LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Freedom of Information request: Reference number FOI2026/01406

Date of request: 3rd November

Request:

- Any current policy, standard operating procedure or written guidance governing the use of audible warning devices (sirens) by your vehicles.

- Any guidance dealing specifically with (a) the use of sirens at night or during recognised quiet hours, and (b) the use of sirens in residential areas.

- Any guidance on the point at which an audible warning should be sounded when an appliance turns out from a station, particularly where the station stands on a residential street; and the number of emergency turnouts from Wandsworth fire station (H33) between 22:00 and 06:00 in each of the last twelve months.

- The number of complaints received from members of the public about siren or audible warning device use in each of the last three financial years, and, where held in a form that allows it, how many concerned the London Borough of Wandsworth.

If any part of this request would exceed the cost limit, please address the numbered items in order and answer as many as fall within it, telling me which you have omitted so that I can narrow them. I am content to receive the information by email. Thank you

Response:

1. Written policy governing the use of audible warning devices

Yes. Policy Note (PN) 347 — Ambient Noise Community Neighbour Policy — is the London Fire Brigade's written guidance governing the use of audible warning devices, including consideration of the impact on neighbouring residential properties. PN 347 was previously disclosed in full in response to FOI request FOI2026/00862 and is disclosed again in full in response to this request. A link to that response is located here - https://london-fire.disclosurelog.co.uk/disclosures/d5d1b61a-7318-4e94-8e0c-b7ed8735f456

2. Guidance on night-time or quiet hours use, and use in residential areas

PN 347 does not provide specific guidance on the use of sirens during night-time hours or recognised quiet periods as a distinct category. However, the policy does set out relevant legal context and a general operational principle that applies at all times, including overnight.
In relation to legal requirements, the policy notes that there are legal requirements on the use of vehicle horns between the hours of 2330hrs and 0700hrs, which include the use of two-tone horns. However, the need for an appliance to provide an audible warning when responding to emergency calls provides an exemption. The policy makes clear that this exemption should not be seen as removing neighbourly considerations when using audible devices whilst responding to emergency calls, nor does it allow excessive testing of devices on stations.

PN 347 addresses the use of audible devices when appliances are turning out from fire stations in response to emergency calls. The policy does not prescribe a specific point at which an audible warning must be sounded; instead, it sets out a general principle. The relevant passage states:

"The appropriate use of audible devices when appliances are turning out from fire stations in response to emergency calls should take into account the location of adjacent dwellings and the need to raise awareness of other road users. The need to consider the neighbouring community who live opposite or adjacent to fire stations, which will be exposed to the appliance noise on every occasion there is a turnout is important. Whilst it is accepted that the audible warning will be required on some occasions, there will be others when it is not and personnel should endeavour to minimise the disruption to their neighbours. However, the safety of personnel and the public must be the paramount consideration."

PN 347 does not provide more prescriptive rules on the precise point at which a siren should be activated on turnout, nor does it contain guidance specific to stations situated on residential streets beyond the general principle set out above.

3. Overnight turnout statistics for Wandsworth fire station (H33)

The information you have requested is publicly available through the London Datastore.

Under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, information is exempt from disclosure where it is reasonably accessible to an applicant by other means. As the data required to identify emergency turnouts from Wandsworth Fire Station (H33) is available via the London Datastore, the London Fire Brigade is not required to reproduce or extract the information in response to your request.

The London Datastore can be accessed at: https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/london-fire-brigade-mobilisation-records-24r65

You may wish to use the London Fire Brigade incident and mobilisation datasets available on the site to identify emergency turnouts from Wandsworth Fire Station (H33) between 22:00 and 06:00 for the period specified in your request.

4. Complaints received about siren or audible warning device use in each of the last three financial years, and how many concerned the London Borough of Wandsworth

The London Fire Brigade has searched its records for complaints received from members of the public relating to siren or audible warning device use during the last three financial years.

The search identified 14 complaints during this period. Of these, none related to incidents occurring within the London Borough of Wandsworth.

You have requested information on the number of complaints received and, where held, how many concerned the London Borough of Wandsworth. As no complaints relating to the London Borough of Wandsworth were identified, no further information is held within the scope of your request

We have dealt with your request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Further information about making a request for information is available on our website: https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/transparency/request-information-from-us/