



## **PRE-DETERMINED ATTENDANCE AT AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM ACTUATIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is taking all necessary measures to minimise disruption to our emergency response during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We have robust contingency plans in place should we encounter a high number of absences among firefighters and staff to ensure we continue to respond to every emergency to protect Scotland's communities. These contingency plans are constantly monitored and reviewed, so we are able to adapt and provide a flexible and prompt response to any challenges COVID-19 presents.

As the situation has been developing, we have been reviewing our operational response models, including options for responding to automatic fire alarm (AFA) actuations at non-domestic premises. As am I sure you're aware a high proportion of these actuations (97%) end up as unwanted fire alarm fire signals (UFAS) and with an average of 28000 of these unnecessary call-outs attended by operational crews every year, this demand on our front-line resources and impact on the community is significant.

As a public service, we must do all we can to stop the spread of COVID-19. By reducing our attendance at AFA actuations in a planned and safe manner, we can help protect the public, our operational crews and ensure we stay resilient for responding to emergencies and other critical incident types operational crews may be required to attend during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of 06 May 2020, we are therefore changing our response at AFA actuations to a single pumping appliance, with the exception of sleeping accommodation and other specific high-risk premises, which will continue to receive either a full or appropriately modified pre-determined attendance (PDA). This change will be under constant review, so we can react promptly to any emerging challenges and issues.

We are aware that this change will lead to a reduced initial response to AFA actuations at certain non-domestic premises across Scotland (e.g. offices, shops etc). Some premises will not see any change at all, because they are exempt (e.g. hospitals, care homes etc), or a single pump strategy already applies to them under our current policies. To ensure this change is communicated effectively and the right messaging is targeted towards duty holders and those with responsibility for fire safety management, we have devised a communications strategy that will be deployed over the coming days. The basis of the strategy, is to reinforce the following key points:

- SFRS will always mobilise an increased attendance to AFA actuations, if it's backed-up by a 999-call confirming a fire.
- Reminding duty holders of their responsibilities for reducing false alarms and resultant UFAS call-outs, including arrangements for investigating AFA actuations, and immediately reporting confirmed fires via a 999 back-up call.

Partnership working is key to delivering this communications strategy. As a key strategic partner we value your support with communicating this change, and acting as a conduit for

sharing any associated advice and information with duty holders. I therefore invite you to share this information across your networks, so the most relevant stakeholders are informed of the changes we are making to our response at AFA actuations.

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