



All Station/Brigade Reps – Briefing Note 01/20

COVID-19

While the FRSA is not an employer, we felt it would provide some clarity and reassurance to our members if we highlighted our expectations regarding how Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) support and manage firefighters across the UK.

At the time of writing this briefing note, the government's objectives are to deploy phased actions to '**Contain**', '**Delay**', and '**Mitigate**' any COVID-19 outbreak, using '**Research**' to inform policy development.

The latest up-to-date guidance from the government is available [here](#).

While the vast majority of the government guidance is also applicable to operational firefighters, it cannot be overstated that as an emergency worker it is imperative that the health and wellbeing of firefighters is of paramount importance.

The situation is further complicated for On-Call firefighters who are likely to be at a greater risk by virtue of their additional exposure due to their additional primary employment.

Our view is that as with general advice, instances where there are interactions between firefighters and the public these should be kept to a minimum temporarily to limit coronavirus contaminations.

We would also expect local FRSs to suspend non-emergency activities (i.e. fire safety visits and inspections, school visits, off-site training (inc. drill nights)) and all public meetings), until such time as it is safe to do so. This will help to reduce the exposure of firefighters to COVID-19 and to protect at-risk individuals from potential contamination from firefighters.

It is also imperative that the appropriate cleaning resources are made available for firefighters, good practice would suggest that this should be extended to an individual's home (inc. family use) and where logistically viable for use within primary employment. This would provide greater protection to firefighters outside as well as inside the fire station.

While in normal times we would promote the use of fire stations by the public in an effort to engage and educate, these are not normal times and fire stations should only be accessed by those who are working from these locations.

The primary focus must be to limit and where possible remove any activity that is unnecessary or a non-emergency to reduce/remove exposure for firefighters.

As a core emergency service, firefighters and control staff need to be protected from infection as much as possible. We need to ensure that firefighters are healthy and available in good numbers to respond when emergencies arise.

It is also vital that there are good two-way communications between FRSs and local employers of On-Call firefighters, this will help to identify good working practices that will help to reduce exposure and potential contamination to firefighters.

We also promote a heightened level of flexibility to allow On-Call firefighters to provide as much emergency availability as possible while fulfilling their primary employment obligations. This may include providing resources to allow individuals to work from fire stations/home.

The union will provide its members with support and advice as usual and will be contactable 24/7.

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

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