

APPENDIX A

MFRS OPS INFIRMATION NOTE 27.20 OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR CREWS DURING BONFIRE PERIOD



MFRS Ops Information Note

Owner:	Prevention Department	Title:	Operational guidance for crews over bonfire period
Date:	27/10/2020		
Expiry Date:	12/11/2020	Ref No:	27.20

TARGET AUDIENCE:

<i>Distribution List:</i>	<i>Info</i>
All MFRS	
Ops Crews	✓
Prevention	✓
Protection	✓
Support staff	
Principal Officers	✓

<i>Distribution List:</i>	<i>Info</i>
Senior officers	✓
Marine Rescue Unit	
Fire Control	✓
Training & Development Academy	✓
Operational Intelligence/ Operational Planning & Policy Team	✓

INFORMATION: NEW RESTRICTIONS FROM NOVEMBER 5TH 2020

[COVID-19 case numbers](#) are rising rapidly across the whole of the UK and in other countries. We must act now to control the spread of the virus. The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home, to protect the NHS and save lives.

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why, from Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December, the Government is taking the following action:

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for specific purposes.
2. Preventing gathering with people you do not live with, except for specific purposes.
3. Closing certain businesses and venues.

These new measures have been carefully judged to achieve the maximum reduction in growth in the number of cases, preventing the NHS from being overwhelmed, whilst ensuring that schools, colleges and universities stay open and that as many people as possible continue to work.

Until Thursday 5 November, the relevant [Local Covid Alert Level](#) measures will continue to apply in the area where you live. From Thursday the national restrictions replace the local restrictions in your area. No new areas will move in the LCAL Very High restrictions between now and Thursday.

The new measures will apply nationally for four weeks up to Wednesday 2 December. At the end of the period, we will look to return to a regional approach, based on the latest data.

Complying with the new measures will help limit the spread of coronavirus, reduce the impact on the NHS and save lives. They will be underpinned by law which will make clear about what you must and must not do from 5 November. The relevant authorities, including the police, will have powers to enforce the law – including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

In previous years, [Service Instruction 0641](#) has stated that MFRS personnel will adopt a tolerant approach to bonfires over the traditional Bonfire period celebrations between the period 1st to 6th November. MF&RS may allow bonfires to burn after a Dynamic Risk Assessment and provided it is safe and appropriate to do so. This year the tolerant approach has been adapted in line with Merseyside Police's 4 E's approach in order to comply with the current Liverpool City Region restrictions. These are as follows:

Engage – Operational Crews should speak to people and try to establish their awareness and understanding of the situation. They may ask people about their circumstances if they are out in public. Staff should give people the opportunity to express their views, listen and take people's responses into account.

Explain – Operational Crews should try to educate people about any personal risks they are taking, they will explain the social distancing regulations and highlight the responsibilities we all share. MFRS staff should treat people with dignity and respect. Staff should highlight their trustworthy motives by explaining wider social factors, such as the risks to public health and the NHS by not sticking to social distancing.

Encourage – Operational Crews may need to guide individuals, suggesting they return home. Staff can encourage people to act reasonably, emphasising that staying alert and safe (social distancing) saves lives. They demonstrate consistency in their approach and are willing to explain why they are requesting a certain course of action.

Extinguish – If necessary and safe to do so, Operational Crews can discharge their duties under the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004, Section 44 (1) (a) to extinguish the fire.

When attending incidents during the bonfire period, Crew/Watch Managers must exercise a decision making process on the approach to incidents to maintain the Health, Safety and Welfare of operational personnel.

When attending fires on public land, crews should utilise the first 3E's to provide a rationale to persons present prior to extinguishing the fire. This approach should also be communicated when attending fires on private property, crews should make an assessment of the risk and deal with accordingly.

If when returning to station the OIC feels there was a breach of Covid guidelines they should report this to Merseyside Police via the following [link](#)

Any bonfire between 1st and 6th November that would have historically been deemed safe due to responsible adults being present, should be extinguished when there is a clear breach of social distancing in relation to Covid guidance. In these circumstances the 4E approach should be utilised to engage with the public. If the 4E approach is not effective, crews should withdraw to a place of safety and request Merseyside Police via Fire Control highlighting the requirement for them to attend to disperse gatherings of people in order for the fire to be extinguished.

The OIC's should provide Fire control with an informative message with rationale for extinguishing fire e.g. danger to property, fire on public land etc.

The OIC must when completing their stop code add the tag "Bonfire Covid" in the comments box via MDT. This approach is being adopted in support of Covid restrictions in place at this time.

The following should be reported as an emergency and police assistance should be requested via Fire control.

- There is a threat to life
- There is a risk that a situation could escalate to violence
- There is a risk of serious damage to property
- There is a serious offence in progress
- There is or there could be a serious disruption to the public

ACTIONS:

Crews are to adopt above guidance and familiarise themselves fully with [SOP 5.4.0 Civil Disorder](#)

For Further Information Contact:	Prevention Department
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