



Fire and Rescue Service Operational Guidance

GRAs generic risk assessments

GRA 1.1

emergency response
and arrival at the scene

Generic Risk Assessment 1.1

Emergency response and arrival
at the scene

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SECTION 1

Initial response

Scope

This section of the generic risk assessment (GRA) examines the hazards, risks and controls that relate to Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) staff and others who may be affected during the period in which they receive an emergency call and begin to respond to the emergency call.

As with all GRAs, this assessment provides a starting point for Fire and Rescue Services to conduct their own assessments within the context of local conditions and existing organisational arrangements.

Significant hazards and risks

There are five key activities that have the potential to cause harm during this initial response phase:

- initial alert
- travelling to the workplace
- access to and around the workplace
- mounting the appliance
- emerging into traffic.

The risks to personnel will vary dependant upon their location on receipt of the initial alert.

Initial alert

ON CALL PERSONNEL

This group of personnel are normally alerted by personal pager, radio or telephone. The speed of initial reaction will depend on a number of local factors such as the number of alerts received, their role, the time of call and the disposition of the individual.

The potential for injury to personnel who, immediately prior to responding, are engaged in work, leisure, social or domestic activities arises from:

- the initial reaction of the individual to the alert
- distraction from current activity, e.g. this may occur during FRS activity but also during secondary employment, leisure or domestic activities

- the sudden transition from rest to response
- rapid movement.

PERSONNEL ON “OUT” DUTIES OR OTHER OFF STATION ACTIVITIES

This group of personnel are normally alerted by personal pager, radio or telephone and some of the circumstances detailed above may be similar.

This group will normally be involved in off station activities such as standby duties, home fire safety visits, school visits, community events, off station training, inspections or returning to home station. They will not normally be dressed in firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE).

The speed of initial reaction will be influenced by unfamiliar surroundings, distance from the appliance, the surrounding environment and terrain and the unpredictable reaction of members of the public, workers, school children and householders.

The potential for injury to this group arises from:

- the sudden transition from rest to response
- rapid movement
- slip and trip hazards and falls from height
- ensuring any equipment in use at the time is not left in an unsafe condition
- replacing equipment onto vehicles with pressure of response and failing to observe safe systems of work
- the initial reaction of members of the public, workers, school children and householders to the response of FRS staff
- lack of familiarity with the surroundings.

PERSONNEL AT THEIR STATION

This group of personnel are normally alerted by an audible signal. The potential for injury to this group arises from:

- the initial reaction of the individual to the alarm
- the sudden transition from rest to response
- slip and trip hazards and falls from height
- replacing equipment onto vehicles with pressure of response and failing to observe safe systems of work
- lack of familiarity with the surroundings by standby crews
- the initial reaction of contractors, visitors and non operational FRS staff
- rapid movement around the workplace or station.

Travelling to the station

On-call personnel travel from remote locations to their workplace using a variety of methods such as car, cycle, motor cycle and on foot. Serious injuries and fatalities have occurred involving personnel travelling in such circumstances. The risk of a road traffic collision is increased due to the perception of urgency by personnel and by other factors such as adverse weather conditions and time of day.

The potential for injury to this group arises from:

- failure to obey road traffic regulations
- failure to observe and consider other vehicles due to the perceived urgency of response.

Access to and around the station

On receipt of alert, personnel will arrive at the station within a few minutes of each other. Personnel who arrive earlier are exposed to a risk of being struck by the vehicles of other responders who arrive later. There is a possibility of members of the public, including children, and contractors being in the grounds of the workplace when personnel arrive.

Weather conditions such as rain, snow and ice may increase risks on station grounds.

Internal and external routes through the workplace may present hazards to all personnel.

The risk of slips trips and falls may be present due to:

- the levels of fatigue of personnel
- the perceived urgency of the call
- poor illumination of thoroughfares
- the suitability of footwear worn at the time of the turnout
- the design, condition and maintenance of the premises, e.g. pole drops, stairs, floor surfaces, presence of snow, ice, oil, dust and water
- the position of firefighting PPE
- the standard of housekeeping.

The presence and concentration of exhaust fumes may pose a hazard, however modern vehicle design, cleaner fuel and/or extraction systems has reduced the risk.

Mounting and dismounting the appliance

There are many occasions where personnel have suffered both short and long term injuries whilst mounting and dismounting FRS vehicles prior to turning out. Contributory factors could include:

- the urgency of the call
- cab design ergonomics

- poor vehicle maintenance and inspection
- poor illumination
- the position and height of the steps
- the size of the steps
- door design (size and position)
- door opening (catches handles and locks)
- ground or floor conditions
- dressing/rigging
- storage of personal protective equipment
- the method of accessing the steps when accessing the appliance
- contamination of steps, e.g. mud, water
- starting the appliance, noise and fumes.

Emerging into traffic

Once the crew has boarded the appliance, the vehicle will emerge into traffic from the workplace/station. On-call personnel use officially sanctioned vehicles and will emerge into traffic from a variety of locations. The risk of FRS vehicles striking the appliance bay doors, other road users or pedestrians (members of staff or the public) on exit could be affected by:

- weather conditions, e.g. rain, fog, snow and ice
- levels of fatigue of personnel
- the perceived urgency of the call, e.g. persons reported
- the initial position of the appliance
- trailing leads from battery maintenance systems
- other personnel responding to station
- drivers failing to be aware of the timing of self closing appliance bay doors
- the degree to which appliance bay doors are maintained
- lack of pedestrian control measures
- lack of traffic control measures
- design and layout of the site, e.g. trees, shrubs or walls obscuring the driver's view.

Key control measures

Fire and Rescue Services should consider how they control the hazards and risks described above. Key measures are described below.

Fire and Rescue Services should assess the levels of noise achieved from audible signals against the requirements of the Noise at Work Regulations.

Policies and guidance for those personnel who respond from off workplace locations should be in place. To ensure availability and acceptable standards of readiness it is important that personnel on all duty systems, understand the requirements of such policies, e.g. working time and rest periods¹. For employees who are not whole time employed, the requirements of their other employer should be understood, e.g. turning off equipment prior to leaving the workplace.

It is important that personnel responding to their workplace/station in private vehicles or motor cycles comply with all road traffic regulations, including speed limits.

Where appliances remain on call whilst they are off station to undertake visits, training and inspections, crews should:

- brief owners/occupiers
- take note of any hazards they may face when returning to the appliance
- consider delaying turnout to reduce pressure on crews when returning equipment to the appliance.

Where a crew is standing by at another station, they should familiarise themselves with the layout of the premises and take note of any temporary hazards.

Policies that reduce the number of occasions when an emergency call is initiated (e.g. prevention work, graduated response arrangements) will reduce the overall risk to personnel from turning out.

FRSs will need to assess the suitability and condition of internal and external travel routes. This includes illumination, the organisation of traffic and pedestrian routes within workplaces and the condition of floor surfaces, ensuring safe access and egress at all times. Snow and ice gritting procedures should be in place.

During the hours of darkness, automatic lights normally illuminate fire stations to assist operational staff to respond.

FRSs should assess the levels of illumination along pedestrian routes to ensure safe access and egress.

FRSs should ensure that there are adequate procedures in place so that the station is in a clean and safe condition at all times. This is of particular importance in appliance bays where leakage of fuel and water, or dust accumulation may occur.

Policies and procedures should be in place to ensure workplace risks are minimised. These include housekeeping standards, snow and ice clearing arrangements, speed limit signs and traffic and pedestrian separation.

The suitability of automatic appliance bay doors, including their fitting, use and maintenance, should be assessed.

Assessments should be undertaken to ensure vehicles can emerge safely onto the highway, which may include crossing pedestrian routes. Control measures may include:

- traffic light controls
- yellow box junctions
- traffic warning signs
- pedestrian warning signs
- design and layout of the site to ensure unhindered turnout
- emergency fire appliance driver training
- driver training for all other responding officers
- audible and visual warning systems on responding vehicles.

Technical references

1	Working Time Regulations Relevant Working Joint Council Conditions for Personnel
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SECTION 1
Summary 1 of GRA 1.1
Initial response

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
1.1	Being alerted to an emergency call on station	Noise	Hearing damage over a number of years	Whole time Day crewed Contractors Visitors Other FRS staff	Noise levels should be measured as part of noise surveys Problems with individual sounders should be investigated Contractors/visitors should be warned of the hazard Phased increase in sound and levels of illumination
1.2	Being alerted to an emergency call whilst on call	Mental and physical state of individual. Transition from rest to action particularly at night Nearby hazards, e.g. slips, trips, struck against	Risk of slips and trips or striking against objects	Whole time Retained, Volunteers Flexible duty officers	Personnel should respond in a timely manner, walk briskly not run Personnel will be aware of local hazards Account should be taken of prevailing weather conditions, e.g. ice, snow, fog, sunshine Suitable footwear Personnel to maintain good fitness levels. Medical fitness assessments

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
1.3	Responding initially to the alert whilst on station	<p>Mental and physical state of individual.</p> <p>Transition from rest to action particularly at night</p> <p>Nearby hazards, e.g. slips, trips, struck against</p> <p>Use of pole drop</p>	<p>Risk of slips and trips and striking against objects</p> <p>Risk of fall (pole drop) leading to serious injury or fatality</p>	<p>Whole time</p> <p>Day crewed, Contractors</p> <p>Visitors</p>	<p>Personnel should respond in a timely manner, walk briskly not run</p> <p>Personnel should be aware of the hazards</p> <p>Good standards of housekeeping are promoted on workplaces to minimise slip and trip/struck against hazards</p> <p>Visitors/contractors policies to include information on the risks from personnel responding to the initial turn out message and action to take at this time</p> <p>All operational personnel should be provided with information/instruction/training on the use of pole drops</p> <p>Visitors/contractors must not use pole drops. They should be secure and appropriate signage should be in place restricting their use to trained personnel</p> <p>Good lighting</p> <p>Suitable foot wear</p> <p>Personnel to maintain good fitness levels</p> <p>Medical assessments</p>

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Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
1.4	Travelling to the station to respond in the appliance	Road, weather and pavement conditions Perception of urgency Condition of vehicle/cycle	Road traffic collision Slip, trip or fall	Retained Volunteers Other road users Pedestrians	Alcohol Policy Mobile Phone Policy Do not access pagers whilst driving. Personnel to obey road traffic regulations, including posted speed limits Helmets worn for cyclists/motor cyclists
1.5	Arriving at the station and preparing to respond in the appliance	Arrival of personnel at same/similar time Adverse weather House keeping on station	Road traffic collision Slips and trips	Retained Volunteers Visitors Contractors	Personnel are familiar with the layout of the site and are aware of access and egress routes Safety signage – speed limits, give way. Traffic systems, e.g. one way, parking systems, barriers Vehicle/pedestrian segregation where possible. Cordon and sign areas where work is taking place Gritting policy
1.6	Support staff responding to the alert	Mental and physical state of individual. Nearby hazards, e.g. slips and trips, struck against	Slips and trips Striking against objects	Support staff, e.g. photographers, workshops	Personnel should respond in a timely manner. They should be aware of the hazards Suitable footwear

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
1.7	Crews responding to alerts whilst undertaking training activity	Nearby hazards, e.g. slips and trips, struck against Manual handling equipment back into vehicle Rushing and not securing the vehicle	Slips and trips Striking against objects Manual handling injury Objects falling from the vehicle leading to road traffic collision	Whole time Day crewed, Retained Members of the public Other road users	Appliance to be re-stowed correctly Personnel should respond in a timely manner Personnel will be aware of hazards Manual handling training
1.8	Crews standing by at station other than at home station and responding to alerts	Mental and physical state of individuals Transition from rest to action, particularly at night Nearby hazards e.g. slips, struck against Movement around unfamiliar location Use of pole drop Manual handling equipment into vehicle	Slips and trips Striking against objects Manual handling Fall from pole drop leading to serious injury or fatality	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexi Duty Officers Contractors Visitors	Personnel should respond in a timely manner, walk briskly not run Be aware of local hazards Familiarise themselves with layout of building at earliest opportunity Avoid the use of pole drop if not trained

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
1.9	Crews involved in off station activities, 7.2.(d) and Intel visits and responding to alerts	Mental and physical state of individuals Transition from rest to action Nearby hazards e.g. slips, struck against Movement around unfamiliar location Local vehicle movement (fork lifts, delivery vehicles, other vehicles)	Slips and trips Striking against objects Being struck by moving vehicle resulting in fatality or serious injury Road traffic collision	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexi Duty Officers Owners/Occupiers	Personnel should respond in a timely manner, walk briskly not run Be aware of local hazards Familiarise themselves with layout of building at earliest opportunity Arrangements in place on procedures to be adopted in the event of an alert
1.10	Crews involved in off station activities, home fire safety checks	Mental and physical state of individuals Transition from rest to action Nearby hazards e.g. slips, struck against Movement around unfamiliar location Attacks from pets Local traffic	Slips and trips Striking against objects Being struck by moving vehicle resulting in fatality or serious injury Road traffic collision Animal bite	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexi Duty Officers Owners/Occupiers	Personnel should respond in a timely manner, walk briskly not run Be aware of local hazards Familiarise themselves with layout of building at earliest opportunity Arrangements in place for potentially dangerous pets to be secured prior to and during the visit Arrangements in place for procedures to be adopted in the event of an alert and recovery of any equipment which needs to be left behind

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
1.11	Crews involved in off station activities, school visits and responding to initial alert	Mental and physical state of individuals Transition from rest to action Nearby hazards e.g. slips, struck against Movement around unfamiliar location	Slips and trips Striking against objects Being struck by moving vehicle resulting in fatality or serious injury Road traffic collision	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexi Duty Officers Owners/Occupiers	Personnel should respond in a timely manner, walk briskly not run Be aware of local hazards Familiarise themselves with layout of building at earliest opportunity Arrangements in place for procedures to be adopted in the event of an alert and recovery of any equipment which needs to be left behind
1.12	Crews involved in off station activities, fetes or other public events and responding to initial alert	Mental and physical state of individuals Transition from rest to action Nearby hazards e.g. slips, struck against Movement around unfamiliar location	Slips and trips Striking against objects Being struck by moving vehicle resulting in fatality or serious injury Road traffic collision	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexi Duty Officers Owners/Occupiers	Personnel should respond in a timely manner, walk briskly not run Be aware of local hazards Familiarise themselves with layout of building at earliest opportunity

Explanatory Key

Description
Reference number for the risk
Task – the specific activity being carried out
Hazard – Hazard present giving rise to the risk
Risk – the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious
Persons at risk – this should detail either employee, and / or member of public
Control measures – That could be used by the Service to reduce the risk

SECTION 2

Turning out and proceeding to an incident

Scope

This section of the generic risk assessment examines the hazards, risks and controls that relate to Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) staff and others who may be affected when they turn out and proceed to an incident.

As with all generic risk assessments, this assessment provides a starting point for Fire and Rescue Services to conduct their own assessments within the context of local conditions and existing organisational arrangements.

Significant hazards and risks

Significant hazards associated with turning out and proceeding to an incident can be classified into the following categories:

- road conditions
- other road users and pedestrians
- insecure or poor stowage
- not using seat belts
- vehicle design, condition and maintenance (this would include driving an unfamiliar vehicle)
- driver competence
- driver fitness, e.g. affected by alcohol, drugs or medication
- weather conditions
- excessive use of speed due to perceived urgency.

Road conditions

Emergency vehicles will travel on many different road types from a farm track to a motorway, all of which presents specific risks. Hazards are presented by:

- road obstructions
- congestion
- parked cars
- traffic calming measures
- road works
- poorly illuminated or maintained surfaces.

These hazards will have an effect on both the traction of the vehicle and the driver's visibility.

If FRSs determine a need to use vehicles off road, they should complete a FRS specific risk assessment.

Other road users including pedestrians

FRS personnel are at risk from other road users who may not be aware of the presence of emergency vehicles, or who may act inappropriately. These risks are increased when other drivers may be using a mobile phone or have the radio turned up and so on.

In the past, injuries to personnel have occurred as a result of collisions with other vehicles and/or emergency avoidance measures. This risk is increased when appliances/vehicles have a poor degree of conspicuousness.

Insecure or poor stowage

Incidents have occurred when appliance doors have opened inadvertently en-route. There is a risk of vehicle doors becoming unlatched whilst the vehicle is in motion. The likelihood of this arising may be affected by factors such as the design and build quality of the latching assembly, maintenance procedures and the suitability and position of the door release mechanism.

There is a risk of personnel being injured by equipment which falls as a result of either badly designed stowage space, or careless or inappropriate securing. This risk may also affect pedestrians and other road users where equipment falls from fire and rescue service vehicles whilst en route due to badly designed stowage or inappropriate or poor securing.

Not using seat belts

There is a risk to personnel en-route to an incident when not wearing seat belts. This risk arises when personnel dress and don breathing apparatus en route.

Vehicle design, condition and maintenance

A key factor in ensuring the safety of personnel whilst proceeding to an incident is the design and condition of the vehicle. Safety can be compromised by poor vehicle design and maintenance, e.g. poor braking performance, tyre wear and damage and inappropriate tyre pressures. FRSs should ensure that vehicles are manufactured to the appropriate standard.

Driver competence

Drivers of emergency fire appliances and other vehicles are subject to stress and are often required to operate under more difficult circumstances than those encountered by other drivers.

Weather conditions

Adverse weather conditions can increase the risk of a collision and injury when travelling in a vehicle to an incident.

Excessive use of speed

Excessive speed can be a factor in road traffic collisions and appliances.

Key control measures

FRSs should consider how they control the hazards and risks described above. Key measures are described below.

Driver training and continuation training

Driver assessment and EFAD training is an essential requirement in ensuring that drivers have appropriate skills and proficiency for the task expected of them.

Refresher training must be an integral part of a FRSs continuation training policy.

Some personnel, although qualified to do so, may not be suitable to drive emergency response vehicles.

All drivers should satisfy relevant medical requirements.

Use of Fire and Rescue Service vehicles

FRSs will need to consider geographic features, the classes of road and the traffic conditions in which vehicles operate.

FRSs need to ensure that door locks are fit for purpose and maintained in efficient working order. This includes door alarms, central locking systems and panel indicators.

The conspicuousness of fire appliances should be given a high priority. This should include lighting and livery.

Audible and visual warning systems should be designed to effectively warn other road users of the presence of an emergency vehicle.

FRSs should ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that FRS vehicles are inspected prior to response. This may take the form of a daily safety check.

FRSs should have procedures in place which ensure that personnel are not at risk from loose or unsecured equipment within the crew cab or compartment or stowed on appliances or vehicles. The crew cab should be kept clear and uncluttered. Equipment should be stored securely and appropriately in lockers and vehicles.

The vision of the driver should not be compromised by the poor sighting of equipment or loose objects.

Traffic control systems

These fall into two groups; those sited at the workplace and designed to facilitate the safe egress of appliances and FRS vehicles, e.g. Wig Wag lights and yellow boxed junctions. Other systems operate on local traffic lights or pre-selected frequently used emergency routines, e.g. EVADE and GREENWAVE.

Such systems which operate on local traffic lights or on a number of pre-selected, frequently used, emergency routes, are more fully described in Fire Service Circulars.¹

Fire and Rescue Service policy

FRSs should have a driving 'blue light' policy including guidance on:

- responding speeds/progressive driving
- dressing policy to reduce the risk to personnel (dressing and donning breathing apparatus en route should be risk assessed)
- wearing a seat belt and donning breathing apparatus en-route to an incident
- alcohol, drugs and medication
- mobile phone and pager use
- mobile data terminals and satellite navigation.

Technical references

1	Emergency Vehicle Automatic Detection Equipment (EVADE) Fire Service Circular, 2/1987 Home Office' 1987 and Scottish Fire Service Circular, 2/1987
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SECTION 2
Summary 2 of GRA 1.1

Turning out and proceeding to an incident (and return from incident)

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
2.1	Dressing at the workplace	Near by hazards e.g. slips and trips, striking against objects, diesel fumes	Slips and trips Striking against objects Long term exposure to diesel fumes	Whole time Day crewed Volunteers Retained	Good housekeeping Suitable foot wear Well serviced vehicles Vehicle start up procedures in place Diesel fumes sampled/surveyed Catalytic regeneration traps fitted where possible Cleaner fuel used Good lighting Competent crews
2.2	Getting onto the appliance	Accessing appliance steps	Slips and trips resulting in fall from vehicle. This could result in a fracture	Whole time Day crewed Volunteers Retained	Appliance design – position/height of steps, size of steps, door opening Good lighting Hand grips Suitable footwear Competent crews

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
2.3	Leaving the appliance bay	Contact with appliance bay door Contacting charging reel cable	Injury to personnel (struck against, struck by objects or vehicle) Damage to appliance and appliance bay	Whole time Day crewed Volunteers Retained	Well designed appliance bay doors Safety strips/default sensors on automatic doors operational Driver training Dry slip free appliance bay Charging reel cable to be removed and retracted prior to mounting appliance
2.4	Emerging into traffic	Weather/road conditions	Road traffic collision	Whole time Day crewed Volunteers Retained Pedestrians Other road users	Driver training Traffic light control/wig wag lights/box junctions/green wave/traffic warning signs Use of visual and audible warnings Suitable footwear for driver High visibility conspicuousness markings for appliance Account to be taken of weather conditions and visibility

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Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
2.5	Responding to incident on Fire Appliance	Weather/road conditions	Road traffic collision	Whole time Day crewed Volunteers Retained Pedestrians Other road users	Blue light policy – urgency of call, speed of response Alcohol policy Drug policy Mobile phone policy Driver training Seat belt worn Controlled use of bull horn, audible and visual warning devices Local topographical knowledge Mobilising policy – number of appliances mobilised Drivers to stop at red traffic lights and proceed cautiously Vehicle design reference rollover High conspicuousness Vehicle maintenance Safe stowage of equipment

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Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
2.6	Responding to incident in other vehicle	Weather/road conditions Use of mobile phone/pager	Road traffic collision	Flexible duty officers Pedestrians Other road users	Blue light policy – urgency of call, speed of response Alcohol policy Drug policy Mobile phone/pager policy Seat belt worn Driver training Drivers to stop at red traffic lights and proceed cautiously Satellite navigation Vehicle maintenance
2.7	Responding in fire appliance	Dressing en route	Striking against people and objects Falling from the vehicle resulting in fatality or serious injury	Whole time day crewed Volunteers Retained	Dressing policy Consider dressing prior to turning out or if alerted when mobile, appliance to stop safely to allow crew to dress Crew cab design Equipment stowage
2.8	Operating off road	Turning over Getting stuck	Serious injury	Whole time Day crewed Volunteers Retained	Vehicle type and suitability Off road policy Topographical knowledge Only off road vehicles to go off road

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
2.9	Responding – fire appliance and other vehicles	Noise	Hearing damage over a number of years	Whole time Day crewed Volunteers Retained Pedestrians Other road users	Noise levels assessed Bull horn use minimised Controlled use of audible and visual warnings
2.10	Responding with satellite navigation operating	Misuse of satellite navigation	Road traffic collision	Flexible Duty Officers Pedestrians Other road users	Appropriate satellite navigation policy and guidance
2.11	Support staff responding	Sense of urgency. Not obeying road traffic regulations	Road traffic collision	Support staff, e.g. photographers workshops Other road users	Adhere to posted speed limits Driver assessment Seat belt worn Satellite navigation Mobile phone policy Alcohol policy Drug policy

Explanatory Key

Description

Reference number for the risk

Task – the specific activity being carried out

Hazard – Hazard present giving rise to the risk

Risk – the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious

Persons at risk – this should detail either employee, and / or member of public

Control measures – That could be used by the Service to reduce the risk

SECTION 3

Arriving and getting to work

Scope

This section of the generic risk assessment examines the hazards, risks and controls that relate to Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) staff and others who may be affected when they arrive at an incident and get to work. Other generic risk assessments examine the hazards, risks and controls of particular incident types.

As with all generic risk assessments, this assessment provides a starting point for Fire and Rescue Services to conduct their own assessments within the context of local conditions and existing organisational arrangements.

Significant hazards and risks

Hazards and risks will include:

- the smoke plume/hazardous materials release
- the operational imperative
- the presence of fire appliances/vehicles and pedestrians/other vehicles
- the uncontrolled situation
- manual handling of equipment
- remote locations
- slips trips and falls
- violence and aggression
- noise.

This is not an exhaustive list but is an example of common hazards and risks faced upon arrival and getting to work at many incidents.

The smoke plume/hazardous materials release

When proceeding to large fires or incidents involving hazardous materials, appliances must approach upwind to avoid contact with harmful gasses/vapour clouds or smoke.

The operational imperative

On the arrival of crews, there will be an expectation of action. Crews should be aware of the pressure to act, particularly when large crowds are at the scene of a serious incident.

The presence of fire appliances/vehicles and pedestrians/other vehicles

When attending incidents, fire appliances may encounter other emergency services, pedestrians (possibly crowds of people), casualties and other vehicles leading to the potential for a collision.

The uncontrolled situation

When arriving at an operational incident, the Incident Commander will face an uncontrolled situation with several hazards and risks, incomplete information and an expectation to act.

Manual handling of equipment

The initial phase of any incident is when operational equipment is liable to be handled with urgency. This combined with the range of environmental conditions likely to be encountered (e.g. inclement weather, uneven ground surfaces and lighting) may increase manual handling risks.

Remote locations

There are a number of operational difficulties associated with getting to work in remote locations, for example:

- suitability of responding vehicle
- communications
- difficult terrain with slip, trip and fall hazards
- extended distances from appliance to the scene of operations
- extended distances from the scene of operations to water supplies
- a potential delay in setting up and complying with safe systems of work
- extended attendance times (initial and reinforcement).

Slips, trips and falls

At the majority of incidents, the risk of slips and trips will be present, e.g. uneven surfaces, poor surfaces.

Slips and trips when dismounting the appliance are an ever present hazard.

Violence and aggression

There is a potential for violence and aggression towards FRS personnel at incidents.

Noise

The incident ground can be noisy due to pumping operations, the use of powered equipment and processes undertaken at the site of the incident which may be outside the control of the FRS.

Key control measures

FRSs should consider how they control the hazards and risks described above. Key measures are described below.

Dynamic management of risk

The Incident Commander must assess the hazards and risks of the incident and identify the operational requirement and system of work to be used. They must take account of any risk information available to them.

Personnel must assess the risks on the incident ground and implement appropriate control measures to reduce risks. The Incident Commander will determine the operational mode to be deployed. This assessment is not a one off task but a dynamic process. This process will operate within the incident command system (see above).

Central guidance has been provided to FRSs within the document, entitled *Dynamic Management of Risk at Operational Incidents*¹, which provides a framework and guidance on risk assessment at incidents.

Vehicle positioning

Effective arrangements need to be in place to allow all FRS appliances and vehicles to be positioned on the incident ground in a way that optimises their safe use and minimises risks. These measures will include:

- protection and visibility on roadways
- parking away from hazardous areas
- leaving access for specialist appliances and other emergency vehicles
- dismounting on the non traffic side or safe side
- slow speed manoeuvring policies.

Incident command system

It is vital that early command and control is established. FRSs should refer to and comply with the Incident Command System as detailed in *Fire and Rescue Service Manual Volume 2 – Fire Service Operations, Incident Command*².

Standard operating procedures, risk assessments and pre-planning

FRSs should have standard operating procedures and risk assessments in place for the full range of incident types they may face, including arrangements with other FRSs and partner agencies.

FRSs should collate information on the risks in their area and make site specific risk information available to all relevant personnel prior to and upon arrival at incidents. This will include information from inspections, site visits and fire safety visits.

Cordon control

FRSs, in conjunction with the Police, will need to ensure that suitable measures are in place to establish effective cordons at the incident.

Manual handling

FRSs will need to ensure that appliances and vehicle stowage has been designed to minimise the risk of manual handling injury. Personnel should have received manual handling training (including refresher training when appropriate) and will need to assess the task, individual, load and environment when undertaking manual handling tasks and act appropriately. Sufficient resources should be available to allow safe systems of work to be implemented.

Dealing with violence and aggression

FRSs should assess the likelihood of acts of violence against personnel at incidents and provide appropriate guidance to personnel.

The nature and degree of risk is affected by the local and national social, economic and political environment. FRSs need to consider implementing specific control measures that could include:

- working and liaison with Police and other emergency workers
- working and liaison with community leaders
- the provision of information to personnel
- vehicle design to protect the occupants and equipment
- withdrawal of crews
- CCTV.

It is important that FRSs maintain records of such attacks and analyse patterns and trends. Such information must be reported to the Department for Communities and Local Government and relevant stakeholders in accordance with Fire Service Circular 22/2006³.

Further detailed information is available from the HSE and in Fire Service Circular 14/2007.⁴

Slip and trips

Drivers should try to position appliances and vehicles to minimise risks when dismounting, e.g. kerbs, grass banks, gullies and uneven surfaces.

Personnel should mount and dismount the appliance correctly (dismount backwards, use all steps and handles).

Vehicle design must consider the need to illuminate the scene to allow safe mounting and dismounting of the appliance and removal and re-stowing of equipment at the scene of operations.

Noise

FRSs should assess the levels of noise achieved from pumping operations and use of powered equipment against the requirements of the Noise at Work Regulations. Noise reduction measures should be implemented where reasonably practicable. Hearing protection should be provided where the assessment indicated this is required.

Technical references	
1	Dynamic Management of Risk at Operational Incidents
2	Fire and Rescue Service Manual Volume 2 – Fire Service Operations. Incident Command
3	Fire Service Circular 22/2006
4	Fire Service Circular 14/2007 Tackling Violence at Work: Good Practice Guidance Document for Fire and Rescue Services

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SECTION 3
Summary 3 of GRA 1.1
Arriving and getting to work

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
3.1	Arriving at the incident	Parking the vehicle	Road traffic collision	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexible Duty Officers Support staff Public	Vehicle positioning Driver training Conspicuousness Slow speed manoeuvring/approach policy Crew briefing
3.2	Dismounting the appliances	Dismounting appliance steps and slipping or tripping Traffic	Injury to personnel – possible fracture Being knocked down by another vehicle leading to fatality or serious injury	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexible Duty Officers Public	Firefighters dismount backwards using all appliance steps. Dismount non traffic side or safe side Be aware of underfoot conditions Suitable parking position/vehicle positioning Appliance/vehicle protection on roadway Hand grips to be used Suitable footwear

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
3.3	Arriving at incident	Public presence. Pressure from public to act	Making a decision that puts personnel or the public at increased risk Acting without control measures in place Serious injury or fatality	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexible Duty Officers public	Audible and visual warning systems Cordon procedures Information to public Police presence Incident command system
3.4	Uncontrolled situation. This varies from incident to incident	Various depending on incident	Fatality or serious injury	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexible Duty Officers Support staff	Dynamic management of risk Incident command system Standard operating procedures Risk information Liaison with other agencies Radio communications Water supplies Cordons
3.5	Getting to work – handling equipment	Manual handling	Manual handling injury – this could result in significant time off work	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexible Duty Officers	Manual handling training Teamwork Equipment design and selection Good stowage Assessment of the task, individual capability, load and environment

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
3.6	Getting to work – general environment	Slips and trips (Uneven surfaces, potholes, debris, embankments, oils, water, timber, ice, hose, timber, missing, manhole covers, etc.) Sharps Glass and sharp edges	Slip, trip or fall resulting in serious injury Needle stick injury and exposure to infection Cuts	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexible Duty Officers Support staff	Lighting Good layout of hose Suitable footwear Guidance to personnel Cordons Safety officers Sharps policy Anti-tetanus
3.7	Getting to work – remote locations	Limited access and egress Limited water supplies Undetected accidents and ill health	Slip trip or fall resulting in serious injury	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexible Duty Officers Support staff	Incident command system Risk information No lone working Communication facilities Establish and control access and egress Rendezvous points

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
3.8	Arrival at scene and getting to work – support staff	Parking the vehicle Slips and trips Traffic Manual handling	Slip, trip or fall resulting in serious injury Exposure to hazardous conditions of incident resulting in serious injury	Support staff, e.g. photographers workshops	Reporting to control point Safety briefing PPE Suitable footwear Supervision Manual handling training Safe systems of work for specific activity Communication facilities Awareness of operational systems
3.9	Dealing with incident	Violence and aggression against crews	Serious injury to personnel	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexible Duty Officers Support staff	Procedure for requesting urgent assistance of Police and Police back-up Training of personnel in dealing with threatening situations/anger management PPE Protective safety glass in case stones etc strike appliance windows Violence and aggression policy Withdrawal of crews/personnel

Ref. No.	Task	Hazard	Risk	Persons at risk	Control Measures
3.10	Getting to work – pumping and use of equipment	Noise	Hearing damage	Whole time Day crewed Retained Volunteers Flexible Duty Officers Support staff	Noise assessments and noise reduction measures Hearing protection

Explanatory Key

Description
Reference number for the risk
Task – the specific activity being carried out
Hazard – Hazard present giving rise to the risk
Risk – the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious
Persons at risk – this should detail either employee, and / or member of public
Control measures – That could be used by the Service to reduce the risk

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