

IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESSES

FIRE BRIGADES UNION (FBU) INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) nationally have voted 78% in favour of industrial action. This is in response to a dispute between the FBU and the Government about changes to the pension scheme. This is not a matter which can be resolved locally.

The FBU has announced that further strike action will take place for 96 hrs:

Commencing 31st October 2014 from 1800 hours until 1800hrs on the 4th November 2014.

There is a legal requirement for Fire Authorities to plan for such eventualities. Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) have a plan in place to provide emergency cover during any strike period; however the number of resources available will be limited.

The plan includes the type of emergencies the Service will attend during any period of strike action and the number of fire engines that we will deploy. As resources will be limited the Service will implement a call prioritisation policy based on those types of emergencies that pose the highest risk to life e.g. domestic property fires, road traffic collisions. Other emergency types such as automatic fire alarms (AFA) and small fires will be dealt with by a limited attendance or, in some instances, no attendance at all based on the information given to fire control at the time of call. The policy will be subject to continual review throughout any period of disruption to ensure the optimum deployment of available resources at any particular time of day.

During any strike action HFRS will still be available via the '999' telephone system as normal, and calls will be handled by our Control operators as they are not part of the dispute. When using the '999' telephone system it is important that the information is precise so that the call prioritisation policy can be implemented. The following information is required:

1. Name of premises, main road and town
2. Is there a fire or not? (It will be very useful to know the answer to this question before contacting the Fire and Rescue Service).
3. Are the premises currently occupied?
4. If a fire alarm on the premises has activated then state the location/zone/floor in building etc.
5. Is there a key holder available if the premises are secure?

If there is a fire:

1. Have the premises been evacuated?
2. Is there any threat to life?

BUSINESS SAFETY

Responsible persons at businesses need to keep people in the premises safe at all times. To assist you with this process the following information is given:

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

It is a legal requirement for the responsible person to have a fire risk assessment and to review it if any risks in the building change.

[Click here](#) – for information explaining the ‘five steps in carrying out a fire risk assessment’ process.

[Click here](#) - If you require a pro forma document so that you can record a Fire Risk Assessment. You can use the ‘Fire Risk Assessment Guidance Information’ or the ‘Small to Medium Premises Fire Risk Assessment’ whichever is appropriate.

[Click here](#) – to view ‘Industry Fire Safety Check List’.

FIRE WARDENS

If you currently provide fire wardens ensure that their training is up to date. You may want to increase the number of fire wardens for those periods of strike action.

If you do not have fire wardens then this should be considered. A fire warden is a person who will manage the evacuation of the premises in a safe manner in accordance with their expected duties.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

It is a requirement for your business to have an emergency plan. This will detail what is expected of people during an emergency situation. In the case of premises where people are sleeping any procedures for delayed or phased evacuation should be reviewed.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills should be carried out on a regular basis. It would be prudent to ensure that all persons carry out a fire drill so that people know where to evacuate to and understand fully the procedures.

‘WAKING WATCH’

This is a term used in premises where people sleep. A designated person will walk the premises, at suitable times during hours of sleep ensuring that all of the fire precautions in the building are working and there is no fire or risk of fire.

In premises such as residential/nursing homes it may be necessary to increase the numbers of staff during these periods.

A 'waking watch' can also be used at premises where people do not sleep for periods of strike action.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Fire extinguishers are provided so that a fire in its early stages can be extinguished by a person who is trained to do so. The number and location of extinguishers should be reviewed. Arrangements should also be made to ensure a suitable number of persons are trained in the use of firefighting equipment.

To ensure that the responsible person is conforming to the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 a suite of guidance documents have been produced.

[Click here](#) – to view these documents.

If you do have any concerns or questions with reference to any of the information in this document then please contact the Community Protection Unit which covers your area:

Hull Community Protection Unit

Noddle Hill Way

Kingston-upon-Hull

HU7 4SH

Tel 0844 3715536

E-mail – hullfiresafetyenquiry@humbersidefire.gov.uk

East Riding Community Protection Unit

New Walkergate

Beverley

HU17 9EQ

Tel 0844 3715537

E-mail – eastridingfiresafetyenquiry@humbersidefire.gov.uk

North East Lincolnshire Community Protection Unit

Peaks Lane

Grimsby

DN32 9RS

Tel 0844 3715539

E-mail – nelincsfiresafetyenquiry@humbersidefire.gov.uk

North Lincolnshire Community Protection Unit

Laneham Street

Scunthorpe

DN15 6JP

Tel 0844 3715538

E-mail – nlincsfiresafetyenquiry@humbersidefire.gov.uk

Please make use of this advice and support. I can assure you that we will use our resources, even though they may be limited by strike action, as effectively as possible to keep communities, including our business community, as safe as we can.