with major changes made, please re-read to familiarise yourself with the amendments. | 23/07/2015 |
| Page 10, para 10 | This policy has been reviewed as current with major changes made to include paragraph 10.3. | 04/04/2018 |
| Throughout | Terminology and role to rank changes made to content. | 01/09/2020 |
| Throughout | The term "arson proof" changed to "arson reduction" to match external communications wording. | 05/11/2021 |
| Pages 4, 8 and 13 | The inclusion of transgender people as a risk group, following an Equality Impact Assessment. | |
| Page 4 | The addition of revenge and gang violence/feuds as two new risk categories, following recent incident trend analysis. | |
| Page 11 | When completing the HFSV record on the HFSV database, supply and fitting of ARL must now be recorded. | |
| Throughout | Changes to delegated levels of responsibility, allowing SCs to take on some of the roles and responsibilities previously associated with BCs. | |
| Throughout | Organisation updates: LFEPA logo removed and replaced with LFB logo, prevention steering group superseded by DAC Ops. | |
| Throughout | This policy has been reviewed as current with major changes made, please re-read to familiarise yourself with the amendments. | 25/03/2024 |
| Page 18 | New EIA date added. | 03/04/2024 |
| Page 19 | FOIA exemption added. | 13/06/2025 |

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Arson | Community fire safety |
| Home fire safety | Programs |

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

| Considered by: (responsible work team) | FOIA exemption | Security marking classification |
|--|---|--|
| Policy and Strategy Group | Para 6.15 – Access codes and specific location of LFB equipment | Section 31(1)(a) - Law Enforcement. |
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| | | |