

Freedom of Information request: Reference number FOI2026/00783

Date of request: 07 July 2026

Request:

Silent Emergency Calls

For the most recent five complete financial years (or calendar years if this is how the information is held), please provide:

- *The total number of 999 emergency calls received.*
- *The total number of silent 999 calls received (where no verbal communication was initially provided by the caller).*
- *The number of silent emergency calls that resulted in a resource being dispatched.*
- *The number of silent emergency calls where no resource was dispatched.*
- *Where recorded, the number of silent emergency calls subsequently identified as:*
 - *Genuine emergency*
 - *Accidental call*
 - *Hoax or malicious call*
 - *Unknown or unconfirmed*

Communication Accessibility

Please provide:

- *Copies of current policies, guidance or procedures for handling emergency callers who cannot communicate verbally.*
- *Copies of guidance relating to callers with communication disabilities, speech impairments, hearing impairments or other communication needs.*
- *Details of any accessibility guidance used by emergency call handlers.*
- *Details of any alternative communication methods available to members of the public during emergencies.*
- *Details of any staff training relating to accessible communication during emergency calls.*

Vulnerability Information

Please provide:

- *The categories of vulnerability that may be recorded by emergency call handlers.*
- *Whether communication needs are routinely recorded.*
- *Whether communication needs are routinely passed to responding personnel.*
- *Any guidance relating to recording communication needs.*
- *Any guidance relating to sharing vulnerability information with attending personnel.*

Where documents are publicly available, links are sufficient.

Policies, Training and Quality Assurance

Please provide:

- *Copies of policies relating to accessible emergency call handling.*
- *Details of training provided regarding:*
 - *Disability*
 - *Neurodiversity*

- Communication difficulties
- Vulnerability
- Details of any quality assurance processes relating to emergency call accessibility.
- Copies of any accessibility audits or reviews undertaken within the last five years.

Incident Outcomes

- For silent emergency calls resulting in deployment during the most recent five complete financial years (or calendar years if held differently), please provide, where recorded, the number of incidents categorised as:
 - Domestic abuse
 - Concern for welfare
 - Mental health
 - Missing person
 - Crime in progress
 - Violence against the person
 - Sexual offence
 - Child protection
 - Medical emergency
 - Fire
 - Road traffic collision
 - Suicide concern
 - Public safety
 - Other (where recorded)

If exact categories differ within your organisation, please provide the closest equivalent classifications used.

Response:

Please see our response to each of your requests in turn below:

Silent Emergency Calls

For the most recent five complete financial years (or calendar years if this is how the information is held), please provide:

- *The total number of 999 emergency calls received.*

Our Data team have let us know that, from the 01 January 2021 to the 31 March 2026, LFB received 1,062,711 emergency calls:

Financial Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Number of LFB calls	183,582	208,192	207,090	219,537	244,310	1,062,711

- *The total number of silent 999 calls received (where no verbal communication was initially provided by the caller).*

By way of background, it is my understanding that a silent 999 call in the UK does not automatically connect to the London Fire Brigade. 999 calls received by LFB control room would have been transferred from a call handling agent (BT operator) who would have established which emergency service was required. If the caller used their voice to call 999 and confirmed they would like to be connected to LFB then this would then be transferred to LFB control room. Details about the different ways to contact 999 are published LFB's website here: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/calling-999/> (which includes details on alternative methods to voice calls).

Our Data team have let us know that we received 196 calls where the initial description says the caller was 'not speaking' or there was a 'silent line':

Financial Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Number of LFB calls	21	37	39	36	63	196

- The number of silent emergency calls that resulted in a resource being dispatched.
- The number of silent emergency calls where no resource was dispatched.
- Where recorded, the number of silent emergency calls subsequently identified as:
 - Genuine emergency
 - Accidental call
 - Hoax or malicious call
 - Unknown or unconfirmed

Our Data team have provided the following breakdown of the 196 calls where the initial description says the caller was 'not speaking' or there was a 'silent line':

Call Type	Call Group	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Call Only	Call Challenge	8	13	8	5	6	40
	Duplicate call	7	3	7	4	11	32
	Faulted Record	0	0	0	1	2	3
	Non-attended Incident	6	19	24	26	39	114
Incident Attended	Fire	0	1	0	0	0	1
	False Alarm	0	1	0	0	4	5
	Special Service	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		21	37	39	36	63	196

Communication Accessibility

1. Copies of current policies, guidance or procedures for handling emergency callers who cannot communicate verbally.
2. Copies of guidance relating to callers with communication disabilities, speech impairments, hearing impairments or other communication needs.

A copy of the most recent version of LFB's Emergency Call Management policy (PN0539) was published in response to an earlier FOI request received in 2024. This published version is still current and can be accessed using the following link:

https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/v4ybghpp/8829-1_response_redacted.pdf

This policy includes emergency call management procedures for speech-impaired members of public and alternative communication methods such as the SMS Text Relay service, GoodSam and BT Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC) data.

I have also attached a copy of 'Control Information Note 0020 - Calls from or about people at risk' to this response that also provides information on situational awareness and the use of Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC), Advanced Mobile Location (AML) and other geo-location tools.

In addition, [NFCC National Operational Guidance - emergency call management](#) provides guidance relating to callers with communication difficulties. LFB Control comply with National operational Guidance.

Details of any accessibility guidance used by emergency call handlers.

LFB Control follow national operational guidance for accessibility methods for callers and, subscribe to the Public Emergency Call Service (PECS) agreement. I have found a recent version of PECS agreement published online which can be accessed here:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/about-ofcom/foi/2025/july/pecs-code-of-practice---version-1.1.pdf?v=401465>

Details of any alternative communication methods available to members of the public during emergencies.

Alternative communication methods include SMS Text Relay service, GoodSam and BT Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC) data. LFB are also able to directly text callers that have previously dialled 999 in an emergency and provide information (such as a change of fire survival guidance advice).

Details of any staff training relating to accessible communication during emergency calls.

Staff are trained on how to access the different services LFB subscribe to (such as the SMS Text Relay service, GoodSam and BT Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC) data).

Vulnerability Information

Please provide:

- *The categories of vulnerability that may be recorded by emergency call handlers.*

LFB policy PN 790 Fire survival guidance defines vulnerable people as:

Extract: "Vulnerable people – Anyone with a characteristic or condition that would impair their ability to leave a premises without assistance. It is not possible to be definitive about those who may need help to evacuate, but the persons most likely to be encountered during an incident include young children, the frail or elderly, persons with limited mobility and people who have:

- *Visual or hearing impairments;*
- *significantly high body weight;*
- *cognitive or mental health issues;*
- *problems understanding instructions or advice provided to them.*

This policy recognises that the nature and extent of an individual vulnerable person's characteristic or condition may make it difficult for both Control officers and those attending an incident to reliably identify who is a vulnerable person. Please also note that this description is specific to operational policy and that the LFB and other agencies define 'vulnerability' differently for other purposes e.g. safeguarding."

A version of the full 'Policy Number 790 - Fire survival guidance' is available online and can be accessed using the following link:

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/5740/lfc-0502-fire-survival-guidance-policy-number-0790-update-signed.pdf>

- *Whether communication needs are routinely recorded.*

If the caller has communications needs this information will be provided to responding resources so they are aware.

- *Whether communication needs are routinely passed to responding personnel.*

If the caller has communications needs this information will be provided to responding resources so they are aware.

- *Any guidance relating to recording communication needs.*

Control staff follow National Operation Guidance for call handling and ensure all pertinent information is shared with attending resources - learning objectives for all National operational guidance can be found at www.NFCC.Org.

- *Any guidance relating to sharing vulnerability information with attending personnel.*

Control staff follow National Operational Guidance for call handling and ensure all pertinent information is shared with attending resources - learning objectives for all National operational guidance can be found at www.NFCC.Org.

Policies, Training and Quality Assurance

Please provide:

- *Copies of policies relating to accessible emergency call handling.*
- *Details of training provided regarding:*
 - *Disability*
 - *Neurodiversity*
 - *Communication difficulties*
 - *Vulnerability*

As mentioned in response to your "Communication Accessibility" request above, a copy of the most recent version of LFB's Emergency Call Management policy (PN0539) was published in response to an earlier FOI request received in 2024. This published version is still current and can be accessed using the following link: https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/v4ybgghpp/8829-1_response_redacted.pdf

I have also attached a copy of 'Control Information Note 0020 - Calls from or about people at risk' to this response that also provides information on people with communication difficulties.

In addition, [NFCC National Operational Guidance - emergency call management](#) provides guidance relating to callers with communication difficulties. LFB Control comply with National operational Guidance.

- *Details of any quality assurance processes relating to emergency call accessibility.*

Our Operational Resilience and Control department have let me know that quality assurance (QA) is carried out in LFB control and every call where LFB Control provide Fire Survival Guidance is quality assured. This QA process confirms that the caller was asked if they had any vulnerabilities.

- *Copies of any accessibility audits or reviews undertaken within the last five years.*

The Operational Resilience and Control department has advised that emergency calls are routinely reviewed as part of operational quality assurance processes. However, specific accessibility information is not separately recorded or assessed as part of these reviews.

Incident Outcomes

For silent emergency calls resulting in deployment during the most recent five complete financial years (or calendar years if held differently), please provide, where recorded, the number of incidents categorised as:

- *Domestic abuse*
- *Concern for welfare*
- *Mental health*
- *Missing person*
- *Crime in progress*
- *Violence against the person*
- *Sexual offence*
- *Child protection*
- *Medical emergency*
- *Fire*
- *Road traffic collision*
- *Suicide concern*

- *Public safety*
- *Other (where recorded)*

If exact categories differ within your organisation, please provide the closest equivalent classifications used

Our Data team have provided the following breakdown of the seven calls where the initial description says the caller was '*not speaking*' or there was a '*silent line*':

Call Type	Call Group	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Incident Attended	Fire	0	1	0	0	0	1
	False Alarm	0	1	0	0	4	5
	Special Service	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		0	2	0	0	7	7



Emergency call management: People at risk

Calls from or about
people at risk

Control note: 0020

Responsible Head of Service

AC Operational Resilience & Control

Responsible Team

Fire Control





Calls from or about people
at risk



Hazard knowledge

Fire control personnel will receive emergency calls from or about people at risk in a range of situations.

A person may remain at risk even after they have evacuated or moved away from the initial hazard, for example if they have evacuated from a vehicle fire on the motorway but cannot leave the motorway and reach a place of safety.

Emergency calls will also be received for incidents where the caller is trapped inside premises, machinery or confined spaces and is unable to escape. Calls received concerning a person shut in lift are filtered to establish if an attendance is required.

People at risk may put themselves or others at greater risk as they attempt to self-evacuate because:

- Normal evacuation routes are compromised by the effects of the incident
- They cannot evacuate without injury
- They attempt to evacuate through unsuitable exits such as windows at height
- They do not raise the alarm for others

- They do not follow safety advice to prevent escalation of the incident
- They are unfamiliar with the building layout.

People at risk may appear to be physically able but unwilling to follow advice being given by fire control personnel because of:

- Emotional distress or fear caused by the incident
- Perception of the dangers relating to the actions they are being asked to take
- Unwillingness to leave a person, possession or animal
- A desire to assist with the incident
- Concern about other people
- Religious, cultural or social beliefs



Calls from or about people
at risk



Hazard knowledge

People at risk may find it difficult to follow advice due to a mobility impairment. People with a mobility impairment may have weakened physical, cognitive or sensory functions that affect their ability to reach a place of safety unaided, but who can still move under their own power.

People not initially at risk may become involved in the incident and placed at risk because:

- They are concerned about people or animals involved in the incident
- They are trying to assist with the incident
- They want to observe the incident or the activity of emergency responders
- The incident is affecting a large area or number of people, for example smoke plumes affecting numerous properties.

Barriers to communication

When communicating with people at risk, there is a requirement for the caller to share information and follow the safety advice or survival guidance being given by fire control personnel.

There may be communication barriers that prevent the caller from understanding or following advice; for example, they could:

- Have communication difficulties
- Be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Not speak English as their primary language
- Be emotionally distressed

Indicators of a communication barrier can include:

- Delayed responses
- Difficulty for the person at risk in understanding the questions they are being asked
- Difficulty for fire control personnel in understanding the responses of the person at risk



Calls from or about people
at risk



Hazard
knowledge

People with communication difficulties

People with communication difficulties may find it difficult to:

- Express themselves through speaking
- Understand spoken words
- Listen to what is being said directly to them or around them
- Remember information they have been given
- Express their feelings and emotion
- Describe what has happened
- Provide a clear sequence of events.

People with communication difficulties may find noisy situations or complicated instructions stressful, especially when trying to communicate over the phone.

People under the influence of drugs or alcohol

People at risk may not be able to follow safety or evacuation advice and guidance because they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

This may affect their ability to interpret

and understand what is being said to them and to follow instructions. Signs of alcohol or drug consumption include:

- Slurred or incoherent speech
- Rambling or repetitive statements
- Talking loudly.

It may be difficult for fire control personnel to identify whether people at risk are under the influence of drugs or alcohol as some of the examples above can also indicate a medical condition, fear or physical or mental impairment.



Calls from or about people at risk



Hazard knowledge

The emotional state of people at risk

People at risk may be distraught and uncooperative, and their emotional state may prevent them from focusing on the questions being asked.

On occasion they may be angry and verbally aggressive towards fire control personnel. This may be because they are worried or afraid, and fear can manifest itself in abusive language and an aggressive manner.

This behaviour can make it more challenging for fire control personnel to provide advice and guidance to the caller.

Calls from or about people at risk are likely to take longer than other calls because, for example:

- Distressed or confused callers cannot provide the required information to fire control personnel
- Callers are more concerned with getting others to safety than communicating with fire control personnel
- Fire control personnel are providing safety advice, evacuation guidance or survival guidance.

Fire control personnel should be aware that people may be confused or upset by the questions they are being asked and the advice and guidance they are being given.

Emotional stress

There may be occasions when fire control personnel are speaking to someone who may not survive and will need to consider carefully what to say, and when it would be reasonable to end the call.

Due to the nature of calls involving people at risk, there may be an increased level of stress and pressure on people at risk, members of the public, fire control personnel and operational personnel involved in the incident, which may lead to difficulties in gathering accurate incident location information.

Handling calls from people who are emotionally distressed can have profound and long-lasting effects on fire control personnel.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Hazard knowledge

Information received from other emergency control rooms

Fire control personnel will receive information from other Category 1 and Category 2 emergency control rooms about incidents involving people at risk.

Each agency will apply their own emergency call handling techniques to gather information and determine the appropriate incident categorisation and response for their organisation.

Therefore, fire control personnel may need to ask additional questions to determine the level of response of the fire and rescue service and ensure appropriate guidance is provided.

Appropriate incident categorisation is essential to ensure the correct mobilisation of resources and that all associated actions are carried out.

For incidents where it is indicated or confirmed that there are persons reported or where people are trapped, this may include mobilising specialist resources and sharing situational awareness with other emergency controls.

Right care, right person

Fire control personnel may receive calls from people experiencing mental health, medical or social care issues when another agency has applied Right Care, Right Person principles.

Such calls may be challenging for fire control personnel if appropriate policies and procedures are not provided.

A fire control commander's ability to select the most appropriate methods to manage the situation is therefore essential.

COs are trained to respond to and assess non-fire rescue calls and through using system-based protocols or experience and knowledge will mobilise the required attendance.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Situational awareness

When dealing with people at risk who are distressed, afraid or confused, fire control personnel may find it difficult to gather accurate incident location details. In such situations, use of Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC), Advanced Mobile Location (AML) and other geo-location tools may provide address and location information if the call is ended before the address is given or if the caller cannot provide the necessary information.

Accurate situational awareness will help fire control personnel to categorise the type of call and identify the hazards and risks associated with the incident. This will enable them to share risk-critical information with the personnel attending, provide appropriate evacuation guidance, safety advice or survival guidance and apply dynamic mobilising strategies if the incident or the situation of the people at risk changes.

Situational awareness can be gathered from:

- Questioning callers about the incident, their location and environment
- Occupant and premises risk information such as information linked to the premises or caller details on the mobilising system
- Risk information shared by other agencies
- Updates from operational personnel
- Location and vehicle information from in-vehicle safety systems

Risk information may be out-of-date or inaccurate, and appropriate continual assessment and questioning to determine the hazards and risks should still take place.

It is important to determine whether the people at risk are in a place that will remain safe until the incident is resolved or they can be rescued. If people at risk are not in such a place, then it should be established whether they are able to evacuate.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Situational awareness

Continued...

If people at risk inform fire control personnel that they cannot evacuate, or they delay doing so, fire control personnel should determine through effective questioning whether the people at risk are physically unable to evacuate or whether it is their perception or unwillingness that they cannot evacuate.

All possible means of evacuation should be explored before giving survival guidance.

Several key points determine the advice that fire control personnel give to people at risk, and the same key points will also assist operational personnel at the scene:

- The immediate level of risk to the people concerned
- The condition, number, age, and ability of the people at risk
- Whether the people at risk are under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- The location of the people at risk

The environment that people at risk are in, for example:

- Road network
- Water
- Building or structure

If people at risk are unable to evacuate from a fire, the incident should be categorised as ‘persons reported’, which may affect:

- The mobilisation of additional resources or personnel where appropriate
- The police and ambulance services’ response priority level
- The tactical plan of the incident commander

Fire control personnel can declare ‘persons reported’ incidents at the point of the first emergency call or following repeat or duplicate calls, or operational personnel may do so when they arrive at the incident.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Situational awareness

Continued...

Following the declaration of a 'persons reported' incident, and once operational personnel are confident that no one is within the building or area, operational personnel must confirm with fire control personnel that everyone has been accounted for. Procedures should be in place for this information to be shared promptly and recorded within the incident log.

Because incidents change and potentially escalate quickly, it is vital that information gathered is continually reviewed and reassessed, particularly if survival guidance is being given.

Fire control personnel can ask simple questions to determine whether conditions are deteriorating, for example:

- 'Has anything changed?'
- 'Has the situation got better or worse for you?'
- 'What has happened since I last asked you?'

- 'Tell me exactly what is happening now?'
- 'Is there more or less of the hazard?'

During the management of an emergency call, fire control personnel should be aware of other potential indicators of how the situation is changing and how this is affecting the people at risk, for example:

- Vocal signals, such as:
 - Raised or lowered voice
 - Rapid or slow speech
 - Periods of silence
 - Coughing or spluttering
 - Sounds in the background from other people at risk
- Alarms actuating

If fire control personnel identify any change in the situation, or the advice given to the people at risk changes, this should be communicated verbally to operational personnel immediately. If the situational information received from operational personnel requires a change of advice, this should be immediately relayed to all people at risk.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control measure knowledge

Situational awareness

Continued...

Hazard – Calls from or about multiple people at risk contain further information.

Fire control personnel and operational personnel should reach a shared understanding of risk, which should be used to identify whether advice to people at risk should change.

Specific information gathered by operational personnel about the location and number of people who are at risk should be shared with the appropriate sector on the incident ground and with fire control personnel.

Timely, efficient and proactive communication is necessary to ensure that shared situational awareness is maintained.

Where possible, contact should be maintained with people at risk until they have reached a place of safety. If the people at risk are already in a place of safety or contact cannot be maintained, then a method of recontacting the caller should be agreed and recorded within the incident log.

Contact may not be maintained when, for example:

- The caller is calling from a landline that does not have a cordless handset
- The caller has a cordless handset that needs to be taken out of range of its base unit
- The mobile phone signal is poor or device battery low

Fire control personnel may receive emergency calls from people who are not at risk or from friends and relatives indicating that there could be people at risk.

Where these calls are about incidents involving fire, they should be categorised as 'persons reported' and details regarding the specific location, name, age, and ability of people at risk, if known, should be recorded within the incident log and passed to operational personnel promptly.

People at the scene of an incident may be on the phone to people who are inside the building or area and may attempt to pass the phone to operational personnel for them to provide advice, guidance and reassurance.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Situational awareness

Continued...

In such situations, operational personnel should inform people at the scene or people at risk on the phone to clear the line and dial 999 to speak to fire control personnel who can provide appropriate guidance.

Emergency call supervision

To ensure prompt mobilisation of resources the fire control commander, another supervisory manager or suitably experienced team member may mobilise appropriate resources to an incident while an emergency call is ongoing. This will allow the fire control emergency call taker to focus on providing safety advice or survival guidance.

Other emergency control rooms

When calls are received from other Category 1 and 2 emergency control rooms about people at risk, fire control personnel should request all information gathered by the other agency during the call.

Fire control personnel should apply appropriate questioning techniques to obtain additional information to enable

them to mobilise an appropriate fire and rescue service response.

In-vehicle safety systems

For incidents involving people who have been involved in a road traffic collision and are trapped or unable to dial 999 manually, the use of in-vehicle safety systems may help to provide information to emergency control room personnel.

Emergency calls may be received from vehicles with eCall, where a call is generated manually by the vehicle occupants or automatically via activation of in-vehicle sensors following a collision.

The system allows the vehicle occupants to communicate verbally if they can, and vehicle location data is also sent to the call handling agent. This data can be passed to fire control personnel, enhancing their situational awareness.

Likewise, emergency calls may be received from vehicles that have a Telematics service that uses mobile phone technology linked to global positioning system (GPS) information from satellites.

This service sends a message to a call handling agent with vehicle and location data prior to setting up a voice call.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Situational awareness

Continued...

When an eCall or Telematics call is connected to the fire control room, the emergency operator will highlight that the call is an 'eCall mobile' or 'Telematics mobile' and give the GPS location information.

If there is a delay in receipt of the location data, the emergency operator will interrupt with location details when it becomes available.

If the caller cannot supply the information required, fire control personnel can ask the emergency operator for further details and can usually obtain the direction of travel, make, model, colour and registration of the vehicle or its identification number, and sometimes other personal information supplied by the customer.

Some vehicles have safety systems that, if the car is involved in an accident where the airbag is deployed or the fuel pump cut off, will make an emergency call from the customer's mobile phone.

When the call handling agent receives the

call, a message will be played giving the geographic co-ordinates of the caller's location.

If the call is silent, or there are problems obtaining the location from the caller, the call playback facility can be used to allow the co-ordinates to be played directly to fire control personnel.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Joint understanding of risk

Joint understanding of risk can be achieved by sharing information about known, likely and potential impacts of hazards.

The sharing of information will allow all hazards to be considered, and their risks understood.

A joint understanding of risk should be maintained between fire control and operational personnel as well as other responding agencies when handling calls from or about people at risk.

This will support the safety of operational personnel and other emergency responders, reduce the impact that the hazards may have on members of the public and operational personnel and allow a co-ordinated response to an incident.

To prevent a delay in the sharing of risk-critical information with operational personnel or other control rooms, the fire control commander should ensure that information from an emergency call that is in progress is shared with operational personnel and other agencies.

This task may be allocated to another member of the team.

When it is established during emergency call management that there are persons reported or persons trapped, the use of appropriate incident types within the mobilising system will provide an early alert to operational personnel.

If new information is obtained after mobilisation has taken place indicating that there are persons reported or persons trapped, this should be communicated promptly to operational personnel and additional resources mobilised if appropriate.

‘Persons reported’ declarations or information indicating that there are persons trapped should be passed to other emergency service control rooms promptly to enable them carry out effective risk assessment, prioritisation and response mobilisation.

When an ‘all persons accounted for’ message is received, or a message is received that states people trapped have been released, fire control personnel should confirm with the incident commander whether other responding agencies are still required to attend, and for what reason.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Joint understanding of risk

Continued...

This new information should be shared promptly with other agencies, allowing them to carry out a further risk assessment and to adjust their response if necessary.

When sharing incident information, the **M/ETHANE** structure should be considered. Incident information may be shared with:

- Operational personnel
- Fire and rescue service command officers
- Fire and rescue service specialist officers and emergency responders
- Other fire control rooms
- Other emergency service control rooms

To ensure the most up-to-date and accurate information is shared, the collation of information in the M/ETHANE structure should be easily identifiable within the incident log and any changes to the M/ETHANE information should be updated promptly. This will ensure all

those viewing the log can easily locate current information.

To support the effective and timely sharing of information, a single method of communication should be agreed and established with operational personnel and other agencies to allow information to be shared and received.

The options available include:

- The use of a dedicated radio channel to communicate with operational personnel
- The use of a telecommunications link or conference call
- Using the Emergency Services Inter Control (ESICTRL) talkgroup

When deciding which method of communication to use, consideration should be given to the most appropriate method that will support timely, efficient and accurate sharing of risk-critical information.

Where possible, methods of communication should be via a system that is recorded. This will allow the review and validation of information when required.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Joint understanding of risk

Continued...

To support consistency of the information shared, a single point of contact between fire control and the incident should be established.

This should also be considered for the sharing of information between fire control and other emergency service control rooms.

Before operational personnel are in attendance and a command structure or a command point has been established, information regarding people at risk should be shared with responding operational personnel via an agreed method that enables officers in charge to confirm receipt of information.

Once operational personnel are in attendance and a command point has been designated, ongoing communication and sharing of information should take place via this channel.

Fire control personnel should be informed what the designated command point is, and this should be recorded and made clear on the incident log.

If fire control personnel cannot make contact or share information with operational personnel via the designated method of communication while enroute to an incident, or with the designated command point once in attendance, efforts should be made to make contact via alternative methods, for example:

- Mobile phone or radio for an alternative fire appliance that is enroute or in attendance
- Mobile phone or radio for an officer who is enroute or in attendance
- Mobile Data Terminal (MDT)
- Pager message or other direct messaging method

To support joint understanding of risk, procedures should be in place for incident commanders to provide regular updates to fire control personnel about people at risk.

Any critical information received in fire control should be shared with all fire control personnel using an agreed method.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Joint understanding of risk

Continued...

Critical information may be shared electronically or verbally, and fire control personnel should confirm that they have understood. This should then be recorded appropriately. Examples of critical information in this context include:

- A change in evacuation strategy
- A change to the advice or guidance that fire control personnel are giving

Emergency calls may be routed to other fire control rooms. If these calls involve persons reported or people who are trapped and are receiving survival guidance, they should be prioritised appropriately and all information regarding the people at risk and the advice they have been given should be shared with the host fire control room using agreed methods.

This will enable the information to be shared with operational personnel and other agencies to support a joint understanding of risk.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Effective Communication

Effective communication is essential to ensure people at risk are provided with clear and direct information and instructions.

Fire control personnel should provide only factual information to the person at risk, such as information received from the incident ground. Any reassurance provided should not lead the caller to develop a false sense of security. It may be inappropriate to offer reassurance to the caller if the only course of action to save their life is to attempt evacuation.

On such occasions, the advice must be both clear and robust in its delivery, leaving the caller in no doubt as to the seriousness of their situation.

The use of appropriate techniques when communicating with people at risk can support:

- The gathering of accurate information
- Building trust and confidence, which may help people at risk to follow the advice and guidance they are being given
- People at risk remaining calm

- People at risk clearly understanding the risks they face and the actions they should take
- The prevention of putting more people at risk

It should be recognised that, despite fire control personnel adopting a range of appropriate techniques, people at risk still may not follow the advice or guidance given.

People at risk may be emotionally distressed, worried, confused or afraid. Repetitive persistence is a tool that can be used to calm emotional callers by using repeated phrases in a firm, even tone.

It involves repeating a question using the same words but accompanying it with a reason for the request, for example 'Tell me where you are, so that I can tell the firefighters your location'.

Should the person at risk be verbally abusive or aggressive, fire control personnel should remain calm and explain why the questions are being asked and how they are going to help.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Effective Communication

Continued...

Remarks should not be taken personally, and fire control personnel should not react with a matching response. Using different questioning styles and displaying empathy may help in these situations.

Fire control personnel may need to adapt their communication technique during emergency calls to overcome any communication barriers. Example techniques include:

- Using different questioning styles
- Listening effectively
- Displaying empathy
- Providing appropriate reassurance

Building rapport

To encourage people at risk to listen, trust and follow the advice they are being given, fire control personnel may need to establish, build and maintain rapport with them. Elements of building rapport include:

- Approachableness – Being calm and open

- Sharing knowledge – Giving information about what is happening. For example, 'The firefighters are on the way'
- Empathy – Tone of voice
- Providing advice – 'Keep away from the building'

Building and maintaining rapport may help to develop trust with people at risk. This can help to break down barriers and give people confidence in the advice they are being given and the actions they are being asked to take, however this should be balanced with the need to avoid leading the caller into false sense of security.

The sharing of names may help to personalise a conversation, build rapport and add individuality to the call. Asking for the caller's name and using it throughout the call may help the person at risk to feel that they have the full attention of fire control personnel.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Effective Communication

Continued...

Where possible, the vocabulary that fire control personnel use should match that of the person they are communicating with. Where people at risk use specific words to describe something, fire control personnel should use the same words when relevant and appropriate.

When appropriate, fire control personnel may consider having a conversation with the person at risk that is unrelated to the incident, for example asking them about themselves, their family or work. This may help to keep people calm.

Empathy

Having empathy for people at risk can also support effective communication.

Empathy can be described as the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation.

Developing empathy is crucial for behaving compassionately.

Compassionate empathy is about feeling concern for someone and either taking action or helping a person to take action to resolve a situation. Compassionate

empathy when communicating with people at risk and during survival guidance situations is crucial because fire control personnel will be encouraging people to take action.

Demonstrating compassionate empathy and building rapport will help to gain co-operation and build collaboration between fire control personnel and people at risk.

Empathy can be displayed by being natural and calm when communicating with people at risk; adopting a natural tone and a less formal way of speaking will help to achieve this.

Using empathetic language to clarify the situation that people at risk are experiencing may help to establish effective communication.

Phrases such as: 'I want to make sure that I really understand what you're telling me, and I'm hearing that...' will help to ensure that fire control personnel have accurate information and give people at risk the opportunity to correct them.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Effective Communication

Continued...

Examples of empathetic statements include:

- 'I understand this is not easy for you, but you are handling it well'
- 'This must be difficult for you'
- 'This must be distressing'
- 'I can hear it in your voice that you are anxious'

People at risk may disengage during continual reassessment of the situation, becoming frustrated by the ongoing questioning. This could be because they do not understand why the questions are being asked or why specific advice is being given, or they believe that the questions are delaying help being sent.

Fire control personnel should ask clear and relevant questions about the caller's circumstances; explaining why they are asking questions and giving advice may support people's understanding.

For example, questions refer to *Control measure – Situational awareness: People at risk*.

Reassurance

Reassurance means providing words of advice and comfort to make someone feel less worried. Reassurance given by fire control personnel to people at risk who are receiving survival guidance may help to put them at ease and should be used where appropriate, however it should be factual and should not lead them into a false sense of security.

Phrases such as 'I am going to give you advice to try and keep you safe' and an explanation of 'what I am doing to help you' are examples of compassionate and attentive language.

They provide an explanation of what action is going to be taken and help provide reassurance to people at risk. Phrases such as 'I can appreciate how difficult it is to...' create trust and mutual understanding and may help to break down barriers.

Support and encouragement should be given to the caller throughout; however this should not result in people at risk being led into a false sense of security.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Effective Communication

Continued...

Over-reassuring people at risk may lead to complacency and over-familiarity, possibly resulting in the caller having a reduced understanding or awareness of the severity of the situation they face.

Fire control personnel should aim to adopt communication techniques that balance the need to be calming and reassuring while being honest, leaving the caller in no doubt as to the reality of the situation. An honest and authoritative approach may be needed when people at risk need to take specific actions to increase their chances of survival.

Because situations can change rapidly and affect the risk level at incidents, it is vital that fire control personnel continually reassess and review the information gathered for accuracy to maintain situational awareness, including when reassurance is being given to people at risk.

Informing people at risk that operational personnel are on their way may also provide some reassurance.

However, there may be occasions where operational personnel will not arrive imminently, therefore consideration should be given as to whether informing people at risk of the exact location of operational personnel will have a negative impact on them.

Fire control personnel cannot guarantee the rescue, safety or survival of people at risk, so they should not make any promises.

Information regarding deployments of operational personnel to attempt to rescue people at risk should be shared with fire control personnel to enable them to maintain situational awareness and to provide an update to the caller when appropriate.

It should be recognised that the deployment of operational personnel does not guarantee that they will successfully arrive at the location of the person at risk.

In rare circumstances operational personnel may inform fire control personnel that a person cannot be rescued, and it is possible that they may not survive.



Calls from or about people
at risk



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Effective Communication

Continued...

Such situations should be handled sensitively and with compassion. Words of comfort such as 'I'm here for you' or 'It's ok to feel scared' may be appropriate. Effective emergency call supervision should be available to support fire control personnel during such situations and to help to establish when it may be appropriate to end the call.

Consideration needs to be given to the welfare and mental health of fire control personnel following calls from people at risk. The use of trauma support mechanisms should be considered to support the mental health of fire control personnel following the handling of emotionally distressing calls.



Calls from or about people
at risk



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Evacuation guidance

Evacuation is the immediate and urgent movement of people away from a threatened or existing hazard.

Successful evacuation can save lives and reduce risks to operational personnel and people at risk.

Evacuation guidance can be given in the following circumstances:

- When people at risk are not trapped but should immediately evacuate because they are being affected by the hazard
- When people at risk are not trapped but the hazard conditions are worsening and remaining in their current location may cause harm to people at risk or lead them to become trapped
- When survival guidance is being given and, through continuous evaluation of information received from the incident ground, it is no longer safe for people at risk to stay where they are and evacuation must be attempted to enhance the chances of survival

- When the building that people at risk are in is known to have a simultaneous evacuation strategy

It is the responsibility of fire control personnel to use effective emergency call management techniques to identify whether people at risk cannot evacuate and require survival guidance.

Where it is identified that an evacuation route is available, people at risk should be advised to 'Get out and stay out'.

People at risk should attempt to safely move away from the hazard as soon as possible to avoid injury.

Evacuation should take place using the nearest safest exit. When the nearest exit is compromised and cannot be used, alternative exits should be explored with people at risk.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Evacuation guidance

Continued...

People at risk may need to evacuate due to:

- An act of terrorism
- The actual or threatened release of hazardous substances
- Fire
- An unstable or collapsed structure
- A risk of explosion
- Severe weather, including widespread flooding
- Environmental contamination
- Transport incidents

There may be a delay in people at risk evacuating: they may be physically able to evacuate, but they may believe they cannot do so – in which case they may take actions before evacuating that result in a delay – or they may choose not to.

This could be due to:

- Normal evacuation routes or exits being locked or blocked
- Injuries sustained or physical limitations

- Attempting to rescue, or being unwilling to leave, another person, animal or possession
- Emotional distress or fear
- Religious, cultural or social beliefs
- An attempt to minimise or stop the hazard
- Alerting other people who are at risk about the hazard
- Misunderstanding or miscommunication about evacuation strategy or policies



Calls from or about people
at risk



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Evacuation guidance

Techniques to assist evacuation

Some people at risk may be reluctant to leave when told to do so because they perceive that the conditions outside their current location are more hazardous. Fire control personnel should make every effort to fully explore the situation and encourage people at risk to follow the guidance being given.

Explaining the benefits of evacuating and informing people at risk what they can expect when they evacuate may help to encourage them to do so. **For example:**

- ‘There are firefighters outside who will help’
- ‘They may give you something to help you breathe better’
- ‘There is less smoke outside’

Information about the benefits of evacuating should be accurate and should not be based on assumptions, therefore confirmation should be sought from operational personnel before the advice is given.

There may be people at risk who, due to their culture or religious beliefs, may be

unwilling to follow the advice or guidance given by fire control personnel or they may take actions that result in a delay in evacuating.

This may be due to:

- An unwillingness to leave behind a sacred or holy item
- An unwillingness to treat a sacred or holy item in a way that is deemed disrespectful
- Getting dressed appropriately before evacuating
- Refusal to speak to fire control personnel of the opposite sex

Some sacred or holy items are seen as living things and are treated with the same respect as a human.

There may be occasions where people at risk would prefer to be in an unsafe environment and put themselves at additional risk than to treat a religious or sacred item in a way that is deemed disrespectful. This is recognised behaviour in an emergency situation and may result in people not carrying out the actions asked of them.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Evacuation guidance

Continued...

While the desire to get dressed before evacuating is not confined to people who follow a specific religion, people whose religious beliefs include dressing in a specific way may be more likely to resist evacuation before doing so. Within some religions, being seen without specific items of clothing may be deemed as disrespectful.

During situations where people are delaying or refusing to evacuate due to their cultural or religious beliefs, the same encouraging approach that explains the benefits of evacuating should be used. Continual reinforcement of the need to evacuate should be applied.

People at risk who will not evacuate may be given advice on how best to protect themselves. Information about the caller's specific location should be passed to operational personnel. In such situations consideration should be given to the provision of fire survival guidance.

Behaviours of people during evacuation

Research into crowd behaviour has identified some generic behaviours regarding evacuation:

- Family members prefer to evacuate as a group, and will delay their exit until all family members are ready
- Parents are more likely to put the safety of their children first
- Groups of friends prefer to evacuate together

It should be recognised that these behaviours may result in slow or delayed evacuation, and that guidance or encouragement by fire control personnel to do things differently may be ignored.

When evacuating, people at risk should be encouraged to make other people aware of the hazard by actuating any available alarms or alert systems. However, raising the alarm should not delay evacuation and should not place anyone at any additional risk.



Calls from or about people
at risk



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Alternative means of exit

When people at risk perceive they cannot evacuate due to normal exits being locked or blocked, they may be able to evacuate via alternative exits, such as:

- Windows
- Balconies
- Doors or stairs

When evacuating through a window, consideration needs to be given to the:

- Height of the window
- Who or what is outside and below the window

When evacuation through a window is required, efforts should be made to use windows on the ground floor or windows with stable ground beneath them, such as a flat roof.

As a last resort, and in case of imminent danger, escape can be made from a first-floor window, climbing out feet first and lowering to arm's length before dropping from the window. Where dropping to a hard surface, soft objects such as bedding should be used to break the fall.

If more than one adult is trapped with a

child or children and they are required to leave the premises via a window, one adult should leave first and the children passed down before any other adults leave.

If a window cannot be opened, a firm blow aimed at the corner of the pane with a hard, sharp object will help to break the glass. Glass left at the edges should be knocked out and, if possible, sharp edges should be covered to prevent injury.

Before advising people at risk to break a window, consideration should be given to anyone who may be below the window and could be injured by falling glass. Where possible, people at risk should avoid standing in front of the window due to the risk of exploding glass. Careful consideration should be given when advising people at risk to break a window, as once the glass is broken it cannot be undone.



Calls from or about people at risk



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People at risk assisting others during evacuation

Where people at risk cannot evacuate due to injuries sustained or their physical limitations, other people may be able to aid their evacuation. People typically remain structured, organised, helpful, co-operative and co-ordinated during evacuations, and they are usually willing to help. Nevertheless, it may be appropriate to prompt people to assist, provided that it does not put them at any additional risk.

The severity or location of the hazard may change as an incident develops or the longer the person is at risk. This may result in:

- Operational personnel being unable to rescue people who are trapped
- A requirement to change the advice or evacuation guidance that was initially given by fire control personnel

Changes in evacuation strategy

If operational personnel cannot rescue people who are trapped and immediate evacuation is required, even in difficult conditions, the incident commander

should communicate this immediately to the fire control commander.

Due to the potential level of activity in fire control, calls to non-emergency lines may not be answered. Therefore, direct contact with the fire control commander to discuss a change in evacuation strategy should take place using either:

- An appropriate radio channel, or
- A direct line that is assigned the appropriate level of priority, for example a fire control commander's mobile phone or another priority line

Any telephone numbers that may be used to communicate directly with fire control and the fire control commander should be available to operational personnel and incident commanders.

Due to the impact on the advice and guidance given by fire control personnel to people at risk, any decision to change an evacuation strategy should be made in consultation with the fire control commander and should not be implemented on the incident ground until such a consultation has taken place.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
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Changes in evacuation strategy

Continued ...

Miscommunication or misunderstanding regarding changes to an evacuation strategy can lead to a delay in evacuation and fire control personnel giving incorrect advice to people at risk.

Where reasonably practicable, methods to assist the self-evacuation of people at risk while having minimal impact on operational activities should be discussed with operational personnel. This may include:

- The location of operational activities taking place
- Preferred egress routes, such as specific staircases to use or avoid
- Any protective equipment or strategies that are being used to assist with evacuation

The fire control commander should communicate any changes to an evacuation strategy to all fire control personnel as soon as possible. This communication may be electronic or verbal, and confirmation that fire control personnel have received and understood

the information should be recorded within the incident log.

A change in evacuation strategy may mean the initial advice given by fire control personnel to people at risk is no longer appropriate. In such situations, attempts should be made to contact all known people at risk to give them the updated evacuation advice. This includes:

- People at risk who were told it should be safe to stay where they are as they were not experiencing effects from the hazard
- Survival guidance callers with whom fire control personnel are no longer in contact

Clear and direct instructions will leave people at risk in no doubt as to what action should be taken.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Changes in evacuation strategy

Continued ...

A consistent approach to the guidance and instruction given by fire control personnel should result in people at risk receiving the same information. This includes:

- Who is calling, for example fire service, fire brigade or fire control
- The instruction to be given, for example you must immediately evacuate or leave
- A reason for the instruction being given, for example the hazard or the conditions have deteriorated or are deteriorating
- Preferred exit routes, if known
- Guidance to help with safe evacuation

If contact with a person at risk cannot be made, a voicemail should be left, or as a last resort a SMS text message sent, containing the time of the call and clear and direct instructions describing the action they should take if they hear the message.

When remaining in an environment reduces the likelihood of people at risk

surviving and their only option is to evacuate, the severity of the situation should be made clear to people at risk and that evacuation is their only option for survival.

For guidance on providing information about a change of advice to multiple people refer to *Control measure – Recontacting multiple people at risk to provide a change of advice*.

Communal buildings and modes of transport

Where people at risk are within a communal building or mode of transport, they should initially follow the evacuation guidance provided by the transport operators or the building owners. This may include finding emergency exits on public transport or in public buildings and following evacuation policies and procedures.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
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Safety Advice

It is likely that safety advice will need to be passed on in some form during all incidents where people are, or have the potential to be, at risk. This may include:

- Providing safety advice to people who are indirectly involved in the incident, for example advising members of the public to close windows and doors
- Providing safety advice to prevent more people being put at risk, for example advising members of the public to avoid the area where the incident is located
- Advising other people who may be at risk to raise the alarm

When providing safety advice to people at risk, additional advice can be given to prevent escalation of the incident, for example to isolate power.

Safety advice will vary depending on the incident. Safety advice should only be actioned where it is safe to do so.

Where there are people at risk in the hazard area, operational personnel will prioritise the rescue of people at risk before attempts are made to save the

property, contents or animals. Therefore, people unnecessarily entering the hazard area may delay operational personnel managing the incident and dealing with the hazard. People at risk should be instructed to 'Get out and stay out', leaving them in no doubt as to what they should do.

People at risk who have been advised to 'Stay put' should also be informed that if the conditions they are experiencing change, if the hazard gets worse or they become directly affected, they should redial 999. For more information about 'Stay put' advice refer to *Hazard – Calls from or about people at risk: Fire*.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
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Share information with other agencies

Support or assistance may be requested from other agencies for matters including:

- Casualty care
- Crowd control and public disorder
- Road closures
- Evacuation
- Refuge centre or emergency accommodation
- Assistance for incidents that may not normally require attendance of a fire service
- Rescue of people at risk
- Right Care, Right Person

When requesting the attendance of other agencies, information should be provided to allow responding agencies to allocate appropriate resources. A M/ETHANE message should be used to share incident details.

Other agencies may hold additional risk information in relation to the premises or people at risk. Gathering this information as early as possible may support the safe resolution of the incident. It is essential that additional information obtained is

recorded and shared with operational personnel at the earliest opportunity.

Fire control personnel may receive emergency calls that require the attendance of more than one emergency service. The call handling agent will provide a verbal handover if it is known at the outset that more than one emergency service is needed. Fire control personnel should confirm with the call handling agent whether they will pass call details to the other emergency services, or whether the call handling agent will remain on the call and connect the caller to the other emergency services that have been requested.

If fire control personnel believe that the caller requires urgent medical guidance, the call handling agent should be asked to remain on the call to ensure connection to the ambulance service without delay.

If the call handling agent has not remained on the call and the caller needs to speak to another emergency service, fire control personnel should ask the caller to stay on the line while they disconnect themselves.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Share information with other agencies

Continued ...

When fire control personnel disconnect from the call, it will be represented to the call handling agent for connection to the required emergency service.

This process should also be followed for callers needing the assistance of all other emergency services. More information can be found in PECS Code of Practice.

Right Care, Right Person

The concept of Right Care, Right Person has its origins in the National Health Service (NHS) and policing. It is an approach designed to ensure that when there are concerns for a person's welfare linked to their mental health, medical or social care issues, a simple principle guides the response. That is the right person with the right skills, training and experience should provide the appropriate level of care and support. Ensuring care is provided by the agency that can best meet the individual's needs should be the overriding objective; in many cases this will not be the police or the fire and rescue service.

The National Partnership Agreement: Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) has been adopted by some police forces in England and Wales through the implementation of the College of Policing Right Care Right Person (RCRP) toolkit.

Although not bound by the National Partnership Agreement, fire and rescue services should make themselves aware of the approaches that are being used by police forces in their area, and the impact these may have on their fire control, operational and other activities. There may be a benefit in developing a memorandum of understanding with local services, including the police and the NHS, for Right Care, Right Person approaches.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Use media to share information

During incidents or events where people are at risk, social media messages and press releases can be used to assist by:

- Providing widespread safety advice
- Sharing public information messages from other agencies to assist in reaching the largest audience possible
- Sharing contact details and web links with agencies who can provide additional advice, guidance or assistance

Social media messages or press statements may be used to advise members of the public about actions to take to reduce harm, when to contact the fire and rescue service regarding an ongoing incident relating to people at risk, or to provide information to support evacuation, including:

- Advising members of the public during widespread flooding incidents to only ring 999 if the water is entering the property or if people are at risk
- Advising members of the public to keep doors and windows closed to keep smoke out

- Providing the location details of refuge centres that have been set up to support people at risk who have been displaced

However, as with any method of reducing and filtering calls, there is a risk that calls containing valuable additional information about the incident or people at risk may not be made, so any public messaging advising that 999 calls should only be made in certain situations should be considered carefully.

Due to the potential increased workload of fire control personnel when dealing with incidents from or about multiple people at risk, press or media support from a media and communications team or media liaison officer should be considered.

It is important to avoid unnecessary public alarm when using social media to share information and advice, so any statements and messages should be worded carefully.

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Control
measure
knowledge

Use media to share information

Continued ...

During multi-agency incidents, it is likely that a joint media and communications strategy will be established, and a lead organisation agreed. Any press releases or social media messages should be in line with the agreed media and communications strategy.

When it has been determined that social media statements or press releases will be managed by the police or another agency, all fire control personnel must be made aware, and details added to the incident log.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Tactical actions

Situational awareness

Fire control personnel should:

- ✓ Use professional judgement, emergency call management techniques and available risk information to develop situational awareness
- ✓ Appropriately identify and categorise incidents as 'persons reported'
- ✓ Appropriately identify and categorise incidents as 'persons trapped'
- ✓ Establish whether survival guidance is required
- ✓ Establish a method of recontacting people at risk if required
- ✓ Establish the condition, number, age and ability of the people who are at risk and their location in relation to the incident
- ✓ Establish whether people at risk are in, or are able to move to a place of safety, and away from any immediate hazards
- ✓ If possible, maintain contact with the caller until people at risk have been rescued
- ✓ Continually reassess the situation and recognise signs that the situation may be changing or deteriorating
- ✓ Consider instructing people at risk to evacuate immediately or move to a different location if it is recognised that the situation has deteriorated, and they are in imminent danger of death or physical harm
- ✓ Continually exchange information between fire control and operational personnel, and use that information to develop shared situational awareness and amend safety advice and guidance as required
- ✓ Obtain all information gathered by other Category 1 and 2 emergency control personnel during emergency call management
- ✓ Use information obtained from in-vehicle safety systems for locating incidents where people are at risk



Calls from or about people
at risk



Tactical actions

Joint understanding of risk

Fire control personnel should:

- ✓ Update incident logs with complete, clear and accurate information
- ✓ Ensure information gathered during ongoing emergency calls is shared appropriately within fire control
- ✓ Inform operational personnel if an incident becomes 'persons reported' after mobilisation has taken place
- ✓ Share relevant information, including 'persons reported' incidents, using the M/ETHANE structure when appropriate
- ✓ Ensure M/ETHANE information is recorded on the incident log and updated promptly
- ✓ Use agreed methods of communication with operational personnel
- ✓ Communicate effectively with other Category 1 emergency control rooms
- ✓ Communicate effectively with other fire control rooms
- ✓ Consider nominating and maintaining a single point of contact within the fire control room to communicate with other fire and emergency service control rooms
- ✓ Agree a method for fire control personnel to indicate acknowledgement and understanding of risk-critical information
- ✓ Share all appropriate information with the host fire control room if a misrouted call is received



Calls from or about people
at risk



Tactical actions

Effective Communication

Fire control personnel should:

- ✓ Provide clear, direct instructions to people at risk, allowing sufficient time for instructions to be understood and carried out.
- ✓ Provide factual information only, using calm and appropriate reassurance to support compliance and reduce distress.
- ✓ Identify barriers to communication and adapt the approach to suit the caller's needs, abilities and circumstances.
- ✓ Use appropriate questioning and listening techniques to gather accurate information and continually reassess the caller's situation.
- ✓ Use effective communication techniques to build rapport and maintain engagement with the caller until assistance arrives.
- ✓ Support rescue by establishing whether the caller can self-rescue, what is causing entrapment, whether the entrapment is stable, whether injuries or pain are present, and whether other people are involved and conscious.
- ✓ Sensitively establish whether the caller has any disability or impairment that may affect their ability to self-rescue or follow instructions, applying relevant protocols where they exist.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Tactical actions

Effective Communication

Fire control personnel should:

- ✓ Consider the use of trauma support mechanisms following distressing or traumatic incidents.
- ✓ Consider the following positive suggested phrases to use:
 - "The Fire Brigade is on the way"
 - "The firefighters will be with you very soon"
 - "Listen to me, I'm going to help you"
 - "I'm going to talk to you until the firefighters arrive"
 - "What happened?"

Assist in rescue

- "Can you free yourself?"
- "What is trapping you in the wreckage?"
- "Are you injured and/or are you in pain?"
- "Is what is trapping you stable?"
- "Are you on your own or are there others involved?"
- "If yes, are they conscious?"

- "Everyone is coming to help you"

- ✓ It should be sensitively established if the caller has any disability that may affect them effecting their own rescue or carrying out any of these actions. Where protocols exist, they should be used.

Medical advice

- ✓ If the caller asks for medical advice, stay calm and reassure them that medical assistance, i.e., an ambulance will be with them shortly
- ✓ They can be told to breathe slowly, stay calm stay awake



Calls from or about people
at risk



Tactical actions

Evacuation guidance

Fire control personnel should:

- ✓ Use risk information, questioning techniques and professional judgement to assist callers to reach a place where they should be safe until operational personnel arrive
- ✓ Maintain contact with the caller, where possible, until the people at risk are in a place of relative safety
- ✓ Agree a method of recontacting the caller when contact is not being maintained
- ✓ Advise people at risk to 'Get out and stay out' when an evacuation route is available and where they can do so safely
- ✓ Advise callers on actions to minimise risk to themselves and others when evacuating
- ✓ Provide clear and direct instructions when advising people to evacuate
- ✓ Where normal exits are locked or blocked, establish whether alternative exits are available and provide appropriate advice on how to use them to evacuate safely
- ✓ Advise callers to actuate alarms or alert systems, where safe to do so, or to shout to alert others to the hazard
- ✓ Advise callers in a communal form of transport or building to initially follow the evacuation guidance provided by the operators or owners
- ✓ Give water safety advice and water survival guidance if the caller is evacuating into water
- ✓ Establish if others can assist the caller's evacuation where they cannot evacuate
- ✓ Advise callers not to re-enter the place of evacuation to search for personal belongings or animals
- ✓ Provide incident commanders with information from other credible sources that may indicate building failures
- ✓ Contact callers to assist in self-evacuation, according to the prioritisation agreed with operational personnel and the fire control commander



Calls from or about people
at risk



Tactical actions

Safety Advice

Fire control personnel should:

- ✓ Use their professional judgement to provide relevant safety advice to people at risk
- ✓ Provide safety advice to assist in preventing the escalation of the incident
- ✓ Provide safety advice to assist in the personal safety of people at risk
- ✓ Provide safety advice to prevent more people being put at risk
- ✓ Advise people at risk to 'Get out and stay out' when appropriate and where they can do so safely
- ✓ Confirm that people at risk are safe to action the advice being given
- ✓ Advise people at risk to recontact the fire service on 999 if the situation they are experiencing deteriorates

Safety advice for callers

- ✓ The Remove principles are to be shared with the caller:

- Remove themselves
- Remove outer clothing
- Remove the substance

If the caller is in open air:

- ✓ Instruct caller to do the following and to encourage others in the vicinity to do the same:
- ✓ Move away from the source – upwind and preferably uphill (walk into the wind)
- ✓ Assist others who are either injured or less able to carry out tasks, if possible
- ✓ Avoid eating, drinking, smoking or touching the face and eyes

Continued ...



Calls from or about people
at risk



Tactical actions

Safety Advice

Fire control personnel should:

- ✓ Remove outer clothing but do not pull clothing over the head unless absolutely necessary.
- ✓ Once clothing is removed, if possible, use absorbent tissue or paper towels to first blot and then rub exposed skin.
- ✓ Wash with water if there are signs of exposure to caustic substances (e.g. itching or pain).
- ✓ Then move away again upwind and preferably uphill.
- ✓ Avoid seeking hospital care – inform the caller that medical assistance is on its way.
- ✓ Wait for the emergency services to arrive and act upon their instruction.

If the caller is in an enclosed space or inside a building:

- ✓ Evacuate the affected area – consider use of the fire alarm system (where appropriate).
- ✓ Consider route out of the building and that the majority of gases are heavier than air.

- ✓ Consider shutting down air-conditioning, fans and air recirculation systems but only where this action would not delay evacuation.
- ✓ If unable to leave, close all doors and windows and seal them where possible. Monitor TV and radio for further information.

Once outside follow 'outside' advice detailed above.



Calls from or about people
at risk



Tactical actions

Share information with other agencies

Fire control personnel should:

- ✓ Request other agencies for incidents involving people at risk
- ✓ Share information about people at risk with other agencies
- ✓ Gather additional risk information from other agencies and use this to assist with mobilisation, safety advice and survival guidance for people at risk
- ✓ Use the call handling agent to transfer the call to the relevant emergency service control when medical or other critical advice is required
- ✓ Follow the procedures provided when managing calls where Right Care, Right Person principles have been applied by another agency

Use media to share information

Fire control personnel should:

- ✓ Liaise with personnel providing 24/7 media support where appropriate
- ✓ Use communication channels and social media to provide appropriate information and advice



Document information

Dates

Issue status	Date
Issued	21/04/2026
Last amended	
Reviewed as current	
Next review	21/04/2029

Assessments

Impact type	Date
Equalities (EIA)	30/03/26
Sustainability (SDIA)	L - 25/03/26
Health & Safety (HSWIA)	02/04/26
Risk Assessment (RA)	02/03/26

Product pack

Multiple calls and multiple incidents
Emergency call management – people at risk

Audit trail

Page/Para number:	Brief description of change:	Date