



HOME OFFICE
Queen Anne's Gate London SW1H 9AT

Direct line 01-213 5307
Switchboard 01-213 3000

Your reference

86483

Our reference
FIR/71 16/1/10

Date

26 September 1979

To All Chief Fire Officers

Dear Chief Officer

FIRE-FIGHTING IN HM SHIPS IN PORTS

1. Following consultation with Home Office Fire Department, the Royal Navy is issuing an amendment to that section of the Navy Manual concerning fire-fighting on Royal Naval ships in port. A copy of the revised section is attached.
2. Among other matters, the section deals with the respective roles of the Royal Navy and the local authority fire brigade at such fires. While the local authority fire service does not possess the same statutory powers with respect to RN ships as it does with other vessels, the Royal Navy has agreed that the control of fire-fighting operations should be delegated to the senior local authority fire brigade officer present as soon as practicable. In accordance with Queen's Regulations, the Commanding Officer retains overall responsibility for the safety of his ship and for fire-fighting measures. It is however the intention that control of fire-fighting operations will be exercised by the local authority fire brigade and Chief Officers will note that the new instruction requires the ship's officers to give every assistance to brigades. I have been advised that these arrangements also apply to ships under construction, refit or repair. The arrangements do not, however, apply to nuclear submarines; nor do they extend to visiting foreign warships. The Royal Navy has also agreed that once control of fire-fighting operations has been passed to the local authority fire brigade officer in charge, the latter will exercise overall control of all BA wearers, including Royal Navy personnel.
3. Chief Officers may wish to know that the reference in paragraph 55 to the naval document 3203c concerns advice to naval personnel about the cooling of bulkheads and the care to be exercised with live electrical apparatus.
4. Appropriate amendments will be made to the relevant section of the Manual of Firemanship ie Part 7, Chapter 3, Section 8, when that is next revised. In the meantime, Chief Fire Officers may wish to liaise with the appropriate Naval authorities for ports in their areas to clarify local implementation of the new arrangements.
5. There are no additional costs or manpower implications arising from the arrangements described in this letter.

Yours sincerely

No

43/1979

FIREFIGHTING IN CONJUNCTION WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY FIRE BRIGADE

Liaison

45. A good liaison with the Local Authority Fire Brigade (LAFB) is essential if efficient use is to be made of their service in the event of a fire. This liaison is vital when a ship is in harbour for any length of time and the ship's company depleted (eg by a leave and maintenance period).

46. Contact with the LAFB in a Home Naval Base should be made, in the first instance, through the Ministry of Defence Area Fire Prevention Officer (AFPO). The AFPO should be kept up-to-date with any significant changes that might affect the ship's firefighting capability, eg docking, leave period, supply of additional pumps, etc. The AFPO or one of his officers will attend ship fires during normal working hours: there may be delayed attendance during silent hours. It is therefore most important to establish a direct liaison with the LAFB.

47. Successful liaison with the LAFB depends on an understanding of any differences in aims and techniques between the Royal Navy and the LAFB.

48. The firefighting priorities of the LAFB are as follows:

- a. To save life
- b. To save property
- c. To extinguish the fire

49. Ship's Standing Orders are to contain specific instructions for calling the LAFB as an automatic response to the discovery of a suspected fire. Once the LAFB is involved, and is in all respects ready to commence firefighting operations, the control of measures taken to find and fight the fire is to be delegated to the senior LAFB officer present (but see Annex 32C, para 54 for submarines). This action is to be agreed between the ship's officer in charge in HQI and the senior LAFB officer. An oral report is to be made to the senior LAFB officer indicating that this control has been delegated to him. This action should be recorded.

50. Ship Safety. The Commanding Officer, or Duty Commanding Officer, is to retain overall responsibility for all firefighting measures and the safety of his ship. In particular, he is to exercise discretion in the amount of water pumped into his ship which may cause it to become unstable. In protracted operations, a stability liaison officer would normally be nominated by the LAFB. Close collaboration with the LAFB officers is of the utmost importance and every assistance is to be given to them by ship's officers.

51. Jetty Space. A clear space (25 ft radius) should always be kept near the foot of the brow. LAFB engines require a space 35 ft by 17 ft for parking and operation, although certain special appliances may require a somewhat larger area. The area is to be conspicuously marked "FIRE BRIGADE ACCESS - KEEP CLEAR". The Naval Base authorities will provide assistance in the supply of suitable notices.

52. Brows. When a ship has more than one brow, a clear indication is required as to which should be used by the LAFB officer to come on board. A red flag should be used to mark the "ON" brow. The LAFB officer is to be met on arrival at the brow by an officer or senior rating with authority to answer his questions and immediate enquiries.

53. Probable Questions. The following are among the questions likely to be asked by the first senior LAFB officer to arrive at the scene:

- a. Is anyone missing and/or injured?
- b. Where is the fire?
- c. What is burning?
- d. Have electrical supplies to the ship/fire zone been isolated?
- e. How long has the fire been burning?
- f. How did the fire start?
- g. What action is being taken by ship's staff?
- h. What is the state of the ship's salt water service?
- i. Are there any dangerous compartments adjacent?
- j. What is the state of the ship's Fire and Emergency Party?
- k. How critical is ship's stability?
- l. How much water has been pumped in?
- m. Are timber docking shores affected? (In dry dock only).
- n. Has a smoke boundary been set up? If so, where?

54. Missing Personnel. The LAFB may well arrive before an accurate check has been made as to whether any personnel are unaccounted for. The ship's officer in charge of firefighting must therefore be prepared to decide if he requires the LAFB to mount a search and rescue operation initially whilst RN personnel continue to tackle the fire.

55. Electrical Supplies. The LAFB normally expect all electrical supplies to an installation on fire to be isolated. This is seldom practicable in a warship fire. However, where there is a risk of voltages in excess of 440V, the equipment should be isolated. It must be noted that attempts at maintaining a 'keep alive' policy may well be counter-productive when compared with the savings in damage through quick extinction of the fire (see 3203c which deals with boundary cooling and precautions concerning electrical equipment).

56. Route to Fire. The first LAFB officer to arrive will probably wish to go from the brow directly to the scene of the fire. The route should be shown by a guide line and be by way of the weatherdeck until as near the fire as possible. The LAFB officer will not need to visit HQI at this stage if he can be adequately briefed on the situation at the brow. To help with the brief a well-marked incident board is to be available.

57. LAFB Control. The LAFB will normally establish an Advanced Control Position (ACP) (see note below, normally in clear air at the point at which the guide line leaves the weatherdeck. In order to avoid subsequent confusion it is important at this time to ensure that this location is the most sensible. A Main Control will be set up either adjacent to the brow or in a Control Unit or other fire appliance on the jetty. Good communications between the ship's control centre, normally HQI, and the LAFB control points are vital. Whenever possible, an RN liaison officer or senior rating should be stationed in the LAFB Main Control.

NOTE: In LAFB terminology this is called a Forward Control Point (FCP).

58. The officer or senior rating in charge of the ship's Main Party will move to the ACP as the smoke boundary spreads. His duties will be:

- a. To liaise with the LAFB officer in charge at that position;
- b. to keep HQI informed of all actions being taken,
- c. to maintain control of RN personnel actively engaged in firefighting, but see para 64.

59. Withdrawal of RN Personnel. Once the decision has been made to hand over the task of finding and fighting the fire to the LAFB, RN personnel will gradually be withdrawn from within the smoke boundary as they are replaced by LAFB personnel. Ship's firefighters, working in pairs and wearing breathing apparatus, will normally be required to act as guides. Close collaboration between the officer/senior rating in charge of the ship's Main Party and the LAFB officer at the ACP is essential.

60. Personnel not Involved. The LAFB will require to exercise strict control over the combined numbers of personnel involved in the firefighting operation and, therefore, all RN personnel not directly involved must clear the ship. This will be achieved by sounding the main broadcast alarm and making the pipe "Emergency, Emergency, Clear Lower Deck of Non-Duty Personnel. Muster on the Jetty (or other nominated location)". The pipe must also include instructions to keep clear of the section affected by fire when evacuating the ship. Entry and egress must be rigorously controlled by the gangway staff at the brow.

61. Evacuation of HQI. Should HQI (or alternative position) need to be evacuated for any reason, it is recommended that the ship's control team moves to the brow near the LAFB Control. If this is not practicable, any other location in clear air with good ship's internal communications should be selected (eg bridge wing).

62. Communications. The ship is to provide a communication link from HQI (or alternative position) to the ACP and from the brow to the ACP, manned by ship's staff at both ends. LAFB officers will normally use their own communication systems, but these may well prove inadequate in a warship environment and, in some cases, the associated RADHAZ prohibits their use.

Use of Breathing Apparatus and Control

63. When the ship's firefighters are using breathing apparatus consideration should be given to establishing the BA co-ordinator at the ACP as soon as possible. The BA controllers for members of the ship's fire party wearing BA will then retreat up the guide line as the smoke boundary spreads; this will ensure that men wearing breathing apparatus will find their controller as they leave the smoke boundary.

64. Ship's staff BA controllers should continue to control ship's staff personnel using BA, at the same time maintaining the closest possible liaison with LAFB BA controllers. Once the control of firefighting measures has been delegated to the LAFB, overall control of all BA wearers is to be exercised by the LAFB officer in charge of the firefighting operations.

65. It must be remembered that RN breathing apparatus has less duration than LAFB sets. RN personnel acting as guides for LAFB teams must operate in pairs to enable them to withdraw or be relieved independently. No man wearing breathing apparatus should be allowed to operate on his own.

**The Fire Service
College**



00129020