

Guidance to Brigade Committees on Developing Policies for Women Firefighters Attending Radiation Incidents.

POLICY STATEMENT

THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION RECOMMENDS THAT FIRE AUTHORITIES PLAN NOT TO EXPOSE WOMEN FIREFIGHTERS TO INCIDENTS INVOLVING RADIATION

The following information is suggested as a template for Brigade Committees to consider against the current arrangements or planning procedures in their respective Fire Authorities. These contingencies will go some way to ensuring that individual personnel remain safe, crew safety will not be compromised and incident command principles are maintained.

This guidance supports the principle of planning to ensure as far as possible that women are not exposed to radiation at incidents. It suggests ways to negate the problems that will occur if crews are turned out to or subsequently find 'radiation confirmed' at the incident they are attending.

1. All Service personnel should be fully trained in their particular or specific role in dealing with incidents involving radiation.
2. A range of duties specifically suitable to the role/skills of any women attending incidents involving radiation should be developed. Training for these roles should also be developed and exercised as part of a programmed training regime.

On receipt of a 'Radiation Suspected' or a 'Radiation Confirmed' message, a process must be developed to ensure that;

3. All appliances/crews are aware of the type of incident they are responding to.
4. Crew/Watch Commanders inform Emergency Fire Control how many women Firefighter's, including themselves, form the appliance crew.
5. Any appliances that have women Firefighter's as part of the crew, report to any marshalling point (MP) or rendezvous point (RP). This will enable those Firefighter's to be redeployed to carry out other required duties.
6. If this subsequently drops the crew number to below the minimum crew level, then further appliances should be mobilised.
7. If this subsequently results in the Crew/Watch manager not being available to supervise control of their personnel, a procedure must be developed to ensure correct levels of incident command are maintained before those personnel are deployed.
8. If the Incident Commander mobilised is a woman Firefighter, then another Incident Commander must be mobilised.

At incidents, where radiation is subsequently discovered, the procedures should include;

9. The Incident Commander immediately withdrawing any women from the incident to a position of safety.
10. Emergency Fire Control being informed of any additional mobilising requirements, including Incident/Sector Commanders.
11. A defensive mode of tactical operations must be employed until the arrival of the required resources.

Any woman Firefighter who has been inadvertently exposed to radiation must undergo specific health monitoring process and advice on health issues. For example, this advice may include advice on issues such as breast feeding or other women's health care provisions.