

REPORT TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY**DATE: 30th June 2008****REFERENCE: DWE/CCR/04/06****SUBJECT: UNITED KINGDOM FIRE SERVICE SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM (UKFSSART) – Update for Members****SUMMARY:**

UKFSSART is the official search and rescue response of the UK Government and responds to international incidents when a request is made at government level.

The Fire Authority has supported UKFSSART for many years, and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service personnel have formed part of the national team from the early days of UKFSSART.

This brief paper is intended to provide Members with a summary of the work of the Service's element of the UKFSSART, and the work ongoing to ensure continued development of the skills of the team.

OBJECTIVES		IMPLICATIONS	
More than an Emergency Service		Operational Risk Management	✓
Trusted & Respected		Community Risk Reduction	
Saving Lives, Protecting Communities	✓	Learning & Development	✓
Managing within Budget		Service Control	✓
Allocate Resources to Priorities	✓	Civil Contingencies & Resilience	✓
Efficiency Savings		Finance & Procurement	✓
Alternative Funding & Resources	✓	H.R.	✓
Managing People	✓	ICT	
Risk Reduction Planning		CCMS	
Partnership Working	✓	Transport	✓
Effective & Empowered People		Health & Safety	
		Premises	
		Sustainability & Environment	
		Welsh Language	
		Legal	
		Governance	
		Equality & Diversity	
		Representative Body Consultation	

COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS ON THE ABOVE OBJECTIVES/IMPLICATIONS:

This briefing paper has limited implications, although the work being conducted by officers to ensure continued development of the skills of the team may have an impact on several departments.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the ongoing work to ensure continued development of the skills of the team.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT:

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UNITED KINGDOM FIRE SERVICE SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM (UKFSSART)

Overview

UKFSSART is the official search and rescue response of the UK Government, and responds to international incidents when a request is made at government level. UKFSSART cannot respond uninvited, as experience has shown that such help often causes problems for the host country. The request has to be made by the government of the affected country or the United Nations' representative in that country.

Once any request for assistance is received and approved by the Department for International Development (DFID), mobilisation of the UK team is coordinated by the Command Support Centre of the London Fire Brigade.

The Fire Authority has supported UKFSSART for many years, and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MWWFRS) personnel have formed part of the national team from the early days of UKFSSART. Representatives from MWWFRS have attended the following incidents since the Service's involvement with UKFSSART:

- Montserrat 1997 (providing training following Volcanic activity)
- Macedonia 1999 (refugee crises - Kosovo conflict)
- Turkey 1999 (Earthquake)
- Mozambique 2000 (Flooding)

The team was recently on standby to mobilise to the China earthquake, but was stood down at the Chinese Government's request.

The Role of the Team

Once at the scene, the team's priority is to locate and rescue missing persons. Once this task is complete, the team may, on approval, become involved in humanitarian tasks. Specifically, the UK Fire Services Search and Rescue Team are required to be able to undertake the following tasks:

- To search for, locate and rescue casualties trapped by structural collapse.

- To undertake medical treatment of such casualties until transfer to an appropriate medical agency.

- To search for, locate and rescue casualties trapped within confined spaces, at height or in other locations having difficult access and egress.

- To be able to live and work in adverse conditions and a hostile environment, and to be capable of being self sufficient for an extended period of time.

- To be able to communicate with, train and teach other personnel in the operational procedures and techniques associated with a variety of search and rescue tasks.

To achieve the above, all team members are trained to Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) standards, many are rope rescue level two and swift water technician trained, and the team is able to provide USAR compatible technical search and rescue equipment and heavy rescue equipment.

The team members are also available to assist with open area searches for missing persons in the UK, in conjunction with the police and mountain rescue teams.

Structure of Team

The Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service UKFSSART currently consists of twelve members of staff from stations and departments across the Service area.

Training

The team train on a monthly basis at venues throughout the service area, as well as utilising the USAR training rig at Earlswood and the Fire Service College. They also attend national and international exercises, and the specialist instructors in the team have opportunities to instruct at an international level.

Funding

The team operates on a voluntary basis, with no payments being made for training or deployment of personnel. Whilst this has been an adequate arrangement to date, increasing demands for increased competence for all UKFSSART members, mean that additional training will need to be conducted. The Team Manager holds a relatively small budget of £6,000 for the refresh and replacement of equipment and clothing,

Officers are evaluating the most viable way of maintaining and developing the skills of the team members, whilst remaining within existing budgets, and will report to Members in due course.