

## Procedure for visits to Brigade premises

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Owner:	General Counsel to the Commissioner
Responsible work team:	General Counsel Department

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the arrangements that must be followed when a request is received to visit Brigade premises.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all requests for visits to all Brigade premises.
- 1.3 This policy does not apply during the pre-election period (see policy number 567 – Election related issues requiring special care), during pre-election periods please refer all requests for visits to General Counsel's department.
- 1.4 The Brigade has a discretion how it treats requests to visit its premises. The Brigade must however be even handed in its treatment of visitors affected by this policy.
- 1.5 The following actions must be completed for **all** visits:
  - (a) The Brigade is concerned to ensure the health, safety and welfare of visitors to its premises and so staff must also follow the procedures set out in the Brigade's Health and Safety policy statement (Policy number 597 - Health and safety policy).
  - (b) Prior to arrival at any Brigade premises, consideration should be given to whether the visitor may have any specific accessibility/dietary requirements.
  - (c) On arrival at a fire station or other operational establishment the visitor must be given a safety briefing in accordance with the aide-memoire contained in Policy number 505 - Safety of visitors to LFB premises procedure. This must include what the visitor should do if fire station staff have to turn out to an incident, leaving the station empty.

## **2 Visits by the Mayor of London or the Deputy Mayor for Fire**

- 2.1 The London Fire Commissioner encourages the Deputy Mayor, Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service (Deputy Mayor) and Mayor of London (Mayor) to visit the Brigade's premises to see at first hand the operation of the Brigade's services.
- 2.2 Arrangements for both of these visitors will be dealt with directly by the responsible officer in consultation with the Commissioner.
  - (a) For visits to fire stations or the London Operations Centre the responsible officer is the Deputy Commissioner.
  - (b) For visits to any other premises the responsible officer is the relevant Head of Service or Assistant Commissioner.
- 2.3 In the interests of health and safety and for practical operational reasons the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have been asked to advise the responsible officer of the date and time of their proposed visit. In the event of an unannounced visit staff should contact the responsible officer.
- 2.4 It is for the Mayor or Deputy Mayor when visiting Brigade premises to decide whether they wish to be accompanied during their visit, for example by an FBU representative. The Mayor or Deputy Mayor should notify the responsible officer of any request to be accompanied. No reasonable request should be refused (although the separate matter of time off for union representatives will be entirely at the discretion of the relevant Head of Service or Assistant Commissioner). If the responsible officer considers that a request by the Deputy Mayor or Mayor to be accompanied should be refused, they should notify the Commissioner who will make the final decision.
- 2.5 The responsible officer will notify the following persons of the proposed visit:

- (a) the staff at the premises concerned (who will make arrangements to receive them), and,
  - (b) the Director of Communications.
- 2.6 Due to the operational and security requirements at LFB premises LFB staff on site may request ID from the visitors and any persons accompanying them.
- 2.7 The Deputy Mayor or Mayor may ask questions of staff about the activities being undertaken at the premises.
- 2.8 In the event that the Deputy Mayor or Mayor arrive at a fire station and the staff have already been called out to an incident the Deputy Commissioner will arrange for a member of staff to meet them in the absence of station personnel. The Deputy Mayor or Mayor will also be provided with contact numbers for each of the borough commanders and for the Resource Management Centre should this occur outside normal office hours.
- 2.9 If during a visit to a fire station staff are called out to an incident the sub/station officer must make sure that the visitor has received the necessary advice, in accordance with Policy number 505 - Safety of visitors to LFB premises procedure, before the start of any visit.
- 2.10 There can be sensitivities about involving Brigade staff, premises or equipment in media interviews, photographs or other publicity activities. For such activities, the Deputy Mayor or Mayor have been asked to obtain the advance agreement of the Director of Communications. If in doubt about meeting a request, the Director of Communications should be consulted (who will seek legal guidance as necessary). See in particular paragraph 5.

### **3 Visits by members of parliament, members of the London assembly or London borough councillors**

- 3.1 The following procedure applies when a Member of Parliament, a London Borough Councillor or GLA Assembly Member (including other Deputy Mayors other than the Deputy Mayor for Fire) makes a request to visit the Brigade's premises.
- 3.2 The Commissioner, the responsible officer and the Director of Communications must be informed of the request.
- (a) For visits to fire stations or the London Operations Centre the responsible officer is the Deputy Commissioner.
  - (b) For any other premises the responsible officer is the relevant Head of Service or Assistant Commissioner.
- 3.3 The responsible officer will request as much notice as possible for the visit together with relevant details (such as the numbers attending, what is to be viewed) so that the necessary arrangements can be made. Wherever possible at least seven days' notice should be requested.
- 3.4 The decision whether to allow the visit will be taken by the responsible officer.
- 3.5 Having given agreement to a visit the responsible officer should inform the Commissioner and Director of Communications of the date, location and the names of the persons attending.
- 3.6 The responsible officer or that officer's nominee should be present to greet the visitors at the start of the visit and should accompany them during the visit.
- 3.7 There is no obligation upon Brigade employees to enter into detailed dialogue with the visitors. However, the Brigade expects its employees to extend the normal courtesies to any visitor to its premises.

## **4 Arrangements during an election period**

- 4.1 An election period generally starts no later than the date on which the notice of election is published. However separate instructions will be issued as necessary notifying staff of the actual dates of elections and the election periods which apply.
- 4.2 The Brigade must be even handed in its treatment of candidates. The procedure set out in paragraph 3 must be applied to all candidates. See also paragraph 5. Candidates have no special legal entitlement to visit Brigade premises or address Brigade employees and there is no obligation on the Brigade to allow them to do so. The Brigade has a discretion how it treats requests by candidates to visit fire stations or its other premises.
- 4.3 Further information on activity in the election period is contained in Policy number 567 - Election related issues requiring special care.

## **5 Political support**

- 5.1 Brigade premises, Brigade equipment and Brigade staff carrying out their jobs must not be used in a way that gives, or implies, political support for any political view, for any person holding or seeking political office or for political party.
- 5.2 The Brigade's staff, premises and equipment must not be used for photographs of visitors (or for any other activities) which appear designed to achieve electoral support for a political party or person. This does not prevent photographs of visitors taken on Brigade premises which do not exhibit party political overtones. If in doubt about meeting a request, the responsible officer should seek guidance from the Director of Communications (who will consult General Counsel as necessary).

## **6 Further advice**

- 6.1 Anyone who has any doubt about implementing this policy should contact the Director of Communications before proceeding further.

## Document history

### Assessments

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

EIA	02/12/2020	SDIA	L - 11/03/2025	HSWIA	01/12/2020	RA	
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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
Page 2 para 1.1	Include reference to European Elections	28/04/2009
Page 3 para 3.1 3.5, 3.7, 3.9	Extend definitions of candidates to include European elections	28/04/2009
Page 4 para 3.11	Explains that no staff should engage in political activity whilst at work	28/04/2009
Page 4 para 4.1	Extend definition of "candidate2 to include European elections	28/04/2009
Page 5 para 4.6	Refer to policy on elections	28/04/2009
Throughout	Department names updated throughout in line with the Top Management Review.	21/10/2011
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current with major changes made to the content. Please read to familiarise yourself.	09/04/2013
Throughout	Head of Communications post has been deleted, content updated to Head of Media and Internal Communications to reflect changes.	05/03/2014
Page 5	Subject list and FOIA exemptions tables updated.	09/12/2014
Throughout	Removed redundant Deputy Commissioner role and replaced with the Commissioner. Updated Head of Communications from Head of Media and Internal Communications.	29/05/2015
Page 2 para 1.2 Page2 para 1.3 Page 2 para 2.1 Page 2, para's 2.2 & 2.7	Update reference to Health & Safety Policy Statement. New para added at the request of Equality Manager. Updated reference to Authority Members on external website. Replaced references to Third Officer with Director of Operations.	16/05/2016
Throughout	Role to rank changes made to the policy content. Changes made throughout to reflect the changes in organisational structure and governance due to the abolition of LFEPA, which is now the London Fire Commissioner.	15/10/2019
Throughout	Policy document name changed from 'Authority' to 'Brigade'.  Hyperlinks updated.	25/09/2020

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	<p>Reviewed as current.</p> <p>All references to members of the Authority changed to the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and the Mayor.</p> <p>All references to Director of Operations changed to Deputy Commissioner for Operations.</p> <p>Changes reflect the change from LFEPA to LFC.</p>	02/12/2020
Throughout	All references to Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience change to Deputy Mayor for Fire.	24/05/2024
Throughout 5.1	<p>Minor, non-substantive, drafting changes to improve readability.</p> <p>Line one: changing 'should' to 'must not' to increase clarity.</p> <p>Line two and three: changing 'any view or to any person or political party' to 'any political view or to any person holding or seeking political office or political party' to increase clarity.</p>	21/03/2025

## Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Brigade premises	Visitors

## Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

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