

<b>REPORT TO FIRE AUTHORITY</b>	
<b>DATE:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2007	<b>REFERENCE</b>

**SUBJECT: Unwanted Automatic Fire Signal Reduction**

**SUMMARY: This paper updates members on the actions taken over a period of years to reduce Automatic Fire Alarms.**

OBJECTIVES		IMPLICATIONS	
Trusted & Respected	Yes	Operational Risk Management	Yes
More than Emergencies	Yes	Community Risk Reduction	Yes
Saving Lives, Protecting Communities	Yes	Training & Development	Yes
Managing within Budget	Yes	Civil Contingencies	
Improving Efficiency	Yes	Finance & Procurement	
Resources to Priorities	Yes	H.R.	
Alternative Resources		ICT	Yes
Managing People	Yes	Corporate Services	Yes
Risk Reduction Planning	Yes	Transport	Yes
Partnership Working	Yes	Health & Safety	Yes
Effective & Empowered People	Yes	Premises	
		Welsh Language	

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
Members note the positive work being carried out within Command areas to reduce the level of unwanted automatic fire alarm calls

**BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT:**

- CFO Memo 07/04
- CFOA Model Agreement between Fire and Rescue Authorities and Users of Remotely Monitored Fire Alarm Systems (Model Agreement for RMFAS)

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Members will be aware of the effort made by the Service to reduce the number of automatic fire alarm actuations received as part of our risk reduction planning process. A number of initiatives have been implemented across the organisation successfully resulting in a 12% reduction over the last 5 years. The Service has significantly better performance than our family group and has better performance than the top quartile of services as can be seen from the quarterly reporting on the Best Value Indicators.

One of the major factors in reducing this activity has been the amendment of our response to automatic fire alarm incidents which took effect on 04 May 2004. The changes implemented are as follows:

- Automatic fire alarm call – fire confirmed – full emergency response made
- If it is not known if there is a fire, a reduced pre-determined response (1 appliance only) will be made. This response will be made at normal road speeds
- In the event that subsequent information received indicates that there is a fire then control will increase the pre-determined response to a full emergency response

This change has also significantly reduced the number of emergency vehicle movements under blue light conditions. This has a direct effect on our ability to deliver our mission of building safer communities by freeing up resources for more preventative work and other initiatives.

In September 2004 the Chief Fire Officers Association introduced a policy entitled Model Agreement between Fire and Rescue Authorities and Users of Remotely Monitored Fire Alarm Systems. Under this policy the Service will monitor the performance of registered sites taking account of the size and complexity of systems. Where systems fall below threshold levels of acceptable performance, the Service response may be modified or reduced in recognition of the lack of confidence that a fire signal is a reliable indicator of fire conditions that warrant Service attendance.

A project was initiated within the service and significant work was carried out. The top 20 premises with high levels of actuations were identified and the registration process started.

The strategic planning and performance department records and reports on automatic fire alarm activations to commands, providing very detailed information on all offenders. Fire safety officers within these commands work closely with premises generating the most unwanted fire signals to develop solutions to prevent further calls, reminding them of their statutory duties under the Workplace Regulations. In particular Ceredigion and Swansea county commands have implemented procedures to manage and reduce the volume of automatic fire alarm actuations, several of the 'worst offenders' were in these county command areas.

The Chief Fire Officers Association has produced a draft update for this policy which widens the scope of premises to be included in the automatic fire alarm reduction policy. This will now require all premises with automatic fire alarm to be included.

Finally members should note that the Authority does not have statutory power to charge for unwanted fire signals. That said, Members will recall that they raised this issue during the recent consultation on the draft 'Emergencies and Charging Order' issued by the Welsh Assembly Government. Further research and consideration is currently ongoing in relation to this matter.