

Working with neighbouring brigades

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Key point summary – Working with neighbouring brigades

Operational procedure - on receipt of request from another FRS

- When only one or two LFB appliances are requested by the impacted FRS, LFB Control will usually mobilise the closest, available appliance meeting those attributes.
- Appliances and officers must book 'mobile' (status 2) with LFB Control in the usual manner either via the MDT or main scheme radio.
- There are recognised parent Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) talk groups that each service utilise, however these are not exclusive to every mobilisation to cross border incidents and there are many variations that may be used by each fire and rescue service for different incidents.
- For example; Some FRS have separate talk groups for different incidents within their FRS borders, if they have two fires at the same time in different locations they will utilise two different talk groups, one for each incident. The remainder of the FRS will utilise the parent radio talk group.
- The default position for LFB appliances mobilised should be to utilise the talk group that Control provide when being mobilised. This enables LFB appliances to receive incident related information relating to the incident they are attending. Appliances are to change to the specified FRS talk group denoted by Control and the call slip after booking 'mobile' (status 2).
- Once officers and/or appliances have booked 'mobile' (status 2) with LFB Control and changed channels they must ensure that the impacted FRS Control are aware that they are mobile via main scheme radio.
- On arrival the LFB appliance should book 'in attendance' (status 3) with LFB Control via the MDT and then with the impacted FRS Control via main scheme radio.
- On leaving the incident the LFB appliances and/or officers should inform the impacted FRS they are doing so via main scheme radio. Then return to their parent talk-group (see PN 518 -Messages from incidents).
- When within the LFB borders inform LFB Control of their availability.
 - NB: All LFB appliances should not book 'available' (status 1 or 6) for further operational calls until they are operationally ready and within the LFB borders.
- Upon return to station from a cross-border incident, LFB personnel will be expected to enter a record into the incident management system (IMS). Therefore, sub/stn officers will be required to take note of incident information, messages sent or resources used for example, as LFB's 'end of incident' report will only hold limited details.

Communication

- When communicating with an impacted FRS Control the 'request to speak' button (key 7) and the 'urgent request to speak' (key 9) will not work.
- Wait for a suitable break in radio traffic and use the 'press to talk' (PTT) button.
- Messages should use the format, impacted FRS followed by LFB. Then by station and appliance.
 - i.e - "Royal Berkshire Control from London Fire Brigade, Feltham pump ladder, now mobile to incident, over".
- Senior officers should use their own call sign along with their LFB role.
 - i.e – "Surrey Control from Golf 22, London Station Commander".
- When LFB forms only part of the attendance at a cross-border incident i.e. when an appliance from the impacted FRS is also in attendance, the host appliance will be responsible for any 'stop' messages.
- When LFB crews form the sole attendance at a cross-border incident, the LFB appliance sends the 'stop' and any other appropriate messages to the impacted FRS Control.

Controlling

- Incidents that require more than two LFB appliances a station commander (SC) will be mobilised to undertake the role of Cross-Border Liaison Officer (CBLO); unless the number of pumps requested is such that a higher role is required to attend.

- The role of CBLO can be carried out by officers from Lff to AC level depending on the size and nature of the mobilisation.
 - 1 pump or specialist appliance only – 1 x leading firefighter (SC informed).
 - 2 pumps – 1 x sub/station officer (SC informed).
 - 3 - 4 pumping or specialist appliances - mobilise an SC as CBLO.
 - 5 - 6 pumping or specialists appliances - mobilise a (GC) as CBLO.
 - 7 - 10 pumping or specialist appliances - mobilise a DAC as CBLO.
 - 11 pumping or specialist appliances and above - mobilise an AC as CBLO.
- The senior officer from the impacted FRS, unless otherwise agreed, will retain executive command of all fire and rescue operations.
- Agreed evacuation signals between the relevant FRS and LFB personnel.
- At incidents where more than one FRS are involved, those FRS will work within their own area of operations using their own standard operating procedures.

Although LFB equipment and personnel will form part of the impacted FRS incident safety structure, the overall responsibility for the safety and well-being of LFB personnel and resources will remain with the senior LFB officer in attendance: Lff – AC.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy provides guidance about the cross-border deployment of London Fire Brigade's (LFB) resources to support other fire and rescue services (FRS) immediately surrounding the LFB area. The document also covers the resources from those surrounding FRS that maybe required within the boundaries of LFB.
- 1.2 FRS resources that may be requested to deploy cross-border are mobilised under mutual aid arrangements provided for under sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA).
- 1.3 Therefore, whilst this policy provides a framework for the LFB's response to these types of deployments, each individual mobilisation must be carefully considered in terms of the appropriate level of resourcing required for the nature, duration and geographic location of any incident.
- 1.4 Arrangements for the deployment of national resilience assets are covered in Policy number 847 – Out of LFB deployment (national mutual aid).

2 Cross-border deployment

Definition

- 2.1 The mobilisation of LFB resources to incidents occurring in (immediate) neighbouring FRS areas are known as cross-border deployments.
- 2.2 Incidents where there maybe resources from two or more FRS are a relatively common occurrence between LFB and the six surrounding FRS namely - Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Surrey, Royal Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services. LFB resources may also be mobilised cross border to 'standby' at neighbouring FRS stations.

3 Mobilising across borders

- 3.1 Once it is established that LFB resources are required to assist with another FRS's operations, an LFB Control officer is to refer to the relevant reference information file (RIF) and ensure that the appropriate level of managerial support is mobilised with the LFB attendance. Which specific appliances are mobilised across LFB borders will be based upon any existing pre-determined attendance (PDA) or the nearest and available resource.
- 3.2 Mobilising procedure will allow Control officers to mobilise cumulative requests up to and including four pumping appliances. This will facilitate a response to aid the request immediately.
- 3.3 Requests from neighbouring FRS for LFB special appliances must be referred to the duty Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) via the Officer Of the Day (OOD) for approval before the mobilisation occurs unless the special appliance (e.g. an aerial appliance) forms part of an agreed special attendance.
- 3.4 When requests, or cumulative requests for LFB resources involve the deployment of 5 or more appliances, those requests must be referred to the duty Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) for approval.
- 3.5 In exceptional circumstances the Control officer has permission to mobilise the full request along with a CBLO. The duty DAC is to be contacted immediately post mobilisation and informs sent as appropriate.
- 3.6 Resilience should be maintained by the use of the dynamic cover tool (DCT) and standby movements made accordingly.
- 3.7 The level of operational command support will be determined by the number of LFB appliances of any type mobilised into the neighbouring FRS (subject to DAC approval as above).
- 3.8 Ordinarily, when only one or two LFB appliances are requested by the impacted FRS, LFB Control will usually mobilise the closest, available appliance meeting those attributes. Where the attending LFB appliance supplements the impacted FRS's PDA, the mobilised LFB resources would not usually attract any further command support.
- 3.9 Requests for reliefs should be directed via the Incident Commander (IC) who will forward the request through the impacted FRS onto LFB Control for action.
- 3.10 A minimum of two pumping appliances, including one Sub Officer (minimum requirement) will be mobilised to all cross-border incidents involving building fires, this is to ensure that enough personnel are available to implement safe systems of work (SSoW), including BA procedures if required.
- 3.11 At incidents that require more than two LFB appliances a Station Commander (SC) will be mobilised to undertake the role of Cross-Border Liaison Officer (CBLO); unless the number of pumps requested is such that a higher role is required to attend (see appendix 1 below).
- 3.12 The primary function of a CBLO is to secure and monitor liaison between the impacted FRS and LFB. In addition to this function the CBLO will be responsible for:
 - (a) Ensuring that all LFB crews are adequately briefed and comply with the IC's operational plan.
 - (b) Ensuring that LFB staff only take instruction from their own officers in line with the chain of command and IC's management structure.
 - (c) Ensuring that there are sufficient resources to enable LFB to set up their own safe systems of work as defined in SOPs and policy, including command support, when required to do so.

- (d) Informing the impacted FRS what LFB additional resources may be available that could improve the overall effectiveness of the operational plan and provide a safer working environment.
 - (e) Monitoring and ensuring crew welfare issues are addressed appropriately, and reliefs are requested (Policy number 772 - Reliefs at incidents) via the IC when necessary.
 - (f) Ensuring that any safety event involving LFB resources is investigated in accordance with Policy number 368 - Health, safety and environmental event investigation policy, in addition to any investigation conducted by the impacted FRS.
 - (g) Identifying areas of improvement and best practise for LFB crews/equipment and report into the incident monitoring process via the Incident Management Process Database (IMPD).
- 3.13 Once a CBLO is mobilised they are to request the relevant airwave talk group details for the impacted FRS from LFB Control. The role of CBLO can be carried out by officers from Leading firefighter to AC level depending on the size and nature of the mobilisation (see appendix 1):
- (a) 1 pump or specialist appliance only – 1 x Leading firefighter. 2 pumps – 1 x Sub/Station Officer with a Station Commander (SC) informed.
 - (b) 3 - 4 pumping or specialist appliances - mobilise an SC as CBLO.
 - (c) 5 - 6 pumping or specialists appliances - mobilise a Group Commander (GC) as CBLO.
 - (d) 7 - 10 pumping or specialist appliances - mobilise a DAC as CBLO.
 - (e) 11 pumping or specialist appliances and above - mobilise an AC as CBLO.
- 3.14 To support the LFB's incident monitoring process for cross-border incidents a representative from the Operational Review Team (ORT) will be informed of all cross-border deployments consisting of more than two LFB appliances.
- 3.15 The senior officer from the impacted FRS, unless otherwise agreed, will retain executive command of all fire and rescue operations. The National Incident Command System (NICS) should be adopted at all incidents and any concerns regarding the command and control of the incident should be directed to the CBLO. This is notwithstanding the moral and organisational responsibility of the senior officer present to take over command of the incident if the situation dictates.
- 3.16 LFB personnel who have safety concerns at incidents utilising 1 or 2 LFB appliances should bring them to the attention of the IC. If these concerns are not dealt with appropriately then the LFB officer should consider withdrawing LFB crews and request the attendance of the SC informed as a CBLO via Brigade Control who will also notify the OOD.
- 3.17 At incidents where more than one FRS are involved, those FRS will work within their own area of operations using their own standard operating procedures. The LFB roles, responsibilities and communications procedures associated with cross border incidents can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 3.18 When an Aerial appliance is requested from a neighbouring FRS a support pump will be mobilised additionally to aid the operational response by the aerial. However, if more than one pumping appliance is requested along with an aerial appliance no additional pumping appliance will be sent.
- 3.19 Command Units will be mobilised to cross border incidents on a request only basis by the impacted FRS.

4 Cross border charging

- 4.1 Charging neighbouring FRS for the use of LFB resources under section 13/16 of the FRSA was introduced in April 2014. All incidents whereby LFB resources are called upon by neighbouring FRS under section 13/16 arrangements shall be deemed to meet the legal criteria for recovering costs, standby's are also included within this criteria. The Brigade will not charge for the use of national resilience assets when the request is made through the national coordination centre (NCC).
- 4.2 The relevant duration for charging purposes will be the point of mobilisation to the point where the returning appliance(s) book available for operation calls within LFB. Charging will be carried out on a per appliance/per hour basis and any partial hour will be counted as a full hour. LFB does not currently distinguish between or vary chargeable rates dependent upon type of appliance. The chargeable rate will be in line with the Brigade's costs and cost- recovery policies, Policy number 402 – charging for special service incidents.
- 4.3 Invoices will be raised on an annual basis and issued to each individual neighbouring FRS. The Corporate Services Directorate will be the charging administrators and will use data supplied by the Head of Information Management to help establish which incidents should be chargeable. The Corporate Services Directorate will send out the invoices and will, along with the General Counsel to the Commissioner as appropriate, be responsible for debt recovery.

5 Cross border governance structure

- 5.1 In order to manage the relationships with our cross border neighbours a governance structure is in place at both strategic and tactical levels (see appendix 3). LFB Control regularly communicate with neighbouring FRS for mobilising purposes and it is expected that stations and boroughs will also have liaised with their cross border counterparts at a local/tactical level.
- 5.2 The Deputy Commissioner Operations, Operational group are the central focus of the governance structure. Tactical level issues raised through Control, local Station/Borough commanders and matters passed down from Commissioner's Board (CB) can be assessed for Brigade wide/policy implications and decisions made accordingly.
- 5.3 Any identified changes to operational policy can be referred to the relevant policy owner but this does not preclude communications and information exchange taking place between cross border stakeholders who maybe involved in investigations and pre planning for significant events. Communication links must be maintained with the Deputy Commissioner, Operations in line with the above.
- 5.4 Other strategic matters are dealt with by the Inter Border Liaison Group (ILG), this is a forum to discuss matters at a strategic level and has representation from LFB and all surrounding FRS. Operational issues arising from the ILG are passed onto the Deputy Commissioner, Operations as necessary.

6 Risk information

- 6.1 LFB will request (from) and supply specific risk information to neighbouring FRS when –
 - (a) LFB or a neighbouring FRS form part of a PDA for reinforcements (Section 13 FRSA).
 - (b) LFB or a neighbouring FRS are the sole attendees to an address through a 'discharge of functions' (Section 16 FRSA).

- 6.2 LFB personnel must identify all the hazards that are likely to be present and manage the risks that could be encountered (including scientific sites of special interest) when attending incidents in neighbouring FRS areas. Section 7 (2) (d) visits should be undertaken and crews must comply with Policy number 800 - Management of operational risk information when dealing with specific risk information from neighbouring FRS and ensure it is recorded and available on the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT).
- 6.3 When attending incidents within neighbouring FRS, risk information can be obtained by contacting the relevant Control over the main scheme radio if it is not available on the MDT (see appendix 2).
- 6.4 Borough commanders must ensure that any cross border risks are considered and included where necessary in their training requirements and are reflected within their respective borough training plans. This will enable station based officers to incorporate effective training in their station and watch training programs.

Appendix 1 - Cross border mobilising arrangements

LFB assets	1 appliances	2 appliances	3-4 appliances	5-6 appliances	7-10 appliances	11 or more appliances
		<i>(pumping or specialist)</i>				
Lff	Minimum x 1					
StnO/ SubO		Minimum x 1	Minimum x1	Minimum x2	Minimum x3	Minimum x3
SC		CBLO (inform)	CBLO (mobilise)	1	2	2
GC	-		Inform	CBLO (mobilise)	1	1
DAC	-		-	Inform	CBLO (mobilise)	1
AC	-		-	-	Inform	CBLO (mobilise)
ORT	-		Inform	Inform	Inform	Inform

Appendix 2 - Roles and responsibilities

- 1.1 A priority action of the initial LFB officer in attendance at an incident is to secure communication between the LFB and the Incident Commander (IC) from the impacted FRS.
- 1.2 Although LFB equipment and personnel will form part of the impacted FRS incident safety structure, the overall responsibility for the safety and well-being of LFB personnel and resources will remain with the senior LFB officer in attendance.
- 1.3 It must be agreed with the IC that LFB crews should work within their own area of operations. Additional control measures may also be required to maintain safe systems of work. For example, dedicated LFB safety officers and LFB entry control officers. LFB crews must at all times adhere to LFB policy and procedure.
- 1.4 Crews are to be made aware that they may experience/observe differences in working practises when working with other FRS and therefore extra vigilance is required. It is imperative that LFB crews comply with extant LFB policy/procedures, particularly with regard to:
 - (a) Breathing apparatus (BA) procedures; Policy number 466 – Respiratory protective equipment – breathing apparatus – operational procedures.
 - (b) Communications/voice procedure; Policy number 518 – Messages from incidents.
 - (c) Pumps and pumping.
- 1.5 For safe systems of work to be established and maintained, LFB officers in attendance must ensure that:
 - (a) All LFB crews are fully briefed and comply with the IC's operational plan, orders and instructions. NB: Evacuation signals must be agreed between the relevant FRS and LFB personnel.
 - (b) There are sufficient resources/equipment for LFB crews to carry out the work that is required of them in line with LFB operational procedures.
 - (c) Fireground communication methods/channels that do not adversely impact on safety are agreed between the relevant FRS and LFB personnel.
 - (d) Any LFB staff welfare issues (including the relief of LFB crews as per Policy number 772 - Reliefs at incidents) are identified and passed to the IC for resolution. If for any reason the relevant FRS are unable to address LFB welfare concerns (including reliefs), this should be referred to the OOD via LFB control.
- 1.6 Policy number 466 – Respiratory protective equipment – breathing apparatus – operational procedures, section 23 – 'working with other brigades' must be applied at all times.
- 1.7 If the senior LFB officer in attendance considers it necessary for additional LFB resources, including LFB functional officers, to be mobilised to support LFB activities, they should discuss this requirement with the IC. The request will then be made formally through the impacted FRS control by the IC.
- 1.8 It is vital that a record of 'command decisions' taken by LFB officers is made and kept. This could be through contemporaneous notes, Command Support System (CSS) if available and/or the key decision log as per Policy number 986 - Command skills - knowledge, skills and competence – NOG.

Communications

- 1.9 When LFB Control receive a request from a neighbouring FRS for LFB resources, LFB Control must exchange incident numbers and make a record of the relevant incident (or standby) number in the mobilising system.
- 1.10 LFB Control will inform the impacted FRS of the number and type of resource being mobilised. Appliances and officers must book 'mobile' (status 2) with LFB Control in line with normal mobilising procedures.
- 1.11 Once mobilised to another FRS, appliances and officers will be under the control of the impacted FRS from the moment they are mobilised to the incident. However on arrival at the cross border incident the LFB appliance officer should book in attendance (status 3) with LFB Control via the MDT, and then via main scheme radio with the impacted FRS Control. On leaving the incident the LFB appliance and officer should inform the impacted FRS they are doing so via main scheme radio and then via MDT or main scheme radio with LFB Control.
- 1.12 There are recognised parent Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) talk groups that each service utilise, however these are not exclusive to every mobilisation to cross border incidents and there are many variations that may be used by each fire and rescue service for different incidents.

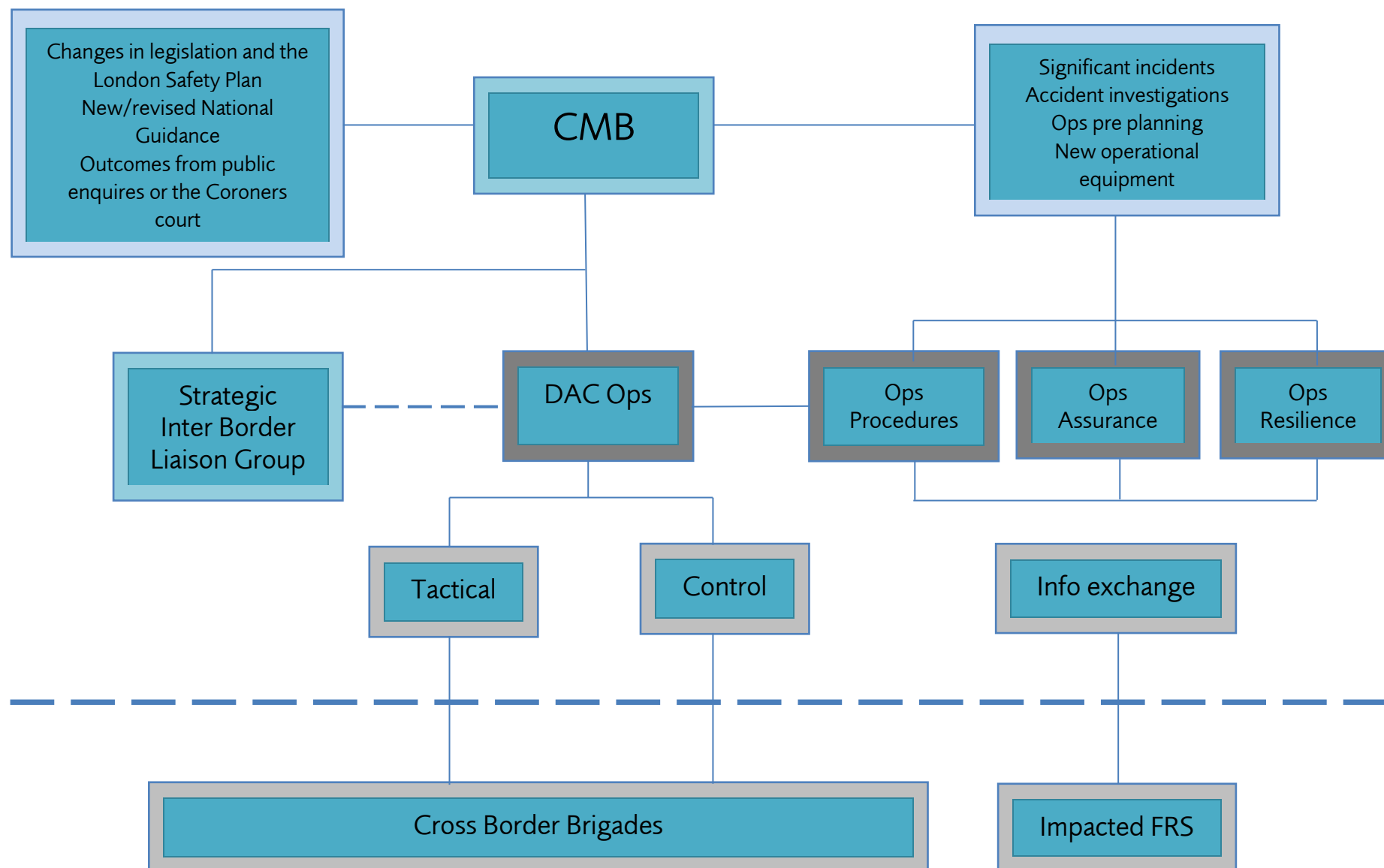
For example; Some FRS have separate talk groups for different incidents within their FRS borders, if they have two fires at the same time in different locations they will utilise two different talk groups, one for each incident. The remainder of the FRS will utilise the parent radio talk group.

The default position for LFB appliances mobilised should be to utilise the talk group that Control provide when being mobilised. This enables LFB appliances to receive incident related information relating to the incident they are attending. Appliances are to change to the specified FRS talk group denoted by Control and the call slip after booking 'mobile' (status 2).

Further guidance on FRS talk groups can be found in Policy number 987 - Incident command - Organisation at incidents – NOG.
- 1.13 Once officers and/or appliances have booked 'status 2' with LFB Control and changed channels they must ensure that the impacted FRS Control are aware that they are mobile via main scheme radio.
- 1.14 A cross-border deployment will usually mean that appliances will proceed to their destination without delay. Therefore, it will not normally be necessary for appliances to communicate with other appliances and officers forming part of the attendance.
- 1.15 When communicating with the impacted FRS Control the 'request to speak' button (key 7) and the 'urgent request to speak' (key 9) will not work. Therefore, the 'press to talk' (PTT) button and appropriate voice procedure should be used. For example:
 - (a) Wait for a suitable break in radio traffic.
 - (b) Depress the PTT and pause for a second before speaking.
 - (c) "Royal Berkshire Control from London Fire Brigade, Feltham pump ladder, over".
 - (d) Release the PTT.
 - (e) Await response from Royal Berkshire's Control centre.
 - (f) Depress the PTT, pause for a second and continue with message at dictation speed.

- (g) "Royal Berkshire Control from London Fire Brigade, Feltham pump ladder, now mobile to incident, over". Policy number 518 – Messages from incidents.
- 1.16 Senior officers should use their own call sign along with their LFB role when communicating with the impacted FRS Control on the main scheme radio. For example 'Golf 22, London station commander'.
- 1.17 Upon release from the incident appliances/officers are to return to their parent talk-group (see PN 518 for more information) once they are within the LFB borders and inform LFB Control of their availability. NB: All LFB appliances should not book available (status 1 or 6) for further operational calls until they are operationally ready and within the LFB borders.
- 1.18 When LFB forms only part of the attendance at a cross-border incident i.e. when an appliance from the impacted FRS is also in attendance, the host appliance will be responsible for any 'stop' messages.
- 1.19 When LFB crews form the sole attendance at a cross-border incident, the LFB appliance sends the appropriate messages to the impacted FRS Control. The impacted FRS Control will provide full details of the stop message and any other relevant information to LFB Control for post incident data collection.
- 1.20 Upon return to station from a cross-border incident, LFB personnel will be expected to enter a record into the incident management system (IMS). Therefore, sub/station officers will be required to take note of incident information, messages sent or resources used for example, as LFB's 'end of incident' report will only hold limited details.

Appendix 3 - Cross border governance structure



Document history

Assessments

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

EIA	10/11/2013	SDIA	H - 10/11/2013	HSWIA		RA	01/02/2014
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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 11	'Subjects list' table updated.	17/11/2014
Page 8 para 1.9	Removed reference to ProCAD as the new mobilising system has gone live.	19/11/2015
Page 8, para 1.12	Paragraph (f) updated as communications for Surry FRS have changed.	03/10/2017
Throughout Page 7-8, para 1.6	Amendments have been made to reflect the changes in organisational structure and governance (the abolition of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority). Section has been removed.	18/12/2018
Page 2	Key point summary added.	23/04/2019
Throughout	Role to rank changes made to content.	15/10/2019
Page 11 Page 4 Pages 10 & 2	Removal of parent talk group 3. Mobilising across borders. Removed talk groups.	30/01/2020
Page 2 & 10 Page 5 Page 3 & 8	Removal of Thames Valley FRS. Addition of Aerial and CU request information. Removal of command units from CB PDA arrangements.	03/08/2020
Throughout	Role to rank changes made.	06/10/2020
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current with no changes made.	17/02/2021
Page 6, para 4.2	Link to policy number 402 added.	29/06/2021
Throughout	Cross references updated.	13/10/2022
Page 4, 3.10 KPS & page 11	Added information in reference to change of mobilisation to all cross-border incidents involving building fires. FLON-OPS information deleted.	04/04/2025

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Neighbouring brigades	Mutual assistance
Cross borders	Working with others

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

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