

# Technical Fire Safety Information, Communication and Advice Plan

## Standard Operating Procedure: TFS - 024

### Document Overview: -

This document outlines Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (Wiltshire FRS) Technical Fire Safety (TFS) Information Communication and Advice (ICA) policy and procedure. The policies contained in this document are aimed at ensuring that Wiltshire FRS adhere to best practice and optimum stakeholder service.

### Contents

1.0	<a href="#">Introduction</a>
2.0	<a href="#">TFS Information Policy</a>
2.21	<a href="#">TFS Information Planning and Implementation</a>
2.28	<a href="#">TFS Information Monitoring and Performance</a>
2.30	<a href="#">TFS Information Audit and Review</a>
3.0	<a href="#">Technical Fire Safety Communication</a>
3.2	<a href="#">TFS Communication – Internal Policy</a>
3.3	<a href="#">TFS Communication – External Policy</a>
3.4	<a href="#">TFS Communication - Organisation</a>
3.12	<a href="#">TFS Communication Planning and Implementation</a>
3.18	<a href="#">TFS Communication – Monitoring and Performance</a>
3.20	<a href="#">TFS Communication – Audit and Review</a>
4.0	<a href="#">TFS Advice Policies</a>
4.2	<a href="#">TFS Non Statutory Advice Policy</a>
4.6	<a href="#">TFS Statutory Advice Policy</a>
4.7	<a href="#">TFS Advice Organisation</a>
4.12	<a href="#">TFS Advice – Planning and Implementation</a>
4.17	<a href="#">TFS Advice – Monitoring and Performance</a>

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This document has been Equality Impact Assessed in accordance with Wiltshire FRS procedure. To view the assessment click [here](#).

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This document outlines Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (Wiltshire FRS) Technical Fire Safety (TFS) Information Communication and Advice (ICA) policy and procedure. The policies contained in this document are aimed at ensuring that Wiltshire FRS adhere to best practice and optimum stakeholder service.
- 1.2 The work of the TFS department constantly evolves in line with national practice and technological progress; therefore the policies have been devised to ensure that any new procedures demonstrate value for money and relevance for the medium and long term future of the department.
- 1.3 Where the subject matter of this document impacts on the contents of the [Technical Fire Safety Plan](#) the IAC policies and procedures take precedence.
- 1.4 This document is split into four sections:
  - a) Section two: Document Overview:
  - b) Section three: Technical Fire Safety Information
  - c) Section four: Technical Fire Safety Communication
  - d) Section five: Technical Fire Safety Advice
- 1.5 Each section will inherently impact one of the others, but in each instance the dominant factor of the matter has dictated the location in the document.

## **2.0 TFS Information Policy**

- 2.1 The following statements outline our commitment to provide information for stakeholders of Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (Wiltshire FRS) TFS department.
- 2.2 We will provide timely, accurate and easily accessible information to enable responsible persons to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 2.3 We will provide timely, accurate and easily accessible information on our enforcement procedures and what to expect before, during and after an audit.
- 2.4 We will provide timely, accurate and easily accessible information on how we manage our inspection regime within Wiltshire FRS TFS department.
- 2.5 We will provide accurate contact information for persons wishing to contact Wiltshire FRS TFS department.
- 2.6 If we are not able to handle an enquiry, every effort will be made to direct the person to the correct individual or organisation.
- 2.7 TFS Staff will be given access to accurate, concise, and timely technical information to enable them to undertake the functions of their job descriptions, group priorities and reference holder duties.

2.8 We will adhere to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998.

## 2.9 TFS Information: Organisation

TFS will provide information about the following key areas of our work:

- a) Fire safety consultation of building regulation applications
- b) Fire safety audits and enforcement
- c) Fire safety consultation under the Licensing Act 2003
- d) Fire authority consultation under the Town and Planning Act 1990
- e) Unwanted for alarms signals and their reduction
- f) Post incident inspections

2.10 Timely is meant to mean:

- a) As soon as practicable for generic advice
- b) An initial response of four working days for case specific queries<sup>1</sup>
- c) A full response within twenty one working days
- d) If further correspondence is required then the time scales will be discussed on a case by case basis. Consideration should be given to ensuring that the timescales are consistent with the ethics of the TFS information Policy

2.11 Technical Fire Safety Procedure Manager and Technical Fire Safety Policy and Implementation Manager will endeavor to respond to internal queries from the groups within five working days of receipt.

2.12 Accuracy of the information will be maintained to the best efforts of the TFS department. However, the TFS department nor Wiltshire FRS will take responsibility for the information presented in good faith.

2.13 Based on the definition of timely (above) all information will be easily accessible when required. Methods in which this will be achieved include:

- a) Wiltshire FRS Website
- b) Internal Intranet
- c) Leaflets and Booklets
- d) Phone calls (including those to Control)
- e) Verbal discussions and
- f) Standard Letters and paragraphs

2.14 The information will be produced in consideration of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The information presented within TFS will adhere to the principles of Equality Impact Assessment and make every reasonable effort to make all information accessible for those who are considered "Hard to Reach".

2.15 The Information provided in written format (including the website) will be written to ensure that it could be put forward for the Crystal Clear English Mark. The Crystal

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<sup>1</sup> This is subject to the TFS advice policy

Mark has become widely recognised as a guarantee that a document has been written and designed as clearly as possible.

- 2.16 The Information Policy will adhere to the principles of the Enforcement Concordat and in line with directives to Local Authority from the local Better Regulation Office.
- 2.17 This document does not prejudice any formal Memorandum of Understanding with Wiltshire FRS.
- 2.18 Technical information will be provided by Communities Risk Register (CRR) for the benefit of the groups will include the following (not exclusive):
  - a) SOPs and Policy documentation
  - b) Building Regulations Approved Documents (predominately Part B)
  - c) Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Fire Safety Guides
  - d) Information regarding CFRMIS, mobile working and workflow
  - e) Information from Regional and National CFOA working parties
  - f) Legal information and definition from the Services Barrister and Solicitors
  - g) Relevant information from Fire Services Circulars letters and other Services
  - h) Information on TFS Training dates and events
  - i) TFS Annual review and planning documentation
- 2.19 The Communication Policy will actively encourage information being given freely between Community Safety Inspectors (CSI). TFS training days will ensure that a formal opportunity is presented to all staff in addition to the free flow of information which the Information and Communication Policy will promote.
- 2.20 TFS Information will be provided to operational crews as part of their Post Incident Inspections. This procedure is outlined in the Technical Fire Safety Training and Development Plan.

## **2.21 FS Information: Planning and Implementation**

The direction of the implementation of the TFS Information Policy will be from the result of an information, communication and advice review (ICA Review). Each group will be asked to monitor the advice, communication and information requests and delivery. The review will run for three months and is subject to the following objectives:

- a) To determine what information is being requested by external stakeholders
  - b) To determine how external stakeholders contact the TFS department
  - c) To determine to what extent time is allocated to explaining standard letters and paragraphs
  - d) To identify who is to give what information to external stakeholders
- 2.22 For more information regarding the trial the IAC Trial Methodology will provide more detail.
  - 2.23 Once the information from the review has been collated and interrogated to assist with the implementation of the Information policy. That integration will be subject to

an action plan. The Information Action Plan (IAP) will be risk assessed to ensure that the information is presented in relation to the priorities of the TFS department. However, it is recognised that the implementation of the Information Policy is undertaken in conjunction to work at Service Management level and that from other departments. The IAP will give due consideration to those works and make the necessary arrangements to ensure there is no duplication, error or omission.

- 2.24 The Information Policy implementation will include the creation of supporting SOPs and guidelines; accompanied by the necessary training and support for affected staff. Staff will receive suitable training on all material, stationery and equipment introduced as a result of the IAP and Information Policy.
- 2.25 All activities taken under the direction of the Information Policy will demonstrate value for money. Nothing will be undertaken unless it can evidence that it has some direct coloration with the Wiltshire FRS Business Plan Objectives and the TFS Information Policy.
- 2.26 The delivery of the IAP will be reviewed at the following stages:
- a) During the Preparing for the Project
  - b) Setting up the Project
  - c) Implementing the Project
  - d) After Project Implementation
- 2.27 The review will consider the efficiency, reliability and effectiveness of the IAP. If it is determined that the IAP is not achieving the above criterion then it will be review and the necessary corrective action undertaken to bring it back on line.

## **2.28 FS Information: Monitoring and Performance**

As part of the implementing and after project review a suitable method of monitoring the effectiveness of the system and procedure will be established. The monitoring will be undertaken by the TFS office management and the Technical Fire Safety Procedure Manager. Where any procedure or system influences other departments, their feedback will be sought as part of the audit and review process. As part of the implementation the Technical Fire Safety Procedure Manager will be presented as a point of contact for their support as required.

- 2.29 The monitoring will be non-intrusive and it is anticipated that most issues will be dealt with at a local level. However comments and action will be feed into the review process. This will be done via the TFS management meetings.

## **2.30 FS Information: Audit and Review**

The outcomes of the Information Policy will be included in the quality assurance (QA) system and procedure. The QA procedure will be amended to reflect the change in practices.

- 2.31 For more information regarding the TFS QA procedures visit the TFS QA SOP.

### **3.0 TFS Communication Policies**

3.1 The following statements outline our internal and external Communication Policy.

### **3.2 Internal TFS Communication Policy**

We have a commitment to clear, consistent and timely communication of advice and information between:

- a) The staff of community safety offices
- b) The staff from CRR to the staff of community safety group offices
- c) The staff of Technical Fire Safety to staff from other Wiltshire Fire & Rescue departments

### **3.3 External TFS Communication Policy**

We have a commitment to clear, consistent and timely communication of advice and information to those from external organisations and stakeholders.

### **3.4 TFS Communication: Organisation**

Staff within TFS and CRR TFS will be able to communicate via the following channels

- a) Monthly TFS management meetings
- b) Quarterly TFS training sessions
- c) Group TFS meetings
- d) Online 'chat room' and electronic notice board
- e) Line management
- f) TFS Bulletins
- g) 'Finds' Messages
- h) SOPs
- i) Emails

3.5 The minutes from meetings will be taken and kept on the TFS Intranet site.

3.6 An online chat room and electronic notice board will be established to allow CSI's to discuss technical matters and post questions for consideration.

3.7 TFS bulletins and SOPs will originate from CRR namely the TFS Policy and Implementation Manager and the TFS Procedure Manager. Any member of TFS staff may request a Bulletin, but it will be at the discretion of the TFS Policy and Implementation Manager as to whether they are issued.

3.8 The procedure of processing 'Finds' messages and enquiries from Control and Corporate Service and will be reviewed to ensure the system is robust and resilient. The procedure will involve interdepartmental working; this will be, subject to consultation, review and monitoring.

- 3.9 External communication by Wiltshire FRS TFS department will be undertaken predominantly via standard letters and paragraphs. These standard letters and paragraphs are nationally led and therefore Wiltshire FRS's influence is limited. However, Wiltshire FRS will participate actively to ensure best practice is followed and that the Information, Communication and Advice policy is adhered to where possible. If the standard letters and paragraphs require supplementing with additional information, that information will be subject to the ICA and Enforcement Policy.
- 3.10 Other methods of external communication will be reviewed as part of the Communication Action Plan (CAP). Due consideration will be given to Wiltshire FRS's pending Communication Strategy and organisational efficiency savings.
- 3.11 The manner in which TFS and CRR department will endeavour to communicate will be in consideration of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The resulting procedures and outcomes will adhere to the principles of Equality Impact Assessment and make every reasonable effort to make communicate with those who are considered "Hard to Reach".

### **3.12 TFS Communication: Planning and Implementation**

The Communication Policy will take some direction from the ICA Review. However, the main direction of the Communication Policy will come from the anticipated objectives of the Wiltshire FRS Communication Strategy. Due consideration will be given to recognised best practice and the development of ICT facilities within the organisation.

- 3.13 As with the Information Policy the implementation of the Communication Policy will be subject to an action plan (CAP). The CAP will run jointly with the IAP. It is recognised that each will impact on the other and due consideration will be given to that during the planning stage.
- 3.14 Any outcome of the Communication Policy which amends introduces or removes existing procedure or practice will only be undertaken with appropriate and timely training and support.
- 3.15 All activities undertaken from the direction of the Communication Policy will demonstrate value for money. Nothing will be undertaken unless it can evidence that it has some direct coloration with the Wiltshire FRS Business Plan Objectives and the TFS Communication Policy.
- 3.16 The delivery of the CAP will be reviewed at the following stages:
- a) During the Preparing for the Project
  - b) Setting up the Project
  - c) Implementing the Project
  - d) After Project Implementation
- 3.17 The review will consider the efficiency, reliability and effectiveness of the CAP. If it is determined that the CAP is not achieving the above criterion or it has an adverse

affect on the Advice or Information Policy then it will be review and the necessary corrective action undertaken to bring it back on line.

### **3.18 TFS Communication: Monitoring and Performance**

As part of the implementing and after project review a suitable method of monitoring the effectiveness of the system and procedure. The monitoring will be undertaken by the TFS office management and the Technical Fire Safety Procedure Manager. Where any procedure or system influences other departments, their feedback will be sought as part of the audit and review process. However, as part of the implementation the Technical Fire Safety Procedure Manager will be presented as a point of contact for their support as required.

- 3.19 The monitoring will be non-intrusive and it is anticipated that most issues will be dealt with at a local level. However, comments and action will be feed into the review process. This will be done via the TFS management meetings.

### **3.20 TFS Communication: Audit and Review**

The outcomes of the Communication Policy will be included in the quality assurance (QA) system and procedure. The QA procedure will be amended to reflect the change in practices.

- 3.21 For more information regarding the TFS QA procedures visit the TFS QA SOP ([link](#))

## **4.0 TFS Advice Policies**

- 4.1 The TFS Advice Policies are taken directly from the principles of the CFOA working group. The policy will ensure that the principles of the nationally agreed CFOA work are adhered to as far as practicable.

### **4.2 Non-statutory Advice Policy**

Outside enforcement action and subject to their fire risk assessments;

- 4.3 We will direct guidance to those that have the capacity but have not attempted to comply.

- 4.4 We will provide generic advice to those that have some capacity and have made some attempt to comply.

- 4.5 We will provide specific advice to those who have limited capacity but have made every effort to comply.

### **4.6 Statutory Advice Policy**

Statutory advice will be given in line with the relevant Memorandum of Understanding and SOPs. Where such documents do not exist or the criterion is not met then the principles of the Non-statutory advice policy will be considered when advice is requested outside the scope of those documents.

#### **4.7 Internal Advice Policy**

Immediate TFS advice will be given to operational crews undertaking Post Incident Inspections.

#### **4.8 TFS Advice: Organisation**

As stated above the main direction for the Advice Policy has been taken from the CFOA guidance and rationale. The main crux of the Policies are the integration of CFOA standard letters and response.

4.9 However, it has been recognised that until the Communication and Information Policies are effectively in place, Wiltshire FRS TFS department will not be considered consistent with the principles of the Enforcement Concordat if the Non-statutory Advice Policy is implemented in isolation. Sufficient information and effective communication is needed to ensure that if the TFS department decline to provide advice in line with our Policies then that person can find the necessary material to enable them to comply with the relevant legislation.

4.10 Any fire risk assessment received by Wiltshire FRS will be reviewed for compliance and possible fire safety audit and returned with the appropriate standard letter.

4.11 Advice requested by operational crews will reach TFS via Control. A structure of identified TFS staff will be required to ensure advice and support can be given when required by operational staff.

#### **4.12 TFS Advice: Planning and Implementation**

The main aspect of the planning and Implementation process which will influence whether the Advice Policy is a success is the effective training and engagement of the TFS staff. TFS staff, by their nature, are inherently very helpful and will try to do what they can to assist people. Whilst that principle is set to remain, we also need to align ourselves with the role of an enforcing authority which, like other organisations, has to demonstrate efficiency and value for money. TFS staff will receive appropriate and individualised training to enable them to form judgements inline with the Advice Policy and at the same time providing a professional service expected of an enforcing authority.

4.13 Once training is received the standard letters and procedures will be adopted and integrated into CFRMIS.

4.14 The Advice Policies will not require an Action plan as they are deemed singular in their approach. The integration of the Advice Policies will be based on the review of the Information and Communication Policy. Only when it is deemed that any person requesting advice can be furnished with sufficient information to enable them to comply with the relevant legislation will the Advice Policies be fully integrated. Partial integration may be possible subject to review of the Information and Communication Policy integration.

- 4.15 The structure of for the Internal Advice Policy will be implemented immediately without need to review the Information and Communication Policies.
- 4.16 All activities taken under the direction of the Advice Policy will demonstrate value for money. All works will consider the principles of the Wiltshire FRS Business Plan Objectives and the TFS Communication and Information Policy.

#### **4.17 TFS Advice: Monitoring and Performance**

As part of the implementing and after project review a suitable method of monitoring the effectiveness of the system and procedure. The monitoring will be undertaken by the TFS office management and the Technical Fire Safety Procedure Manager.

- 4.18 The monitoring will be non-intrusive and it is anticipated that most issues will be dealt with at a local level. However, comments and actions will be fed into the review process. This will be done via the TFS management meetings.