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## All Station/Brigade Reps – Briefing Note

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### Mobilisation of a Crew of Three

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The FRSA has, in the past, supported the mobilisation of a crew of three to specific incidents with the appropriate structures in place and that were in accordance with the now defunct [HSE Sector Information Minute SIM 7/2000/07](#).

At the time our agreement was given on the basis that it was a short-term measure that was part of a wider piece of work that incorporated a **recruitment and retention strategy**, to ensure that riding front line appliances with a crew of three was the exception rather than the rule.

As a member-led organisation we are aware that some of our members across a number of services are willing to mobilise as a crew of three due to the benefits this can provide in terms of public protection, maintenance of competency and retention levels. However, these benefits must never compromise the safety of our members, the public or safe systems of work.

A crew of three, if agreeable to the local FRSA branch, must as a minimum consist of a separate qualified driver and an Officer in Charge (OIC), the two roles cannot be mixed. The scope of incidents a crew of three could be mobilised to should be agreed with the local branch of the Association, training and competency should take into account the actions required by a crew of three within the scenarios of the aforementioned agreed incidents to ensure safe systems of work.

The use of a crew of three should be viewed as a supplementary resource and/or an interim resource while an additional appliance(s) is/are mobilised and the service's Pre Determined Attendance (PDA) policy will need to incorporate such mobilisations including an appropriate communications procedure. Crews of three could also be mobilised to join personnel from another station/appliance to form a fully crewed appliance. These policies and procedures should be regularly reviewed.

All crews that are required to respond with a crew of three should train for such an eventuality. Any OIC that might be required to take charge of a crew of three should have their competence for this activity regularly assessed.

The generic risk assessment in relation to arriving at an incident with a crew of three should be reviewed every 12 months taking into consideration any report of accidents, near misses as they may arise.

On a separate but connected note, we are aware that Small Incident Units (SIUs or the equivalent of) have become the latest fashion accessory for services to procure. These vehicles are often crewed by fewer than four firefighters, contain less equipment than a normal appliance and carry less water on-board. While we agree that these hybrid vehicles have a place in the modern fire and rescue service, they should not be a replacement for frontline water rescue tenders and should be viewed and utilised as a supplementary resource.

For the avoidance of doubt, please let it be clear that the use of a crew of three is not an ideal situation any service finds itself in and is a problem of its own making due to inadequate action being undertaken regarding a robust recruitment and retention strategy for its On-Call establishment. This level of crewing must be viewed as a temporary measure with a timetable of actions in place to overcome crewing shortages.

The local IRMP will also need to reflect the services use of low crewing levels and how this impacts on its response standards.

If further information is required regarding this briefing note, please contact **FRSA HQ**.

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