

## **London Fire Brigade update**

### **Duties under Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022**

Legislation came into force on 23 January 2023 that places new duties on the Responsible Person (RP) for the fire safety of any multi-occupied residential building. These duties include sharing information about any buildings of seven or more storeys or over 18 metres height with the fire and rescue service, **which we ask you share with us via our High Rise Building Portal (<https://hrbdp.london-fire.gov.uk/>)**.

This portal enables you to send us up-to-date building floor plans, a summary of the external wall arrangements, and report any faults that cannot be fixed within 24 hours - as required by the regulations. Sharing this information using the portal ensures it can be acted on quickly and relevant details provided to our fire crews should there be an incident at the premises. All RPs must both register on the High-Rise Building Portal and use it to provide all the information required to meet the regulations.

RPs who do not carry out these new responsibilities are not meeting their obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and can be subject to enforcement action by the fire and rescue service.

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 were introduced to meet recommendations within Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Some provisions apply to buildings regardless of height, and others at 11 metre and 18 metre height thresholds. A summary is enclosed.

For further information on the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, visit our website.

London is expecting above average temperatures over the coming weeks and the Brigade has been receiving regular updates from the Met Office and through our London partnership meetings to support our planning.

### **Wildfire Preparedness**

#### **Weekly strategic forecasting meeting**

The Brigade continues to hold the weekly strategic forecasting meeting each Wednesday morning. This meeting considers a range of areas for the next 8 days including, Intelligence status, planned events, weather information, staffing levels and operational requirements. The outcome of this meeting provides our position to resource against the predicted risk to ensure (where possible) that the appropriate resources are available. This arrangement has worked well up to this point.

#### **Working in our boroughs**

Officers and crews have taken a proactive approach and have been familiarising themselves with the access and egress to areas of risk identified on their station grounds. We encourage this approach and fully support local engagement with the Chief Executives, council leaders, local authority and other partners to minimise risk and work in partnership to protect your local communities.

### **Wildfire training**

The new wildfire training package is live and completion rates are improving. With the Amber wildfire alert still in place, this training is being prioritised to ensure fire station staff are aware of the risks and prepared for incidents of this type.

### **Holy Hose and new Hats**



The changes we're making following 2022's heatwave-related fires include providing 'bucket hats', new wildfire training for firefighters and the roll out of 'holey hoses' to tackle wildfires during very hot weather.

It became clear during debriefing following the unprecedented temperatures in 2022 that our welfare equipment and procedures are not sufficient to mitigate the impact of working in 40C heat. This includes our personal protective equipment (PPE), respiratory protective equipment (RPE) and our welfare arrangements, such as portable shelters and cooling fans. As a result, our equipment and welfare are all under review to ensure that we put in place suitable measures to protect staff working in extreme temperatures.

When the holey hose is charged with water it creates a 'water curtain' over a considerable distance and provides a fire break. The early use of holey hose will wet unburnt fuels and soak into the ground, making their ignition more difficult. Holey hose will be carried on the OSU with a 5,000-litre water dam for areas that are difficult to access. This hose is stored at Finchley Fire Station and can be deployed across London.

### **Crew Welfare**

Staff welfare is paramount and with the increase in temperature, it's important to ensure our staff have the appropriate measures in place such as personal issue water bottles to maintain hydration levels, sun cream and appropriate levels of Personal Protective Equipment available at all times.

### **Flood response equipment**

The Met Office has also heavy rain over the summer, that could lead to floods over a wide area of London.

The Brigade's previous flood response equipment was limited to the mass delivery of sand bags. These have manual handling issues, and once deployed they are difficult to re-deploy. After a flooding incident they also present a contamination issue, rendering them unsuitable for re-use.

Incident commanders can now request up to 500m of flood protection barriers stored at two strategic locations, **Finchley** and Sutton.

The barriers can be taken by Operational Support Units to any flooding incident across London.

### **New approach to automatic fire alarm calls**

We are preparing to launch a public consultation over the Brigade's proposals to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarm calls from non-residential premises.

We will always attend an emergency when a member of the public calls us, but we want to stop wasting so much time, effort and money responding to automatic fire alarm calls that turn out to be false when firefighters arrive at the location. Any changes would mean more appliances are available for genuine emergencies. Firefighters could also spend more time on vital fire prevention work and other activities that keep our communities safe.

Further information will be shared when the consultation has been finalised.