

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE
RESPONDING TO OTHER EVENTUALITIES AND OTHER
SERVICES**

1. STRATEGY

It is the strategy of the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) where appropriate, to use its discretionary powers under sections 11 and 12 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA) to equip and respond to events beyond its core functions. These types of calls are generally known as Special Service Calls (SSC).

FRSA has been amended by the Localism Act 2011. Section 19 of the FRSA is now omitted and replaced with sections 18A-18C. These new sections give additional guidelines in relation to freedoms and restrictions for charging for specific actions carried out by a Fire and Rescue Service.

It is the intention of the WMFS to ensure that resources remain available to respond to fires, road traffic collisions, other emergencies and not to engage unnecessarily in activities which could be done by other trades or undertakings.

It is important to note that the WMFS does not receive any explicit funding for non-emergency activities. It is imperative, where the WMFS is engaged in any non-emergency activity, that every attempt is made to recuperate its costs.

Fire Authorities may charge **any person** for **any action** taken by the Authority in the United Kingdom subject to the **restrictions** imposed by the FRSA.

2. PROCEDURES

The information contained in this order is to be followed by Fire Control and Commanders when dealing with all requests for assistance in relation to SSCs.

Also detailed in this order is guidance to assist Fire Control when call challenging the initial call and the information required when completing the Customer Confirmation of Service Agreement form (SSC form) and the electronic SSC workbook.

2.1 Definition of a special service call

A SSC is any incident where WMFS resources may be engaged, which fall outside the scope of the core functions of a Fire and Rescue Authority (fire safety, fires, RTCs and serious emergencies).

2.2 Categories

SSCs generally fall into 3 main categories:

- Category 1 A SSC incident which requires a response by the WMFS due to an emergency **(the Authority is normally restricted from making a charge)**
- Category 2 A SSC request for the WMFS to engage in actions which are chargeable involving the use of WMFS resources.
- Category 3 SSC incident where there is a combination of both category 1 and 2, for example: - where an initial response is made by the WMFS due to an **emergency** however, once the incident is stabilised the recovery phase of the incident require actions which are of a chargeable nature.

2.3 Call management and charging policy

A request for assistance is usually received in Fire Control via the 999 or administrative telephone system. Fire Control will normally act as the first filter and will try to determine whether the call for assistance is of an emergency or non-emergency nature.

Category 1 (Non-chargeable SSCs)

For all requests made for assistance of an **emergency** nature, Fire Control will mobilise the appropriate Level of Response (LOR) either directly to the incident, or if more appropriate, to a nominated rendezvous point.

An '**emergency**' is defined as an event or situation that causes or is likely to cause:

- one or more individuals to die, be seriously injured or become seriously ill; or
- serious harm to the environment (including the life and health of plants and animals).

There will be no charge for incidents that involve the following situations:

- a) Providing emergency medical assistance.
- b) Rescuing individuals from serious harm, in the event of an emergency.
- c) Emergencies resulting from events of widespread significance.
- d) Emergencies which have occurred as a direct result of severe weather.
- e) Emergencies resulting from road traffic accidents.
- f) Actions taken by the Fire Authority to enforce the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- g) Extinguishing fires, or protecting life and property in the event of fires (excluding fires which are at sea or under the sea).

Category 2 (Chargeable SSCs)

For all requests made for assistance of an **non-emergency** nature that falls under the remit of others (for example, an appropriate trades person, other service provider or landlord), the caller should be first advised that the WMFS role is to provide an emergency response, the caller should then be encouraged to call the appropriate undertaking or trades person.

In the event that the caller still requires the services of the WMFS, then Fire Control must ensure the caller understands that providing this discretionary service falls outside the scope of the core duties of a FRS and they must be left in no doubt as to the likely charges involved.

No response should be made unless the caller or appropriate person identified as liable for the charge is prepared to accept such charges. Fire Control will always have the discretion to mobilise if there is any doubt or where a vulnerable person could be at risk. (See section 2.4 exceptional circumstances.)

Important: - The person considered 'appropriate' **must** be consulted and agreement reached before taking actions of a chargeable nature.

Once contact is made with the appropriate person Fire Control should make them aware that the call may be recorded for quality monitoring and training purposes.

Following the consultation if the caller is still prepared to accept the charge an invoicing address must be taken. The caller must also be informed that a **verbal agreement** has now been made and is binding.

Fire crews mobilised to incidents where a chargeable service is to be provided will be notified via the mobile data terminal (MDT). The word '**chargeable**' will be recorded in the data field.

Once the crew are in attendance, the Incident Commander (IC) should ensure the customer is fully aware of:

- the financial implications of accepting assistance from the Fire Service at the current SSC charge rate x per resource x per hour and the estimated time it will take to complete the task for which the service is being provided; and
- the conditions of the declaration. (See Appendix 4 for a copy of the SSC form.)

For all non-emergency SSCs a signature should be obtained from the person identified as liable for the charge or their nominated representative. This is in advance of the service being provided.

The 'customer copy' of a SSC form should be completed and left with the customer for their records. (Appendix 6 copy of the 'customer copy' of the SSC form.)

If the caller is not prepared to accept the charge, or where it is decided by the IC that the attendance of the service is unwarranted or not an appropriate use of WMFS resources, the caller may be provided with general advice. Where necessary Fire Control may seek advice from the duty flexi duty system (FDS) officer or if appropriate contact the duty fire emergency support service (FESS) officer, if this is an area where they could provide additional support to members of the public.

Examples of chargeable SSCs (this is not an exhaustive list)

- a) Containment and clearance of debris, spillages, discharges or leaks from vehicles, storage tanks or pipes (recovery phase only).
- b) Provision or removal of water.
- c) Effecting entry to, or egress from a premises.
- d) Release of a person(s) from lift cabins.
- e) Rescuing animals (not linked to an emergency as defined in section 2.3).
- f) Removal of unsafe structure.
- g) Lifting of incapacitated persons.
- h) Non-emergency police or ambulance assists.
- i) Provision of documents, photograph, tapes, videos or other similar recordings, where charging is not already authorised or prohibited by other enactments.

(See Appendix 1 for additional guidance on the most appropriate person to charge.)

Category 3 (Combination of non-chargeable and chargeable actions)

Incidents in this category will normally require some form of emergency action to be taken by the WMFS due to the risk to human life or the environment. Once the incident is stabilised the incident may fall into a chargeable category. For example; a chemical incident, initially emergency action maybe required however the clear up operation (recovery phase) may the chargeable.

It is not essential that the Fire Service resources are used at this stage however, before charging can commence, an appropriate person must be consulted and agreement reached.

It will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander to recognise this transition and to take the appropriate action.

Fire Control should be informed when the SSC changes from one category to another. The SSC forms must be completed as per a chargeable incident.

Note: - When completing the electronic SSC workbook or the SSC form the time of the **chargeable phase of the incident** should be recorded against each resource involved.

2.4 Exceptional circumstances

Occasionally the WMFS will attend SSCs that are of a chargeable nature however due to exceptional circumstances, it may not be in the interest of WMFS to charge for the actions taken.

Exceptional circumstances could be for a range of reasons, for example, an incident involving a vulnerable person where there is potential for the person to come to harm if action is not taken at that time.

When completing the SSC workbook the exceptional circumstances section should be completed, all pertinent details should be recorded to justify the decision as to why the situation was exceptional and why the charge should be waived. This will be assessed by the Mobilising Officer.

In circumstances where vulnerability has been identified whilst attending a SSC, the Incident Commander must always consider a referral to the local **Vulnerable Persons team**.

A vulnerable person is someone who may need extra support because of:

- a learning disability;
- a physical disability or mobility issues;
- Dementia;
- sensory loss;
- mental health condition;
- long term drug or alcohol dependency;
- long term critical illness;
- lack of mental capacity; or
- young child.

2.5 Special service advisor or adjudicator

The Brigade Mobilising Officers (BMO) will act as the Fire Service advisor in relation to SSCs queries.

The station commander or group commander Emergency Response and Policy will act as the adjudicator in a SSC dispute.

2.6 Assessment on whether a service can be provided

Fire Control and the Incident Commander must be satisfied that:

- any request is reasonable and the service to be provided is considered relevant to the role of a FRS;
- the service to be provided **should not** involve any action that may expose personnel to a disproportionate level of risk; and
- it is not possible to obtain the service from elsewhere, for example, a contractor within a reasonable time.

2.7 Pre-arranged special services

All pre-arranged special service calls should be treated as a Category 2 SSC (chargeable). Authorisation should be obtained, from the relevant Station Commander, duty flexi duty system officer or the mobilising officer.

2.8 Attending special services calls, over the boarder (OB)

Where requests are made for specialist equipment or personnel in support of another Fire and Rescue Authority for '**emergencies**' only, this is not dependant on a mutual assistance agreement being in place.

It will not be normal practice to respond OB to provide a chargeable service; however where this occurs, the WMFS SSC charging structure will apply.

2.9 Using water for reasons other than for firefighting or training purposes

The **removal of water** from a hydrant for reasons other than firefighting or training is **not** free. Any person requesting the services of the WMFS which requires the removal of water from a hydrant should be referred to the Fire Service Water Officer at Fire Service Headquarters.

2.10 Electronic SSC workbook

All SSCs attended by WMFS will generate an electronic workbook once the incident is closed. It will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander to ensure that the electronic workbook is completed in line with Standing Order 15/2 Reporting Procedure – Stop Codes and Incident Workbooks.

2.11 Review of SSC charges

A full review of the schedule of charges will be carried out every 3 years. During this 3 year period the Finance Department will annually adjust the direct salaries cost elements within the charge for pay award, if appropriate, and also increase the indirect cost elements by the Retail Price Index (RPI).

3. CROSS REFERENCE

[Standing Order 13/4](#) – Mobilising – Attendances

[Standing Order 15/2](#) – Reporting Procedure/Stop Codes and Incident Work Books

[Standing Order 15/10](#) – Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

4. KEY CONSULTEES

All Borough Commanders

Station Commander Foleshill

Station Commander Kings Norton

Station Commander Binley

Station Commander Highgate

Station Commander Aston

Perry Barr Fire Station Green Watch

Bournbrook Blue Watch

Dudley Purple Watch

Solihull White Watch

Bickenhill Red Watch

Headquarters Community Safety

Fire Control

Safety, Health and Environmental Team

Media Officer

Finance Manager

Equality and Diversity

Vulnerable Persons Officer

Integrated Risk Management
Fire Brigades' Union
Unison
Fire Officers' Association
Chief's Policy Advisor
Word Processing Unit

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A full Equality Impact Assessment was completed.

6. OWNERSHIP

The order did not require Corporate Board or Authority approval.

7. RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW/AMENDMENT DETAILS

7.1 Responsible Corporate Board Member/Department

Director, Technical and Operational Support/Emergency Response

7.2 Created/fully reviewed/amended

This Standing Order was reviewed in full by the Mobilising Officer, Emergency Response and Policy, June 2014.

COMMON CHARGEABLE SERVICES AND PERSONS WHO MAY BE CHARGED

Action taken by Fire Service	Person who may be charged
1. Containment and clearance of debris, spillages, discharges or leaks from vehicles, storage tanks or pipes.	The owner, occupier or operator of any premises or vehicle prior to the incident which is giving rise to the charge.

Guidance Once the emergency phase of the incident is stabilised the recovery phase will be chargeable. When completing the workbooks, the recovery phase should be reflected when recording the in attendance and release times.

Important Minor non-commercial leaks of fuel in public places can be classed as an emergency due to the serious risk this could pose to other members of the public.

If the incident involves a vehicle it is vital that the registration number of the vehicle and any other identification marks such as company name or fleet number of the vehicle is recorded. This information should be confirmed to Fire Control and recorded on the incident log.

Action taken by Fire Service	Person who may be charged
2. Provision or removal of water.	The owner, occupier or operator of any premises in relation to which the service is provided or the person who requests the service or for whom the service was provided.

Guidance Flooding in domestic or commercial premises the caller should be advised to call the appropriate trade’s person or service provider.

Water coming from adjoining premises where that occupier is not present, maybe treated as an emergency if it is deemed persons could come to harm.

Important Flooding affecting an electrical consumer unit (fuse board) should be treated as an **emergency**.

Using water from a hydrant for a SSC to fill pools, ponds tanks or similar vessels should be referred to the Fire Service Water Officer.

Under no circumstances should WMFS loan out equipment to a third party to allow them to access water from a hydrant or washout.

Action taken by Fire Service	Person who may be charged
3. Effecting entry to, or egress from a premises.	The owner, occupier or operator of the premises, or the person who requests the service or for whom the service was provided.

Guidance Lock in or out, special consideration should be given to vulnerable persons. See section 2.4 for further guidance.

Action taken by Fire Service	Person who may be charged
4. Rescuing persons from lift cabins.	The owner or operator of the lift.

Guidance Fire Control or IC should make every effort to determine the identity of the owner or occupier of the premises where the lift is located.

Where the owner or operator of the lift can not be located in a reasonable amount of time, Fire Control should mobile the appropriate LOR. The lift owner or operator should be informed in writing that any similar rescues in the future will be chargeable.

Action taken by Fire Service	Person who may be charged
5. Rescuing animals.	The owner or keeper of the animal or the person who requests the service.

Guidance Where there is **no** immediate risk to human life, animals rescues will be treated as chargeable.

It is not the intention of the WMFS to charge the RSPCA in the event they request assistance from the WMFS especially if the rescue required is of a technical nature.

Action taken by Fire Service	Person who may be charged
6. Provision of documents, photograph, tapes, videos or other similar recordings, where charging is not already authorised or prohibited by other enactments.	The person who requested the service or for whom the service was provided.

Guidance The provision of fire scene photographs, video footage, copies of fire reports where there is no separate prohibition on charging.

The above is not intended to deal with freedom of information requests or Data Protection Act issues or any similar requests under statute where separate charging arrangements exist.

Such requests should be made directly to Data Management.

Action taken by Fire Service	Person who may be charged
7. Removal of dangerous structure.	The owner, occupier or operator of the structure or where the structure or premises where the structure is located or the person who requests the service or for whom the service is provided.

Guidance

If it is believed that persons could come to harm or serious injury Fire Control should treat the initial call as an emergency. Once the incident is stabilised (for example, safety cordons implemented) the incident should be deemed as chargeable. The IC should advise the owner, occupier, or Police of the most appropriate action to be taken.

If necessary a structural engineer from the local authority can be requested via Fire Control.

Miscellaneous

Removal of rings

Removal of rings and other similar items will **not** be deemed as chargeable.

APPENDIX 2

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

Incident Number	Date

Special Service Call – Confirmation of Service Agreement

This form is to be used when a special service call is of a chargeable type – for guidance see Standing Order 15/12.

Declaration – I/we the undersigned apply for a service to be carried out and agree to meet the cost of this service according to the official scale of charges. I/we also agree to pay for any damage to or loss of equipment arising from my/our negligence. I/we also understand that the Fire Authority and its personnel shall not be held responsible in the event of a claim for damages by a third party, arising out of the performance of this special service.

Incident Commander – tick box to confirm that customer has been informed of the charges.

Position/Title		Signed
Name (printed)		

Invoice address or Public Limited Company address (Block Capitals)

Post Code

Tel. No.

Incident address

Service required/rendered/description of incident and registration of vehicle if involved and any considerations & comments of the OIC.

Station/ Department		Incident Commander Signature
Service Number		

Any data provided will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

APPENDIX 3

Comments/Exceptional circumstances						
Decision of Technical and Operational Support-Normal Scale/Special Consideration/Waive charges						
Signed				Service Number		
Service used (appliances/equipment)	Number of appliances/assets	Time		Ops Support use Only		
		Start/in attendance	End/ available	Total hours	£	P
Technical and Operations Support use only		Date		Total		
				VAT		
Technical & Ops Support Use Only				Grand Total		
Prepared by (printed)			Authorised Signature			
Finance Codes	VAT Code	Codes	VAT Code			
K779		74100	2			

Debtor's Ref/Order No.

Invoice No.	Received by Exchequer	Date Input

Any data provided will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

Incident Number	Date

Customer Copy	Special Service Call - Scale of charges
----------------------	--

Nature of services and charges (**see reverse side of sheet for scale of charges**)
 Special Services involving use of Fire Service appliances, vehicles and equipment.

To be Completed by the IC at each chargeable special service call

Brief description of the action(s)

Fire service resources used:

Time will be calculated from time of arrival until time of completion of service. Part hours will be charged in 15 minute increments once the 1st hour is exceeded	Estimated special service call charge (including VAT)
---	---

Customer signature	Incident Commander signature
--------------------	------------------------------

Correspondence connected with this incident may be addressed to:

The Mobilising Officer
 West Midlands Fire Service
 Technical and Operational Support
 99 Vauxhall Road
 Birmingham
 B7 4HW

Any data provided will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

Special Service Charges for 2015/16	Special Service Charge Cost Per Hour (Rounded)	Special Service Charge Cost Per Hour Including VAT	Special Service Charge Cost Per 15 Minutes	Special Service Charge Cost Per 15 Minutes Including VAT
Pump Rescue Ladder with normal crewing	£357.00	£428.40	£89.25	£107.10
Aerials	£387.00	£464.40	£96.75	£116.10
Pump Rescue Ladder with BRV crewing	£243.00	£291.60	£60.75	£72.90
Brigade Response Vehicles - New Toyotas	£148.00	£177.60	£37.00	£44.40
AFA Vehicles	£125.00	£150.00	£31.25	£37.50
Command Support Vehicles	£215.00	£258.00	£53.75	£64.50
Prime Movers	£178.00	£213.60	£44.50	£53.40
Bobcat (Excluding Prime Mover & PRL)	£64.00	£76.80	£16.00	£19.20
Pods (Exc. PRL, Prime Mover and Environmental Units)	£52.00	£62.40	£13.00	£15.60
Environmental Unit (Exc. PRL or Prime Mover)	£92.00	£110.40	£23.00	£27.60
Incident Command Unit	£369.00	£442.80	£92.25	£110.70
DIM Vehicle	£209.00	£250.80	£52.25	£62.70
IRU Including Fork Lift Truck	£190.00	£228.00	£47.50	£57.00
Van and one member of staff	£77.00	£92.40	£19.25	£23.10
Flexi Duty Officer	£64.00	£64.00	£16.00	£16.00
Tech Rescue – HVP Prime Mover (inc. Hydrosub & Hosebox Module)	£180.00	£216.00	£45.00	£54.00

Other Charges

1. Chemical protection suit (CPS) –replacement cost

**£678.30 per
suit**

An additional charge (pro-rata) will be levied for the replacement of any CPS used in the non-emergency or recovery phase of the special service. These charges will be based on the current replacement costs. Any or all ancillary equipment (Distress Signal Unit, personal line, and so on) which is lost or damaged or cannot be suitably decontaminated due to use in the non-emergency or recovery phase of a SSC, will be charged for at the current cost of replacement.