

THE HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS FIRE BOARD

29 January 2010

CALL REDUCTION STRATEGY

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Summary

This report seeks to update Members on the Call Reduction Strategy that commenced in 2005/06, providing a summary of statistical information.

Background

Historically each year the Service receives considerable numbers of fire calls which result in an emergency response being mobilised to an incident, which does not threaten life or property. As part of the IRMP process, a collective strategy was developed to reduce the number of these unwanted calls, bringing the following advantages to the Service;

- An enhancement of the availability of resources to respond to life critical emergencies
- The reduction of road risk for our personnel and other road users
- A reduction of the impact on the primary employer of retained personnel
- The reduction in the associated cost
- An opportunity to allocate resources to appropriate risk reduction strategies

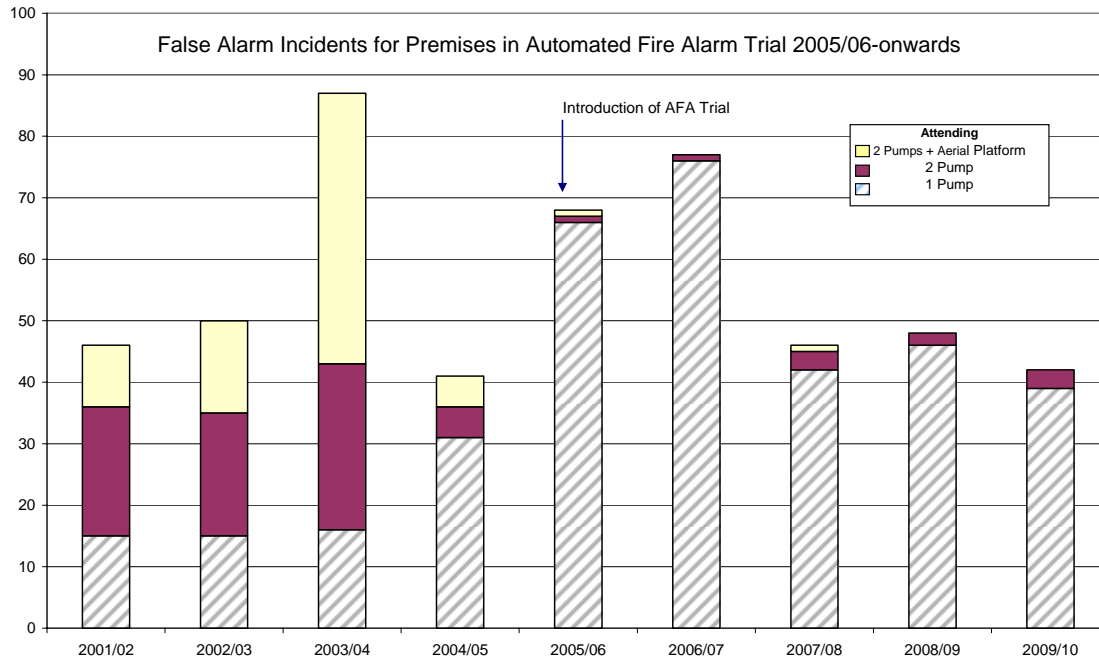
Response to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA)

In 2005/06, a policy was developed and a trial commenced in the Inverness area, to reduce the attendance for automated false alarm calls from a number of premises where automated false alarm calls (AFAs) were an often frequent occurrence.

The trial involved sending one pump instead of two to respond to AFAs occurring in low risk premises, between 0800 and 2200hrs each day, and in addition, not mobilising the Aerial Appliance. As for all other premises, should an emergency call via the '999' system be received to any of the premises included in the trial (supporting the AFA), a full attendance would automatically be mobilised.

In analysing the results from the data gathered, it can be concluded that the AFA trial has considerably reduced the number of appliances mobilised, from an average of 2.3 appliances per false alarm call at the premises involved in the trial in 2003/04, to an average of 1.07 appliances per call so far this year.

A bar chart of the AFA's concerned is shown below, illustrating the shift to single-pump attendances, along very low current levels of mobilisation of the aerial appliance, to the premises involved in the trial.



Illustrating the low level of risk, there has been just one significant fire at any of the premises involved in the trial during the past five years, this arising from an electrical fault. The automated alarm which triggered this call to the Service, triggered the initial single-pump response in line with the AFA trial. The second appliance attended the incident five minutes after the first, this having no measurable detrimental effect on the outcome of the incident.

Over the past ten years, the number of automated false alarm calls in general has been rising, a trend not reflected in the premises which were part of the trial, as several of the premises originally involved are either no longer commercially active or have resolved their initial AFA issues.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10*
Total Attendances at Premises in AFA Trial	68	77	46	48	42

To assist in addressing the ongoing rise in the number of AFA's received, acting on the success of this trial, it is the intention of the Service to role out the policy to other appropriate areas of the Service.

Call Challenge

Since 2004/05, Fire Control have implemented a policy of 'call challenge' for received 999 calls which Control Operators reasonably believed to be malicious in nature. The total number of malicious calls resulting in 'challenge' and no attendance being sent, across all Council areas of the Service, is as follows:

Malicious Calls Challenged by Control - No Attendance

Year	Highland	Orkney Isles	Shetland Isles	Western Isles	Year Total
2004/05	26	1	1	0	28
2005/06	64	4	1	1	70
2006/07	66	0	5	1	72
2007/08	56	1	2	2	61
2008/09	53	2	2	1	58
2009/10*	31	1	1	2	35

* to 19 January 2010

Appliances attending under non-Blue Light conditions

From April 2008, the Service implemented a policy of identifying conditions when responses to AFAs would be made under non-blue-light conditions. This policy reduced the risks to our own staff and that of the community posed by emergency vehicles attempting to attend an incident in the shortest possible time i.e. travelling above normal road speeds. The table below shows the potential number of AFAs to which one appliance would have attended as a non blue light response.

Automated Fire Alarm Calls - All Stations

Attendances	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10*
Totals	1944	1993	2011	1755

* to 21 January 2010

Acting on the success of this trial, it is the intention of the Service to roll out the policy to other appropriate areas of the Service

Recommendation

Members are asked to NOTE the contents of the report and AGREE that the individual policies/procedures forming the Call Reduction Strategy should be rolled out to other areas of the Service as appropriate.

DAVID WYNNE
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
18 January 2010