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FIR/72 620/33/76

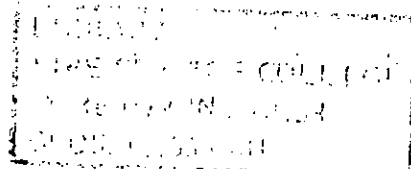
Our reference: FIR/72 620/33/83

Your reference:

25 JUN 1987

The Director-General, Greater London Council
The Chief Executive

6 May 1981



Dear Sir

FIRE SERVICE CIRCULAR NO 4/1981

- A. FIRE SERVICE PROCEDURES FOR INCIDENTS ON MOTORWAYS
- B. EVACUATION SIGNAL

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A. Fire Service Procedures for Incidents on Motorways

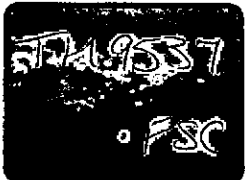
1. The fire service procedures for incidents on motorways, contained in Book 6a (Chapter 36, Section III) of the Manual of Firemanship, have been reviewed by a Study Group set up by the Joint Committee on Fire Brigade Operations. Taking account of the many changes in motorway design and procedures since this section of the Manual was issued some 10 years ago, the Study Group, which included representatives of the Police and the Department of Transport, has produced revised fire service procedures.

2. These new procedures have been approved by the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council, who also recommended that, as some time will elapse before this part of the Manual can be reprinted, they should be issued to the Service. A copy of the new procedures is accordingly attached at Appendix A to this circular, together with a summary at Annex A, of the main changes incorporated.

B. Evacuation Signal

3. The method used by fire brigades to signal to firemen at incidents the need to evacuate and particularly use of the Acme "Thunderer" type whistle as recommended in Fire Service Circular No. 46/1969, has been reviewed by a Study Group set up by the Joint Committee on Fire Brigade Operations. The Committee noted the impracticability of the whistle being used by firemen wearing breathing apparatus and were concerned, following a survey carried out as part of the review, at the significant differences between brigades in the adoption of the recommended evacuation signal. The Study Group's recommendations have been endorsed by the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council which agreed that adoption by all brigades of the Acme "Thunderer" type whistle should be strongly recommended. Renewed guidance on the choice and use of an evacuation signal as approved by the Council is set out in Appendix B to this circular which replaces that set out in Appendix C to Circular No. 46/1969.


4. The Council also approved a recommendation that the Joint Committee on Fire Brigade Operations should put in hand an examination of the feasibility of developing a miniaturised electronic/communication type device, by which the officer in charge of the incident or sector could relay coded signals to teams or individuals working within a building or a ship, whether equipped with breathing apparatus or not. This work has been put in hand and the results will, in due course, be conveyed to fire authorities.



5. There are no additional cost or manpower implications arising from Part A of this circular. In respect of Part B, the cost of procuring whistles will arise for those authorities whose brigades do not at present have them and which decide to purchase them as a result of the advice in this circular. On the basis of the smallest county brigade and the largest metropolitan county brigade, the cost to an individual authority would be in the range of £100 to £1,600.

6. Additional copies of this circular and its attachments are enclosed for the information of the Chief Fire Officer and the Chief Financial Officer.

Yours faithfully



P R BURLEIGH

Issued to: Greater London Council and County and Metropolitan County Councils in England and Wales.

Copies sent for information to: The Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

CENTRAL FIRE BRIGADES ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND, WALES AND SCOTLAND
JOINT COMMITTEE ON FIRE BRIGADE OPERATIONS
STUDY GROUP TO REVIEW FIRE SERVICE PROCEDURES FOR INCIDENTS ON MOTORWAYS

Summary of Main Changes

The main changes to the procedures, which have been proposed by the Study Group, are as follows:-

- 1) The inclusion of a general reference to observance of the Highway Code (Introduction).
- 2) The inclusion of suitable references to variations of practice in Scotland (Pages 2 and 3)
- 3) More detailed and up-to-date references to the numbering of carriageways and emergency telephones (Pages 2/3)
- 4) Mention of the new hazard-warning sign system (Page 4)
- 5) Re-statement of the statutory position relating to U-turns on motorways and exclusion of the procedure for making U-turns except under police direction and supervision (Page 4)
- 6) The inclusion of a revised procedure for crossing motorways on foot, which lays particular emphasis on the need to avoid doing so whilst carrying heavy equipment (Pages 4/5)
- 7) Up-dating and revision of the section on water supplies (Page 5)
- 8) Revision of the arrangements for positioning appliances at incidents (Page 6)
- 9) Revision of the desired angle of fend-off for appliances (Page 8)
- 10) Recognition of the use of amber warning signs with, for example, "Police-Accident" signs (Page 10)
- 11) Updating of illustration of firemen's surcoat (Page 10)
- 12) Revision of the safety check-list in order to clarify the role of the Fire Service in relation to movement of casualties and vehicles (Pages 11 and 12)
- 13) Standardisation of terminology (including metric distances)

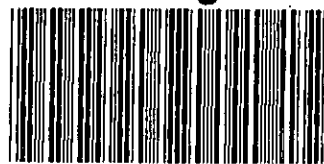
N.B. In addition, the opportunity has been taken to examine closely the wording, the illustrations and the positioning of the illustrations in this section of the manual, and numerous minor alterations have been made.

EVACUATION SIGNAL

RENEWED GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF AN EVACUATION SIGNAL BY FIRE BRIGADES

1. The evacuation signal recommended is repeated short blasts on a whistle of the Acme "Thunderer" type, the sound of which is distinctive. It should be relayed as necessary inside a building; either throughout so that all persons concerned may hear it or as a more localised warning if it is desired to evacuate only part of the premises. In these aspects of use the whistle has the advantage over loud signals made outside premises. There are also practical difficulties with the equipment used to produce louder signals. Although the need for the signal to be used has been found to be infrequent, when it has been used it has almost always been found satisfactory. It has been concluded that the whistle is the best, indeed the only, evacuation signal currently available which meets fire service requirements.
2. Until a better solution is developed, the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council have strongly recommended that the Acme "Thunderer" type whistle should be used. Having noted that there is significant variation in the evacuation signal used by brigades, the Council have stressed that because of the need for standardisation throughout the service on this matter, the whistle should be adopted by all brigades. The Council have also emphasized that use of the whistle is in effect a last resort and no substitute for proper command and control procedures and the observance of safety measures.
3. The Council have reaffirmed that whistles need to be issued to all personnel of the rank of Leading Fireman and above and that a whistle should always be available for the officer in charge of an appliance.

**The Fire Service
College**



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