

FIRE INVESTIGATION TEAM

REGIONAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
TRAINING AND CPD
CORONERS COURT REPRESENTATION

REGIONAL WORKING

- n AGREED TO OPERATE AT 3 DISTINCT LEVELS
- n LEVEL 1
 - n Where cause established by a Crew/Watch Manager
- n LEVEL 2
 - n Where cause not easily established. To be carried out by a nominated Fire Investigator with specific advanced training and experience
- n LEVEL 3
 - n Requiring more technical, forensic scene examination. Usually more serious, large or complex. Fire and Rescue representation at such incidents will remain at level 2.

TRIGGERS FOR LEVEL 2 INVESTIGATIONS

- n Fatalities/serious injuries
- n 6 or more pumping appliances
- n Primary fires where cause cannot readily be identified
- n On request from Senior Police Investigating Officer
- n Following a re-call within 12 hours of FDR1 fire
- n Fires and explosions of special interest

REGIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- n That each FRS will maintain a minimum of 8 Level 2 qualified Investigators
- n Regional assistance will be provided
- n Recall will be instigated where no other availability
- n Each FRS will have a nominated representative to the Regional Forum

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

- n Agreed between Police, Fire and Rescue Services and Scientific support across the region
- n Aims to provide Best Value by formulating a combined strategy to;
 - Recognise each services role and responsibility
 - Minimise duplication of effort
 - Share resources
 - Undertake suitable combined training

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FIRE SERVICE

- n Inform Police of fires of mutual interest asap
- n Preserve the scene and evidence
- n Assist Police to investigate
- n Coordinate a risk assessment and H&S review
- n Preserve and record any evidence and pass to Police Investigating Officer asap
- n Communicate their findings to the Police asap and provide a full written report on request
- n Provide equipment and access to the Hydrocarbon detector dog (s)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES POLICE

- n Primary responsibility at fires involving fatalities, serious injury, appear to be non-accidental.
- n Respond to requests from the F&RS to attend fires of mutual interest
- n Work with F&RS to establish cordons, scene logs, scene preservation
- n Pass relevant information to Fire Investigator, where it may aid cause definition unless deemed detrimental to Police investigation to do so.
- n In cases of fatalities or suspected arson an appropriate level of Police Investigating Officer will be appointed.
- n Police Investigating Officer has responsibility for Forensic Strategy and should, where appropriate, form a Forensic Management Team (involving all agencies) as soon as possible.
- n Police Officer in charge of the investigation shall be the authority for requesting any specialist provision such as the Police Surgeon or Forensic Scientist (excepting the Accelerant Detector Dog Team).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES POLICE

- n The Police Investigating Officer will be responsible for requesting the attendance of the Health and Safety Executive. In the absence of a Police attendance, this responsibility will fall upon the Fire Service Incident Commander.
- n The Police Service has the primary responsibility for dealing with press matters. The Fire and Rescue Service will not make a press release by way of comment or footage/pictures although a media strategy can be agreed.
- n Where necessary the Police Service will facilitate a case conference between all relevant parties to establish the direction of the investigation.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT

- n Responsible for taking samples and control samples as deemed necessary and for providing correct packaging, labelling, documentation, continuity and transit of such samples to the Police Officer in Charge of the Investigation.
- n Responsible for addressing and advising on all issues of contamination and continuity in relation to the scene (s) and subsequent investigation.
- n Responsible for recording photographic and video evidence of the scene. Such evidence will be made available to the F&RS where it is appropriate to do so.

FIRE INVESTIGATION TEAM TRAINING

- n Work is currently underway to develop a basic input on Fire Investigation that will give all Crew and Watch Managers an understanding up to Level 1
 - n **LEVEL 2**
- n All 10 current members of the Fire Investigation Team are trained to Level 2
- n In order to achieve Level 2 status, team members ;

TRAINING

- n ...complete an introductory/development period
- n This involves shadowing existing Team Members.
- n Attending one of the recognised Level 2 Technical Courses **
- n Applying this learning whilst continuing to shadow
- n Attending one of the recognised Level 2 Practical Courses **
- n Further shadowing and evaluation by the existing Team Members and the Fire Investigation Coordinator
- n At this point, given suitable performance/evaluation an individual may be granted Level 2 status.

- n ** See next slide for course content

TRAINING

- n The 2 Level 2 Courses attended cover, amongst other areas, the following:

- n The Legislation which sets out Powers, Duties and Constraints
- n Fire growth and spread within a fire damaged building or area and the contribution made by the structure, fire loading and processes
- n Safety Concerns
- n Electrical causes of fire
- n Deliberate (malicious?) ignition
- n Reporting on the findings of a fire investigation
- n Evidence collection and management
- n Witness interviewing
- n Locating the seat of the fire and determining the cause
- n Investigating fires in vehicles

TRAINING

- n Investigating explosions in buildings
- n Liaising with other agencies
- n Awareness of court proceedings

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- n A large proportion of the Team Members have attended the;
- n
- n *ADVANCED FIRE SCIENCE AND FIRE INVESTIGATION COURSE*
 - n *(EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY)*
- n Here they have studied;
- n Fire Behaviour of combustible materials
- n Ignition sources
- n Compartment fires
- n Fire Growth
- n Identification of items at fire scenes
- n Electrical fires

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- n Response of materials and structures to fire conditions
- n Analytical Techniques
- n Investigation of explosions
- n Spontaneous combustion
- n Wilful fire raising
- n Forensic Pathology

EVIDENCE GIVEN AT CORONERS COURT

- n Fire Investigation Officer, like any other member of the public, can be **REQUIRED** to attend a Coroners Court to give evidence. Failure to attend can invoke a custodial sentence!
- n A Coroner may direct that a full or partial report is submitted or may require that a statement is made to the Police as part of a report required from them.
- n On the day of the inquest the Coroner guides the attending Officer through their evidence, asking for a full explanation where deemed necessary for the understanding of those present. This is done in such a way as to be informative whilst sensitive and is intended to show how a determination has been reached.
- n Once the information has been presented, the Coroner will make his determination.
- n In Nottinghamshire we have an exceptional working relationship with the Coroner and his Office