

Work related violence

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Owner: **Assistant Director, Health, Safety and Wellbeing**
Responsible work team: **Health and Safety Services**

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1 Scope

- 1.1 The Brigade is committed to the creation of a working environment free from violence for all our staff. Abuse, threats or assault against our staff is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Brigade will report instances of violence at work to the police whenever appropriate.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff can make an appropriate response to any instance of abuse, threat or assault from members of the public, or other non-employees, that may be experienced, whilst working for the Brigade and details the responsibilities of both management and the workforce in dealing with violence at work.
- 1.3 This policy does not apply to:
 - Employees conducting work classified as for lone workers (Policy number 524 – Lone workers policy applies).
 - Incidents of staff on staff. Guidance for incidents of staff on staff violence is available through existing policies covering harassment and bullying. Incidents of violence by employees may also be dealt with in accordance with the Brigade's discipline procedures.
 - Incidents of domestic violence (Policy number 653 – Domestic violence applies).
- 1.4 There is an additional specific policy in place for:
 - Events classified as civil disturbances (Policy number 261 – Civil disturbances applies).

2 References

- 2.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 sections 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8.
- 2.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and Approved Code of Practice L21.
- 2.3 Emergency Workers (Obstruction) Act 2006.
- 2.4 Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 (Updated 2025).
- 2.5 Successful Health and Safety Management HSG65.
- 2.6 Health and Safety Executive (HSE) information on the topic of violence at work.
- 2.7 Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- 2.8 HSE publication INDG69 (rev) Violence at work.
- 2.9 Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences Regulations 2013 policy (RIDDOR 13) and Policy number 369 - Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations (RIDDOR) 2013.
- 2.10 Policy number 392a – Disciplinary procedure uniformed staff, Fire and Rescue staff and control staff.
- 2.11 Policy number 394 – Complaints (grievance) policy.
- 2.12 Policy number 673 – Risk assessment procedure.
- 2.13 Policy number 985 – Operational safety management knowledge skills and competence – NOG.
- 2.14 Policy number 524 – Lone workers policy.
- 2.15 Policy number 653 – Domestic violence policy.
- 2.16 Policy number 539 – Emergency call management.

- 2.17 Policy number 368 – Health and safety and environment event investigation policy.
- 2.18 Policy number 975 – Assaults on emergency workers.
- 2.19 Policy number 11 – Security for London Fire Brigade premises.
- 2.20 Policy number 412 – Mobilising policy.
- 2.21 Metropolitan Police Service Hate Crime.
- 2.22 Counselling and Trauma Services.
- 2.23 Occupational Health Services referral.

3 Definitions

- 3.1 The Health and Safety Executive defines work-related violence as:

Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

- 3.2 The Metropolitan Police define hate crime as:

Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.

4 Procedure

Legislation

- 4.1 This policy takes account of all relevant legislation, guidance and documents identified in section 2 above.
- 4.2 In particular, attacks on crews, vehicles or equipment while responding to an emergency may contravene the Emergency Workers (Obstruction) Act (2006) and Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 (Updated 2025).

Responsibilities

Directors/heads of service

- 4.3 Directors/heads of service or persons nominated by directors/heads of service are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this policy are implemented and that managers have sufficient resources, information and training to enable them to discharge their health and safety duties at locations under their responsibility.

Managers

- 4.4 Managers have a duty to ensure that all staff under their responsibility follow the requirements of this policy and receive sufficient information, instruction and training as necessary to ensure compliance with this policy.
- 4.5 Managers are responsible for ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable the health safety and welfare of their staff when at work. Managers are responsible for ensuring that any information on the risks of reasonably foreseeable violence against staff, from any source, are communicated to their line manager, colleagues and other agencies, as is appropriate.

- 4.6 Managers are responsible for assessing the risk of reasonably foreseeable violence to their staff, conducting risk assessments and implementing control measures for identified risks of violence where appropriate.
- 4.7 Managers are responsible for post incident welfare of staff exposed to violence at work including their access to Occupational Health Services (OHS) and Counselling and Trauma Services (CTS) if appropriate (reference 2.22, 2.23).
- 4.8 Managers are responsible for reporting and investigating all reported instances of violence at work (reference 2.17). Managers are responsible for ensuring that all suspected or confirmed hate-motivated incidents are promptly reported to the Metropolitan Police through established pathways and escalated to the Corporate Management Team as required.
- 4.9 Managers are responsible for reporting instances of violence at work to the police, where appropriate.
- 4.10 Managers are responsible for implementing the domestic violence policy, when the violence at work is from a partner, ex-partner or family member (reference 2.15).
- 4.11 Managers are responsible for reporting instances of violence at work, linked to hate crime to Corporate Management Team (reference 2.21).

Employees

- 4.12 Employees have a responsibility to comply with this policy.
- 4.13 Employees have a responsibility to communicate any identified, known or potential risks of violence at work to their line manager.
- 4.14 Employees have a responsibility to report any instance of violence at work to their line manager and where applicable to the Corporate Management Team. Employees must immediately report any incident that may constitute a hate crime and provide any relevant information regarding language, behaviour or perceived motivation of the perpetrator, where safe and appropriate to do so.

Managers with specific responsibilities

- 4.15 AC Control and Mobilising is responsible for establishing systems to gather and share information regarding the risks of reasonably foreseeable violence against Brigade staff, from any source.
- 4.16 AC Control and Mobilising is responsible for establishing procedures for the reporting of instances of violence at work from Control to the Control Operational Resourcing and Event (CORE) team, (reference 2.16).
- 4.17 AC Control and Mobilising is responsible for establishing procedures for the recording of instances of violence at work as Fires of Special Interest (FOSI), (RIDDOR 13) and Safety Event Reporting Database (SERD) events, as is appropriate, (reference 2.19, 2.17).

Reporting of assaults, abuse and hate crime

- 4.18 All staff should follow reporting procedures as per Policy number 975 - Assaults on emergency workers. SERDS should be reported as per Policy number 368 - Health and safety and environment event investigation policy. Reports of assaults, abuse or hate crimes are required to be reported via both Health and Safety and Security arrangements as above.
- 4.19 All instances of assault (including verbal abuse) should be reported under 'Injury/Accident Event' and a full SERD completed. No assault or abuse are classified as near misses.

4.20 Procedures for reporting to the Metropolitan Police Service and further guidance for staff and managers can be found in Policy number 975 - Assaults on emergency workers.

Appendix 1 - Control measures

The following guidance is based on that currently provided by the HSE and CLG (references 2.6 and 2.8).

Operational incidents

- 1 Senior managers and others that attend operational incidents individually will comply with the Lone Worker Policy (reference 2.14).
- 2 All staff will comply with policy requirements for maintaining security at work (reference 2.19).
- 3 Whenever there is an actual or potential occurrence of violence at work, then staff should maintain a neutral stance and not become involved in activities normally undertaken by the police service.

If staff find themselves in a situation where they are under attack, they should seek to withdraw from the situation, without inflicting injury to the aggressor. Under criminal law, for the purposes of self-defence, the use of force must be **reasonable** in the circumstances. Any actions taken in self-defence may be used as evidence in a court of law and in such circumstances, staff will be required to explain their physical actions.

Continuous dynamic risk assessment

- 4 If a situation arises where it is obvious that some form of aggression/violence may be directed towards staff, a dynamic risk assessment should be carried out. This should take into account the following:
 - The nature and level of the threat.
 - The type and severity of the incident.
 - The need to withdraw from the incident or discontinue the activity.
 - The need for additional staff resource.
 - The need for urgency.
 - Police availability.
- 5 Police assistance: A priority message requesting police attendance with details of the situation should be sent to Control.
- 6 Where possible, crews should remain together; when this is not practical crews must maintain open lines of communication.
- 7 Personal protective equipment: Although not designed specifically for protection against attacks, firefighting PPE will offer some protection and should be worn.
- 8 Vehicle security: All vehicles in the Brigade fleet have lockable cabs and newer vehicles have anti-bandit glass fitted as standard; some older fleet vehicles used as spare still require the fitting of riot shields to offer full protection. Withdrawal of crews to vehicles may offer a temporary place of safety.
- 9 Vehicle parking:
 - Audible and visual warning devices must not be used as they have the potential to incite and aggravate a situation where staff are engaged in activities when the risk of, or potential for violence at work is identified.
 - During the hours of darkness, where possible, park vehicles close to street lighting.
 - Avoid entering dead end situations wherever possible and plan escape routes and if necessary, reverse the vehicle into any dead-end roads.
 - Ensure that all lockers are closed once any equipment has been removed or replaced.

- Where possible ensure that no one is left alone with vehicles. In some circumstances the driver may remain within the vehicle with doors locked.

Work activities within the community

- 1 Activities in the community are generally planned; therefore there is the opportunity to consider the risk of violence against Brigade staff as a possibility. Control measures must then be implemented as appropriate.
- 2 Staff groups undertaking work activities away from Brigade premises must conduct a risk assessment in line with the nature of work to be undertaken (reference 2.12 and 2.13).
- 3 Whenever possible staff should work in groups of two or more, where this is not practical staff must comply with the lone workers policy.
- 4 Staff must have adequate and appropriate communications in place; this may range from mobile phones to hand held radios depending on the member of staff role.

Action on Brigade premises

- 5 If individual members of staff are unavoidably left alone at a station then compliance with the lone workers policy must be ensured.
- 6 When undertaking duties on the station, station security arrangements must be maintained at all times (reference 2.19).
- 7 Should an abusive or threatening phone call be received at Brigade Control, staff are to respond in accordance with current policy (reference 2.16).
- 8 Non-control staff receiving an abusive or threatening telephone call must:
 - Remain calm and polite.
 - Assertively advise the caller, that their behaviour is unacceptable to the Brigade and that the call will be terminated if the behaviour continues.
 - Refer the caller to a line manager where practical.
 - Offer the caller a choice of a call back from a manager.
 - After a notice of warning, terminate the call.
 - Inform their line manager as soon as possible.
 - Inform the police where appropriate.
 - Ensure compliance with event reporting and investigation procedures.
 - Access post incident support from CTS and/or OHS, as early as possible, whenever this is appropriate.

Document history

Assessments

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

EIA	13/03/26	SDIA	L – 26/02/26	HSWIA	12/02/26	RA	N/A
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Audit trail

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

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Changes made to RIDDOR in reference section. Policy reviewed as current.	28/01/2021
Throughout	Cross reference links updated.	06/06/2022
Page 4, para 4.16	Reference to the Resource Management Centre (RMC) replaced with the Control Operational Resourcing and Event (CORE) team.	28/07/2025
Throughout Page 2, para 2 and Page 3, para 4.2 Page 3, para 3 Page 5, paras 4.18 - 4.19	This policy has been reviewed as current, with amendments for clarity and reference points undertaken throughout: Update to remove/amend relevant guidance and legislation. Replacement to current definitions. New paragraphs on reporting procedures.	19/03/2026

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Health and safety at work	Workplace regulations

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification