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To: All Chief Officers

9 April 1990

Dear Chief Officer

DEAR CHIEF OFFICER LETTER 6/1990

Items

1. INCIDENTS ON RAILWAY PROPERTY
2. FIREFIGHTING ON ROYAL NAVY SHIPS, SUBMARINES AND ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARIES IN PORTS AND DOCKYARDS
3. LIST OF DCOLS ISSUED IN 1989.

Yours faithfully

SIR REGINALD DOYLE
Her Majesty's Chief
Inspector of Fire Services

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INCIDENTS ON RAILWAY PROPERTY

1. Chief Officers were advised in my letter of August 1988 (DCOL 5/88) that British Rail had revised its operating procedures in order to provide fire crews attending incidents involving electrified third rail track systems with as safe a working environment as possible. Details of the new procedures were provided, along with an explanation of why British Rail could not guarantee that electrified track systems would remain de-energised for the duration of an incident. The letter stressed, that notwithstanding the revised procedures, fire crews should continue to treat electrified third rail track systems as being 'live' at all times. On no account should firefighters rely on any assumption that such track is or will remain de-energised.
2. I also reported that existing guidance for incidents on railway property, contained in Book 4 of the Manual of Firemanship, was being reviewed. The Fire Service Inspectorate is liaising closely with British Rail as part of the review, and is otherwise meeting regularly with British Rail's Directorate of Operations and Safety in order to discuss matters of mutual interest. At a recent meeting, British Rail reported that it had expanded upon its operating procedures in relation to its switching off electricity in any emergency, and upon the advice it gives British Rail personnel on the rescue of persons. This followed an incident on the London Midland Region involving the rescue of a person on the overhead line equipment. The revised procedures are being taken into account during the aforementioned review, and will be incorporated in any revised guidance to brigades.
3. In the meantime, Chief Officers might wish to review their brigades' own procedures in the light of the updated BR instructions detailed in the attached annex. It is stressed that the procedures relate solely to incidents on electrified systems where urgent life-saving action is necessary.
4. This guidance has been endorsed by the Joint Committee on Fire Brigade Operations.
5. The outcome of the general review of existing guidance to the fire service for incidents on railway property will be reported in due course.
6. This note is for Chief Fire Officers' information. There are no financial or manpower implications.

FEP/90 9/309/1

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INCIDENTS ON RAILWAY PROPERTY INVOLVING URGENT LIFE-SAVING ACTION
INSTRUCTIONS TO BRITISH RAIL PERSONNEL

Overhead Line Equipment

1. "If the casualty is completely below live overhead line equipment and no part of the body is nearer than 1 metre from the live overhead line equipment, it is not essential for the electricity to be switched off. It is perfectly safe to touch the person since there is no harmful electric charge retained in the body."
2. "The rescuer(s) must make quite sure for their own safety that no part of their body, clothing, anything they are holding or the casualty gets within 1 metre of the live overhead line equipment or anything in contact with it."
3. "If the casualty is only partly below, or is within 1 metre of live overhead line equipment, it is essential that the electricity is switched off before the casualty is approached or touched. It may then be necessary for the purposes of rescue to come into contact with the overhead line equipment or a casualty who may be touching the overhead line equipment. As there may be a small residual voltage present under the emergency isolation conditions, before touching the casualty or the overhead line equipment the rescuer(s) must make quite sure for their own safety that their hands are covered with something dry which will not conduct electricity." (ie. rubber gloves).

Conductor rail systems not exceeding 750 vDC

4. "The traction current should, if possible, be switched off before firefighters attempt to rescue anyone touching a conductor rail. If the traction current cannot be switched off without delay, a dry rope or wooden pole may be used to pull or push the person clear of the conductor rail."
5. "It is stressed that British Rail cannot guarantee that electrified track systems will remain de-energised for the duration of an incident. Fire crews should, therefore, continue to treat electrified third rail track systems as being live at all times. On no account should firefighters rely upon any assumption that such track is or will remain de-energised."

FIREFIGHTING ON RN SHIPS, SUBMARINES AND ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARIES IN PORTS AND DOCKYARDS

Chief Officers will be aware that, following consultations with the Royal Navy, guidance on procedures to be adopted by fire crews attending fires on RN ships in ports and dockyards was issued in September 1979, (DCOL 43/1979). Supplementary guidance, issued as DCOL 12/1985, reported that the Royal Navy had instructed its ships officers to contact the local authority fire brigade on arrival at a UK port, and to arrange a "ship acquaint" visit to enable local fire crews to familiarise themselves with the layout of the ship and with any problems which might be encountered should a fire on board occur. These arrangements have proved beneficial on a number of occasions when it has been necessary for fire brigade and Royal Navy personnel to jointly tackle a fire. However, some problems have been encountered on occasions and at the request of the Royal Navy, a further series of consultations, involving representatives from, among others, the Royal Navy, Fire Services Inspectorate, and those brigades which most frequently attend incidents on RN ships, were recently held to consider whether the current arrangements were in need of revision.

2. In the event, it was found that the arrangements took insufficient account of the many changes which have been introduced by the Royal Navy since 1979 in respect of RN firefighting capability, procedures, equipment and training. It was also found that the arrangements failed to recognise that the operational priorities of the RN and LAFB may vary significantly on occasions, particularly when a decision was required in respect of firefighting and search and rescue operations. In the light of these factors, it was felt that both RN instructions and guidance to LAFBs should be updated. A copy of the revised arrangements is duly annexed. The contents have been endorsed by the Joint Committee on Fire Brigade Operations.

3. It is intended that the new arrangements will apply to all RN vessels, including nuclear submarines, and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries (RFAs). Attention is drawn to the following significant points arising from the new procedural arrangements:

(a) Upon arrival, the LAFB officer in charge will be met at the brow and escorted directly to the ship's officer responsible for safety in order to receive a full briefing on the fire and be consulted about the appropriate firefighting strategy.

(b) Following consultations with the fire officer-in-charge, the ship's officer responsible for safety (known as the Officer of the Day) will decide whether to ask the LAFB to 'standby' or alternatively to ask the senior fire officer to undertake firefighting operations.

(c) The fire officer-in-charge will be formally delegated command and control responsibility should it be decided that the LAFB should undertake shipboard firefighting operations. The RN officer responsible for safety will retain command and control of such operations should the LAFB be asked to remain on 'stand-by'.

(d) The RN Officer of the Day (RFA Duty Deck Officer) will, at all times, retain overall responsibility for the safety of the ship. The senior fire officer should, therefore, ensure that good liaison is maintained with the ship's OOD (DDO) throughout the incident.

(e) It is also essential that close and effective communications are established and maintained.

4. In the light of the new arrangements, it will be necessary to revise Chapters 11 (para 2b) and 13 (para 9) of Book IV, Part 2, of the Manual of Firemanship. This will be done as soon as practicable. In the meantime Chief Officers should ensure that all personnel are advised of the new procedures which will come into effect from 2 April 1990.

5. Any difficulties experienced as a result of the new arrangements should be brought to the attention of HM Fire Service Inspectorate.

6. There are no manpower or financial implications arising from the issue of this guidance.

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FIREFIGHTING ON RN SHIPS, SUBMARINES AND ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARIES (RFA) IN PORTS AND DOCKYARDS

Revised Procedural Arrangements

ARRIVAL AT AN INCIDENT

1. All RN/RFA ships and submarines include in their Standing Orders a requirement for the LAFB to be summoned as an automatic response to the discovery of a suspected or known fire when a ship or submarine is berthed in a naval base, commercial port, or dockyard. When a ship is at anchor or at buoy, Standing Orders require that assistance be considered at an early stage, having due regard to the ship's geographical location and the probability of useful and timely assistance from the LAFB.
2. Wherever physical conditions permit a clear space (7.5m radius) should always be kept clear near the foot of the brow; each LAFB appliance requires a space 10.5m by 5.0m 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.
3. Upon arrival at the incident, the LAFB senior fire officer will be met at the brow (see paragraph 4) and escorted directly to the ship's officer responsible for the safety of the ship. (Officer of the Day (OOD) in RN ships and submarines, Duty Deck Officer in RFA ships). The ship's officer responsible will be at the RN/RFA control point which is known as HQI.
4. When a ship has more than one brow, a red flag will mark the "ON" brow to be used by the LAFB officer.
5. Upon arrival at HQI, the senior fire officer will be fully briefed and consulted on the situation, and the appropriate firefighting strategy to deal with the incident. Following the consultations, the ship's officer responsible for safety will decide whether to formally delegate responsibility for firefighting operations to the LAFB. Any request for LAFB assistance should be clearly recorded.
6. In determining whether or not to delegate responsibility to the LAFB, the ship's officer responsible for safety will take account of the nature of the incident, the operational state of the vessel, the availability of ship's staff, and the firefighting resources available to him. As a general rule, Frigates and above, in operation, are less likely to require LAFB assistance than minor war vessels or submarines. Due to limited manpower resources, RFA's and ships under refit or repair will generally require major assistance from the LAFB.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

If the Ship's Officer responsible for safety decides that RN/RFA firefighting resources are sufficient to deal with the incident, the LAFB attendance should remain on 'stand-by'. The senior fire officer should remain at HQ1 for liaison and consultation purposes until the LAFB presence is no longer required. The ship's officer responsible for safety will retain control and command of firefighting operations. It is possible that the LAFB will be asked to provide supplementary assistance, such as facilities for re-charging (RN) BA cylinders.

8. If the ship's officer responsible for safety decides that LAFB assistance is required to extinguish the fire, he will ask the senior fire officer to undertake firefighting operations. At that point, command and control of such operations will be formally delegated to the Senior LAFB officer in attendance. Close and effective liaison should be maintained throughout the period of the incident.

SHIP SAFETY

9. Notwithstanding the involvement of the LAFB, the RN/RFA Commanding Officer, or designated representative, retains full overall responsibility for the safety of the ship. The senior fire officer-in-charge should therefore take full account of any advice received from the ship's officer responsible in respect of ship safety and firefighting tactics and priorities. It is important to recognise that the main priority on RN/RFA vessels is ship safety, and that during the initial consultations between the LAFB and Ship's Officer responsible for safety a decision might have to be made as to whether search and rescue operations are required in preference to firefighting actions. The need to ensure continuity in firefighting operations throughout the incident is stressed.

COMMUNICATIONS

10. It is essential that effective communications are established and maintained between fire control (quayside), HQ1 and the forward control point (FCP) throughout the period of the incident. The LAFB will normally use their own communications systems, but these may prove inadequate in a warship environment and, in some cases, the associated RADHAZ prohibits their use. Wherever possible, both the LAFB and RN/RFA should appoint a liaison officer to be present at the other service's control point.

ROUTE TO FIRE

11. Once the appropriate route to the scene of the fire from the 'ON' brow has been agreed between the ship's officer responsible for safety and the senior fire officer, ship's personnel will identify the route by running a combined guide and communications line.

CONTROL OF PERSONNEL

12. LAFB personnel will at all times act under the direction of the senior fire officer. Likewise RN/RFA personnel will act under the direction of the Ship's Officer of the Day/Duty Deck Officer. In circumstances where the senior fire officer is in control of firefighting operations, any use of RN/RFA personnel (eg to act as guide to LAFB teams) will be by agreement with the ship's officer responsible for safety (ie OOD or DDO). In

such circumstances, the senior fire officer will be responsible for the health and safety of personnel involved in firefighting operations.

WITHDRAWAL OF PERSONNEL

13. If the LAFB is delegated the task of finding and fighting the fire, RN/RFA personnel will be gradually withdrawn from within the smoke boundary as they are replaced by LAFB personnel. Ship's firefighters, working in pairs and wearing BA, will normally be required to act as guides. Close collaboration between the officer/senior rating in charge of the ship's main group and the LAFB officer at the FCP is essential.

ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES

14. The LAFB normally expect all electrical supplies to an installation on fire to be isolated. This is seldom practicable in a warship fire. However, when there is a risk of voltages in excess of 440 the equipment should be isolated. It must be noted that attempts at maintaining a "keep alive" policy may be counter-productive when compared with the savings in damage through quick extinction of the fire.

USE OF BREATHING APPARATUS AND CONTROL

15. Ship's staff BA controllers should continue to control ship's personnel using BA, at the same time maintaining the closest possible liaison with the LAFB. Should firefighting measures be assigned to the LAFB, overall co-ordination of all BA wearers is to be exercised by the LAFB officer in charge of the firefighting operations.

SHIPS UNDERGOING REFIT

16. Details of the circumstances which apply when ships are undergoing refit are provided in RN publication BR8593, copy attached.

(EXTRACT FROM BR 8593 SERIAL 4)

FIRE PRECAUTIONS - UNMANNED REFITS

38. Responsibility

During unmanned refits the entire responsibility for fire prevention and fire services will be handed over to the Contractor. His responsibilities will span between the Start of Upkeep Period Work date to Ship's Staff Move Back Onboard Day, or an earlier date if specified in the Project Contract.

39. Fire Prevention. The Contractor is to:

- a. Publish fire orders which have to be agreed by the vessel's Commanding Officer or Senior Officer and Superintendent Ships.
- b. Ensure that his workforce comply with Health and Safety Regulations with regard to work practices, especially those involving welding, burning and hot work.
- c. Ensure that clear access routes are provided and maintained for Emergency Service vehicles to pass through his premises and onto a clear area on the jetty/dockside so that emergency services can have good unhindered access to the vessel at any time of the day or night.
- d. Permit the Navy Department Fire Prevention Service (NDFPS), as directed by the Naval Base Commander and in consultation with Superintendent Ships, periodically to ascertain that the Contractor's fire prevention and fire services arrangements are satisfactory.
- e. Consult with the vessel's Senior Officer and the local Fire Brigade's Fire Prevention Officer to discuss particular fire fighting problems. Arrangements should be made for a fire exercise to be carried out within two weeks of CSD with the local Fire Brigade in attendance.
- f. Comply with any special extra measures specified in the Project Contract.

40. Fire Fighting Equipment

The Contractor will be required to:

- a. Test and maintain in accordance with equipment instructions and sound engineering practice, all fire exits, appliances (fixed and moveable), fire fighting equipment, alarms, communication systems, drench systems, spray systems, mains, smoke control fittings and any other such device for fire fighting and emergencies.

b. Be entirely responsible for the care of any charged fixed fire smothering systems likely to be required for use during the refit. The Contractor is also to ensure that proper safety precautions are observed to prevent accidental release of the system charge.

41. Ship's Staff

Whenever service personnel are standing by a vessel being refitted under Contract, they are to be allowed during fire emergencies to carry out those tasks and duties associated with damage control which are appropriate to their training and normal employment. These duties are to be defined and agreed with the Contractor at the Take-in-Hand Meeting.

FIRE PRECAUTIONS - MANNED UPKEEP PERIODS

42. Responsibility

During a fully manned period of Upkeep the Commanding Officer will retain his responsibilities for fire prevention and fire fighting. Comprehensive Fire Orders are to be prepared and made available to the Contractor at the Take-in-Hand Meeting.

43. The Contractor

The Contractor may be required by the Project Contract to provide services and assistance for certain aspects of fire precaution. In any case he will be bound by his wider Term Contract obligations for fire prevention. Specifically he will have to adhere to the assurances in paragraph 39.b and c. above and be responsible for any services or fire fighting equipments handed over to him as part of the specification of work or safety plan.

44. The Contractor is to ensure that his work force are aware of and do comply with Ship Staff fire orders.

45. Welding, Burning and Hot Work

Welding, burning, grinding and heating blankets are potential sources of fire. Personnel involved in hot work activities must comply with Ship's Staff Fire Orders and be subject to the control of the Ship's Staff Safety Organisation. Hot workers are to obtain clearance from Ship Staff and must sign the welding and burning log at the vessel's control centre before starting work. Ship Staff are to be kept informed of progress. Hot workers are also to comply with the orders in NBCGO Supplement 1.

46. Fire Watching

If specified in the Project Contract, the Contractor is to provide fire watchers for welding, burning and grinding operations. Fire watchers are to be trained as directed in Port Orders. In addition fire watchers working in nuclear reactor compartments are to comply with BNSA Orders.

47. Fire watchers are responsible to the Commanding Officer for the conduct of their duties and are to work under the direction of the Officer or Senior Rating manning the vessel's control centre. Before starting a job they are to report to the control centre with the hot worker, sign the welding and burning log, be briefed on hazards in the area of hot work and obtain approval to start work.

48. Fire Prevention Controls

Ship's Staff are to undertake frequent safety rounds 24 hours a day. They are authorised to stop any activity which they consider may lead to a hazardous situation. If the cause of the stoppage cannot be resolved on site the matter is to be referred to the Contractor, Ship Supervisor and Ship's Staff Duty Officer. Superintendent Ships is to be consulted if Ship Staff cannot resolve the situation.

DEAR CHIEF OFFICER LETTERS ISSUED IN 1989

- 10.2.1989 1. a. Training in aircraft firefighting and rescue: use of Civil Aviation Authority Fire Service training school.
- b. 999 service: Mercury Communications Limited.
- c. Fire Service Drill Book: amendments.
- d. Dear Chief Officer letter 11/1988 addendum.
- e. List of Fire Service Circulars and Dear Chief Officer letters 1988.
- f. Amendments to national guidelines.
- g. Brigade Command Course 1990.
- h. Fireground Radio Channel allocation.
- i. Radio Communications: guidance on the evaluation of maintenance options.
- 14.4.1989 2. a. One day conference on fire prevention publicity.
- b. Standing conference on Fire Prevention: Report of the Working Group on the Prevention of Arson.
- c. Vacancies in HM Inspectorate of Fire Services.
- d. Manual of Firemanship: Slides of Illustration Book 3.
- May 1989 3. a. Notification of Defective Equipment.
- b. Firemen's rubber safety boots (A23 Specifications).
- c. Home Office pattern ground monitors.
- d. Fire extinguishers as approved products.
- e. Revised highway code - hand held radio equipment.

- f. Hydraulic platforms - use at public events.
 - g. Emergency Flying Restrictions.
 - h. Acetylene Cylinders.
 - i. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988 (COSHH).
 - j. Hepatitis B.
- 25.5.1989 4. a. The Road Traffic (Carriage of Explosives) Regulations 1989.
- b. Periodic inspection and test of Breathing Apparatus Cylinders.
- 14.6.1989 5. a. Fire Precautions at LPG Cylinder Stores: HSE guidance against the use of portable pumps as monitors by Fire Brigades.
- b. Incidents involving farm silos.
- c. Electricity and the fire service.
- d. The Armenian Earthquake of December 1988.
- e. Issue of Technical Bulletins.
- f. Building Bulletin No 7: Fire and the Design of Educational Buildings.
- 16.6.1989 6A. Extended Interviews.
- 31.7.1989 6B. a. Recruitment of retained staff: Revised recruitment literature.
- b. Fire Hydrants - British Standards 750: 1984.
- c. Review of the temperature/time curve used in BS 476 and ISO B34 tests - CFBAC Research Report No 34.
- d. AIDS: Guidance to the Fire Service.
- e. Access difficulties posed by security doors.

- f. Meteorological advice in the event of a release of toxic chemicals - CHEMET.
 - g. National Fire Safety Week 1989.
- 7.7.1989 7. Notification to Fire Authorities of changes to the Factory Register.
- 13.8.1989 8. a. Renumbering of DCOLs "6/1989".
 b. Water Act 1989.
 c. Fire Spread between mobile homes.
 d. Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) - British Rail.
 e. VHF radio channel spacing.
 f. Fire Precautions in National Health Service premises - firecode.
 g. Report of the Joint Working Group on Chernobyl.
- 17.10.1989 9. Vacancies in HM Inspectorate of Fire Services.
- 27.10.1989 10. a. Building (Amendments of Prescribed Fees) Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/1118).
 Building Regulations (Amendment) Regulation 1989 (SI 1989/1119).
 Building Research Establishment: Thermal Insulation: Avoiding Risks (HMSO 1989).
 b. The Montreal Protocol on production and consumption of Chlorofluorocarbons and Halons - Implications for the Fire Service.
 c. Jet/spray branches - Data Sheets.
 d. Insect triggered false alarms from automatic fire detection systems - fire research project.
 e. Fire Service Inspectorate.
 Fire Prevention Inspections in Shire Counties.

f. Breathing Apparatus.
A new Technical Bulletin 1/89.

30.11.90 11. Annual Returns 1989

11.12.1989 Addendum to DCOL 1/89 -
Guidance on the Evaluation of Radio Maintenance Options.

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