

# News Release

Issued on: Thursday 4 October 2018

## **Fire and Rescue Service and Environment Agency Produce Memorandum of Understanding**

The East Midlands Regional Implementation Team, including representatives from Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Services, and two Environment Agency areas, East Midlands and Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, have worked together to produce a new, updated Memorandum of Understanding.

Memorandum of Understandings are used to document a relationship of goodwill between parties, indicating an intended common line of action. The new Memorandum of Understanding brings together five individual versions, to better reflect the most current National Fire Chiefs Council and Environmental Agency agreed principles and promote improved liaison and shared working in one shared document.

There was a significant challenge to achieving this, and this was down to the sheer size and diversity of their combined response areas. The Environmental Agency's geographical response area can differ considerably to the typical county boundaries each fire and rescue service responds within. Working with local, regional and national Environmental Agency leads over the past 12 months helped, and resulted in a document that is representative and suitable for all involved.

As category one responders, this Memorandum of Understanding is vital to both organisations in achieving their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and other specific legislation introduced to protect the environment. It sets out the agreed principles and aims for:

- minimising the hazard to the environment from fire and rescue activities
- improved liaison for emergency planning and coordination of response, in particular for pollution and flooding incidents which informs our Integrated Risk Management Plan

- joint training, familiarisation and planning of exercises with greater frequency
- introducing the National Environmental Risk Assessment (NERA), standardising terminology, identifying environmental hazards and informing a combined tactical plan.

Implementing the new Memorandum of Understanding provides the foundation for closer working, identification on the incident ground and appreciation of capabilities and skills. A big step in our continued efforts in reducing the environmental risk and associated impact to the businesses and communities we serve.

Darren Pick, Watch Manager Regional Implementation Team, said: "Producing a new Memorandum of Understanding will prove to be significant for all involved, as previously this was a single document in each fire and rescue service agreed between the equivalent geographical response areas for the Environmental Agency.

"As I'm sure you can imagine, bringing five fire and rescue services and two Environmental Agency areas together to agree working practices in a single document is a great achievement.

"We are glad to have finally got to the end, and we hope this will make a difference to the way we work in the future."

Paul Lockhart, Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for the Environment Agency, said: "As an emergency responder, the Environment Agency works alongside fire and rescue services to protect people and the environment from flooding, fire and pollution incidents.

"This is the first time two Environment Agency regions – the East Midlands, covering Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire, and Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire - have signed a combined Memorandum of Understanding with five fire and rescue services and we believe this revised Memorandum of Understanding will set a new standard for incident response.

"It will help to shape and change fire and rescue service training and development and is a great example of us working more efficiently than ever before with the emergency services to protect people and the environment."

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

Interviews can be arranged through prior arrangement with Corporate Communications on the details below.

**About the Service**

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides emergency response, prevention and protection services from 20 stations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Its headquarters is based in Birstall, Leicester.

The Service's prevention, education, enforcement and inspection programmes have resulted in significant reductions in the number of incidents. In the last ten years, fire-related incidents have reduced by 43 percent.

During 2016/17, the Service attended 694 road traffic collisions, of which 148 were extrications from vehicles, in addition to 2,259 fires. 272 schools were visited as part of the Service's schools programme, delivering fire and road safety education to pupils. Staff organised or took part in 1,613 community safety events, promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, and 145 Virtual Fatal Four (VF4) events as part of the Service's young drivers' road safety project.

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