

LFB charges for information

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Responsible work team: **Information Governance Team**

Contents

1	Policy summary.....	2
2	Notable changes since last published	2
3	Purpose	2
4	Scope.....	2
5	Legal and regulatory context.....	3
6	Policy statement.....	3
7	Roles and responsibilities	8
8	Assurance and monitoring.....	8
9	Review	8
10	Charges schedule	9
	Appendix 1 – The origins and legal framework for charging for fire and incident reports	11
	Document history	13

1 Policy summary

- 1.1 The London Fire Commissioner (LFC) – who runs the London Fire Brigade – may recover the costs of providing certain information outside statutory access regimes. This policy explains when charges apply, the legal basis for doing so, and the principles ensuring charging is fair, lawful and transparent. It clarifies who may receive incident related information, at which level of detail, and under which charging arrangements.
- 1.2 The policy also sets out separate arrangements for petroleum and environmental information, which fall under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). The Charges Schedule forms part of this policy.

2 Notable changes since last published

- 2.1 The policy has been rewritten to be more public facing. It remains an internal policy, but where complaints about the process/charging are raised by external organisations, the provision of an accessible policy document is useful.
- 2.2 This version of the policy clarifies that providing incident reports as a chargeable service is primarily for those representing the insurer or services to the insurance sector; and the commercial fee structure reflects that. The access arrangements for owners, landlords and managing agents (and similar), and for the public have been refined and limited to protect the personal data of those involved in incidents, and to clearly introduce an 'administrative fees' route for redacted report information as recommended in the Information Commissioner's model publication scheme.

3 Purpose

- 3.1 The incident information collected by the LFC supports statutory operational, prevention, protection, and regulatory functions. Its purpose is to improve the safety of people and property in London by informing operational learning, risk analysis, fire investigation and fire safety interventions through aggregated knowledge.
- 3.2 The London Fire Brigade (LFB) does not attend every fire. The English Housing Survey reports that in most households experiencing a fire, the fire either went out by itself or was extinguished by someone in the household; only around a quarter (25%) were put out by fire and rescue services. Many insurance claims, repairs and equipment replacement needs therefore, relate to incidents where LFB was not present and holds no information.
- 3.3 Incident information is not collected to determine liability, assign blame or resolve insurance disputes. Insurers may take the LFB's information into account for their own purposes, but this is separate from LFB's reasons for collecting it. This distinction underpins the routes of access set out in this policy.

4 Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all information that the LFC provides outside the statutory access regimes of FOIA and the EIR. It includes:
 - Fire and special service incident reports;
 - Mobilisation (CAD) reports;
 - Fire investigation reports;
 - Photographs or video recorded for operational purposes;
 - Petroleum and environmental information.

5 Legal and regulatory context

Incident information (FOIA/FRSA)

- 5.1 Under sections 18A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA), the LFC may recover the costs of discretionary services. Under FOIA Section 21, information is "reasonably accessible" where available upon payment of a lawful fee. The ICO Definition Document 1 recognises that fire services may charge an administrative fee for redacted reports.

Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)

- 5.2 Under Regulation 8(1), the LFC may charge for making environmental information available, and Regulation 8(3) requires that any charge is a reasonable amount and does not exceed the actual costs of locating, retrieving, extracting and preparing the information. Charges may include staff time and disbursements directly involved in supplying the information but must not include general overheads or costs unrelated to the request. These EIR specific charging rules apply only to petroleum and environmental searches and are distinct from the statutory fee arrangements for incident reports.

Statutory fees and VAT

- 5.3 Charges for incident reports are statutory fees authorised by FRSA 2004 and are outside the scope of VAT.
- 5.4 Charges for providing copies of photographs or video captured in the course of LFB's statutory functions are also statutory fees and do not attract VAT. Where LFB issues a commercial licence for reuse or reproduction, VAT applies to the licensing fee.
- 5.5 EIR Regulation 8 allows a public authority to charge a reasonable amount for making environmental information available. These are not statutory fees; they are charges for a service and VAT applies.

6 Policy statement

Confirmation of Attendance

- 6.1 The LFC makes available – to all requestors and with no charge – a report that confirms the attendance of the LFB at any incident. The Confirmation of Attendance report (CoA) confirms the LFB's assigned incident reference number, date and time, general location and high-level nature of the incident the LFB responded to. It does not include operational detail, fire cause, damage assessments or information about individuals.
- 6.2 For most people, businesses or otherwise affected persons, the CoA is sufficient evidence when making insurance claims, requesting repairs or making other enquiries related to an incident the LFB responded to.

Access to information about fire incidents

- 6.3 Access to incident information about the LFB's attendance at fires is made available through two routes:

¹ [Definition document](#) for joint or combined authorities and boards in part II of schedule I of the Freedom of Information Act

A. Commercial services route

Insurers and individuals directly affected by the incident, are permitted to receive operational and fire-specific information.

B. Administrative fee route

Provides operational response information, suitable for public release.

C. Subject access request route

Provides access only to personal data relating to the requester.

(A) Commercial services route

6.4 This route applies when the requester is:

- An insurer, loss adjuster or authorised agent acting for the purpose of assessing, verifying or investigating an insurance claim; or
- A resident, tenant or occupier who was directly affected by the incident at the time it occurred.

(A1) Insurers, loss adjusters or authorised agents

Reports available	Level of detail
• CoA • Primary Fire/Special Service Report • Mobilisation Report • And where available ○ Summary Fire Investigation Report ○ Full Fire Investigation Report ○ Scientific Advisor's Report ○ Photographs/Video	Full operational and fire specific- detail, including cause, ignition, spread, origin, damage assessment, investigative findings and involvement of individuals. Limited redactions may apply to protect national security or very sensitive personal information.

(A2) Residents, tenants or occupiers (directly affected)

Reports available	Level of detail
• CoA • Primary Fire/Special Service Report • Mobilisation Report	Operational and fire specific- details relating to the incident, except information that would reveal personal data or sensitive information about other individuals. Redactions may apply to protect national security. Fire Investigation and Scientific Advisor's Reports (etc) are only available to insurers or their authorised agents.

(B) Administrative fee route

- 6.5 This route provides operational response related information only and is charged at the administrative fee. It is compatible with FOIA s21 by making redacted information reasonably accessible to all requestors.

(B1) Owners, landlords or managing agents (not personally involved)

Reports available	Level of detail
• CoA • Primary Fire/Special Service Report • Mobilisation Report	Operational response information only – this includes the vehicles that responded, and the actions of the attending firefighters. Any information that is not about the LFB's activities responding to the incident are redacted. Information that is redacted includes, but not limited to, the fire cause, items damaged, ignition source, fire spread, involvement of individuals, location within property, caller information or personal details. Redactions may also be applied to the operational activity information where these protect national security, regulatory enforcement or are otherwise confidential.

(B2) General public and media

Reports available	Level of detail
• CoA • Primary Fire/Special Service Report • Mobilisation Report	Operational response information only – this includes the vehicles that responded, and the actions of the attending firefighters. Any information that is not about the LFB's activities responding to the incident are redacted. Information that is redacted includes, but not limited to, the fire cause, items damaged, ignition source, fire spread, involvement of individuals, location within property, caller information or personal details. Redactions may also be applied to the operational activity information where these protect national security, regulatory enforcement or are otherwise confidential.

(C) Subject access requests

- 6.6 A data protection subject access requests provides (free) access, to a requestor to their personal information. SAR's will be fulfilled by making appropriate extracts from the information held (they will not be redacted reports). SAR disclosures are not incident reports and exclude operational, fire-specific or investigative information that are not specific to the identifiable individual.

Identity and verification

- 6.7 The LFC will make suitable enquires, and may ask for reasonable evidence, to satisfy itself that the requestor is genuine, and that their connection to the incident is as claimed before actioning a request.

Summary Table

Requester category	Fee type	Reports available	Details available
Insurers, loss adjusters, authorised agents	Commercial	Primary Fire/Special Service; Mobilisation; Summary FI; Full FI; Scientific Advisor.	Full details (redactions only by exception).
Resident, tenant or occupier	Commercial	Primary Fire/Special Service; Mobilisation.	Operational and fire details excluding information about other individuals.
Owner, landlord or managing agent	Administrative	Primary Fire/Special Service; Mobilisation.	Operational only; no fire cause, damage, involvement or caller information.
General public	Administrative	Primary Fire/Special Service; Mobilisation.	Operational only; no fire cause, damage, involvement or caller information.
Subject access requester	Free	Personal data extract only.	Personal data only.

CoA is provided free to all requesters.

Access to information about incidents that are not fires (Special Service incidents)

- 6.8 The LFB attends a wide range of non-fire incidents known as Special Service incidents. These include rescues, medical assistance, flooding, hazardous materials, road traffic collisions, lift releases, other emergency responses to protect people, property and the environment. The level of information recorded for Special Service incidents is limited and is less detailed than the information recorded for fire incidents, as these incidents do not typically require cause analysis or full investigative activity.
- 6.9 Special Service reports usually contain only high-level information about our attendance, the nature of the incident and the actions taken. They rarely include detailed analysis, cause information or wider contextual material. Because of this, access to Special Service information follows a slightly different approach from fire-incident information.

Disclosure principles for Special Service reports

- 6.10 Special Service information may be released, free of charge where:
- The incident falls into a category suitable for public release (see table below).
 - There is no good reason to doubt the identity or involvement of the requester (where relevant).
 - The report does not contain sensitive operational information or information relating to the health, vulnerabilities or circumstances of identifiable individuals.
- 6.11 Where disclosure is not appropriate through this route, requesters may instead:
- receive an operational-tier report under the Administrative Fee Route (Section 5.2), or
 - request their own personal data through a Subject Access Request.
- 6.12 The table below shows which Special Service incident types are suitable for routine release. Redactions may apply to protect national security or very sensitive personal information.

Special service type	Suitable for release
Advice only	Yes
Animal assistance incidents	Yes
Assist other agencies	Yes
Effecting entry/exit	Yes
Evacuation (no fire)	Yes
Flooding	Yes
Hazardous materials incident	Yes
Lift release	Yes
Making safe (not RTC)	Yes
Medical incident	No
Medical incident – Co-responder	No
No action (not false alarm)	Yes
Other rescue/release of persons	No
Other transport incident	Yes
Removal of objects from people	No
Rescue or evacuation from water	No
RTC	Yes
Spills and leaks (not RTC)	Yes
Stand by	Yes
Suicide/attempts	No
Water provision	Yes

Access to petroleum and environmental information (EIR)

- 6.13 The LFC provides information relating to petroleum storage and environmental searches as part of its role as a Petroleum Enforcing Authority. This material is environmental information for the purposes of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) and is therefore handled under the charging rules in Regulation 8.
- 6.14 The Information Commissioner's guidance confirms that EIR charges may only reflect the actual cost of making the information available, and that charges must not act as a deterrent to access. A schedule of charges must be published, and charges should not be applied routinely where doing so undermines the purpose of the EIR.
- 6.15 Petroleum and environmental searches often require the Commissioner to consult specialist inspection logs, historic licensing records, environmental datasets, site history documents and regulatory files. The fees set out in the Charges Schedule reflect the cost of:
- carrying out specialist petroleum-record searches;
 - examining historic or regulatory datasets;
 - verifying details against inspection logs and record archives;
 - preparing written responses or survey findings;
 - producing plans or other extracts where held.
- 6.16 These EIR-based fees differ from the charging arrangements that apply to incident-related information, because EIR regulation creates a general charging permission, not a statutory fee-setting power. As a result, fees for petroleum and environmental information attract VAT, whereas incident-report fees do not.
- 6.17 Eligibility tiers that apply to incident reports under Section 5 do not apply to EIR information. All requesters are treated equally for environmental searches.

7 Roles and responsibilities

- 7.1 London Fire Commissioner – Approves this policy and charging arrangements.
Chief Information Officer – Oversees compliance and reviews fee levels.
Head of Information Governance – Maintains policy.
Information Access Team – Applies this policy for incident information.
Petroleum Team – Applies this policy for petroleum information searches.

8 Assurance and monitoring

- 8.1 Compliance is overseen by Information Governance, internal audit and management review. Redactions and disclosures may be sampled to ensure compliance. Charging levels are reviewed annually.

9 Review

- 9.1 The policy is reviewed every three years, or sooner if required. The Charges Schedule is reviewed annually, normally from 1 April.

10 Charges schedule

Information about fires

Administrative fee = 50% of commercial fee

Report type	Commercial fee	Administrative fee
Confirmation of Attendance	Free	Free
Primary Fire Report	£114	£57
Mobilisation Report	£114	£57
Summary Fire Investigation Report	£155	Not available
Full Fire Investigation Report	£466	Not available
Scientific Advisor's Report	£260	Not available

VAT does not apply.

Information about special services

Administrative fee = 50% of commercial fee

Report type	Commercial fee	Administrative fee
Confirmation of Attendance	Free	Free
Special Service Report (suitable for public release)	Free	Free
Special Service Report (NOT suitable for public release)	£114	£57
Mobilisation Report	£114	£57

Photographs, video or other imagery

Copies provided under statutory fee (no VAT).

VAT applies only to commercial licensing.

Imagery type	Fee
Still photographs (1–49 images)	£100
Still photographs (50–200 images)	£200
Additional images beyond 200	£1 per image
Search/research fee (if required)	£25
Video footage (per 30 minutes or part thereof)	£150

Petroleum and environmental information (EIR)

VAT applies to all EIR charges.

Information type	Fee (excluding VAT)
Standard environmental search	£70 + VAT
Environmental survey with positive findings	£140 + VAT
Express service (within 5 working days)	£240 + VAT
Copies of plans	£5 + VAT per plan

Appendix 1 – The origins and legal framework for charging for fire and incident reports

The origins of public fire brigades in the UK lie in the insurance industry. Before municipalisation, insurance companies directly funded fire-fighting services to protect the properties they insured. Although most of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Act 1865 (MFA 1865) has since been repealed, two provisions remain relevant in Inner London. Section 13 requires insurance companies covering property in Inner London to contribute to the cost of the London Fire Brigade (LFB), and section 31 provides that the Brigade may supply those insurers with information relating to fires it attends. While this latter requirement is no longer followed in practice, it reflects a historic statutory relationship in which insurers were expected to receive operational information from the Brigade.

By the time modern local government legislation emerged, the practice of providing insurers with detailed post-incident fire reports had become a commercial service rather than a statutory obligation. Since the Fire Services Act 1947 did not include charging powers, fire authorities relied instead on the general powers available to local authorities. These enabled brigades to levy fees for information products, including detailed fire reports, because such reports were not part of their statutory firefighting duty and were treated as discretionary services supplied on request. Insurers were therefore the primary customers for these commercial reports.

The introduction of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) altered the framework for accessing information, but it did not displace the long-standing arrangements for charging for fire reports. Under s.9(5) FOIA, the Act's standard fee provisions do not apply where another enactment already authorises a specific fee. Because fire reports were already supplied on a chargeable basis under local government charging powers, FOIA did not override or replace those existing arrangements, and the established charging mechanism remained in place.

Fire reports themselves contain two distinct categories of information. First, they include Operational Activity data – such as the number and type of appliances mobilised, the firefighting tactics employed, the timeline of events, and other factual details about the Brigade's response. Second, they include incident-specific and sensitive information, such as the circumstances leading to the fire, personal data about those involved or injured, and assessments of motive, causation, and damage. This latter category is routinely treated as confidential due to the context in which it is provided, and because disclosure of sensitive personal or investigative information may engage exemptions or confidentiality obligations.

Because insurers legitimately require detailed information for claims assessment, the commercial fire report has remained accessible to them as a chargeable service. For others seeking access only to the nonsensitive Operational Activity information, brigades provide a redacted version of the fire report for an administrative fee, with all confidential elements removed. As this form of the information is available via an alternative statutory route, s.21 FOIA applies: the information is "reasonably accessible by other means," even though a fee is payable.

The broader statutory basis for fire service charging changed significantly with the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004). Section 18 of the FRSA 2004 introduced explicit charging powers, placing the authority to charge for certain categories of nonemergency services on a clear statutory footing and superseding the reliance on general local authority charging powers. However, this reform did not fundamentally alter the longstanding practice of charging for fire reports. Instead, it regularised and modernised the charging landscape, providing a specific fire sector statutory basis that aligned with existing practice.

Taken together, these strands show that the charging of insurers for detailed fire reports evolved from the historic relationship between insurance companies and fire brigades, was sustained for decades

under local government charging powers, and later became aligned with FOIA principles before being expressly confirmed in modern form by the FRSA 2004.

Document history

Assessments

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

EIA	17/07/15	SDIA	L - 27/02/26	HSWIA	06/12/22	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
Page 5, Page 6, Page 8, Page 10 and Page 11 Throughout	Minor changes updated extension numbers. Hyperlink to incident reports email address updated.	28/06/2024
Page 22	SDIA date updated.	06/03/2026
Throughout	Re-written to have a public focus, to clarify the routes of access (commercial vs. administration fees), and to limit the access to personal and sensitive information to those who are not directly involved or are not representing the insurance sector.	30/03/2026

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Special charges	Cost recovery
Freedom of Information	

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

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