



Service Policy
Breathing Apparatus Policy PREPOL0?

“An Excellent Authority”

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Document Control

Active date	Review date	Department	Author	Editor	Publisher
April 2013	April 2014	Ops Planning & Policy	D Stephens	N Searle	Jeff Edwards

Legislation

Title	
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004	N/A

Amendment History

Version	Date	Author	Reasons for Change

Equalities Impact Assessment

Initial	Full	Date	Reviewed by	Comments
✓				Required

Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment

Date	Reviewed by	Comments

Related Policies

Title	Author	Department
Operational Training Policy		Ops Planning & Policy

Distribution List

Name	Position	I/R

Sign-Off List

Name	Position

Related Documents

Ref No.	Title	Author	Version & Date
	SI's to de detailed here		

Target audience

All MFRS	✓	Ops Crews		Fire safety		Community FS		Support Staff	
Principal off.		Senior off.		etc		etc		etc	

Ownership

FOI exemption required?	Yes	X	URL	
	No		Reason	

POLICY

BREATHING APPARATUS POLICY

It is the policy of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) to adhere to the principles detailed in the national Breathing Apparatus (BA) Operational Guidance (currently Technical Bulletin 1/97 Breathing Apparatus Command and Control Procedures) supplemented by local enhancements which will be detailed within the relevant Service Instruction(s).

POLICY EXPLANATION

Technical Bulletin 1/97 BA Command and Control Procedures (TB 1/97) was prepared by a sub-group of the Technical Working Group on Breathing Apparatus and was agreed by the Joint Committee on Fire Brigade Operations; a Committee of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (now defunct).

The systems, procedures and practices contained within TB 1/97 are designed to achieve a risk based and output focused approach. Where appropriate these systems, procedures and practices have been enhanced through local amendments which have been the subject of consultation with the representative bodies and embedded within the Service training and safe person assessment processes.

BA is used in atmospheres that are hazardous to health. Often the work undertaken in BA will be complex, physically and psychologically demanding and in circumstances where the normal sensory perceptions are denied. The wearer may face risks from hazards in addition to the irrespirable atmosphere, such as from fire, explosion or collapse.

To reduce these risks to the lowest practicable level, command and control procedures are required. The procedures set out in TB 1/97 and the associated SI must be adopted by all personnel at all incidents.

This Policy will allow the Service to apply a risk based approach to the wearing of BA. This requires the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) to identify, analyse and assess risks and select the appropriate BA procedures for risk control prior to committing crews wearing BA. The guidance is based on knowledge and experience gained over many years; therefore any proposed deviations from the procedures in TB 1/97 and the associated SI at an incident will require a re-assessment of the risk to be undertaken before implementation.

The use of standard procedures is essential to ensure:

- (a) The competent use of BA;
- (b) Adequate support and emergency arrangements;
- (c) The safety of the individual BA wearer;
- (d) The safety of other BA wearers at the same incident; and
- (e) The successful conclusion of operational incidents.

The procedures adopted for operational incidents apply equally in the training environment. The B.A. procedures determined by this Policy are reinforced by appropriate and realistic training and assessment. This training and assessment is designed to develop and maintain the professional competence and safety of firefighters, officers and others with a role in using BA and its associated equipment, and to secure the effective implementation of the procedures.

In recognition of the risks likely to be faced by BA wearers, only those Firefighters who are deemed competent through assessment when attending the BA refresher and Compartment Fire Behavior training and assessment course at the Training and Development Academy (TDA) and continually demonstrate competence in the safe use of breathing apparatus through the Safe Person Assessment's (SPA) process will be authorized to use BA for the full range of operational duties. BA is

provided as PPE for all operational personnel in the event that they may need to work in hazardous atmospheres. There is a legal requirement for all persons allocated BA equipment as PPE to conduct and sign for a detailed test to ensure that the BA equipment allocated to them is functioning correctly.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Incident Commanders will apply the principles contained within TB 1/97 and related Service Instructions detailing the local enhancements at all incidents irrespective of size, utilising all supporting mechanisms provided.

The roles and responsibilities of all personnel undertaking BA operations are detailed within Service Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and related Service Instructions which can be located via the Operational Information System.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

This policy was approved in April 2013 and will be reviewed annually.

PROTECTED