

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	23 JULY 2026	REPORT NO:	CFO/05/2627
PRESENTING OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, DAVE MOTTRAM		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER, CHRIS BARRETT	REPORT AUTHOR:	GROUP MANAGER, DANILA BREATHNACHT
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	HEALTH & SAFETY DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINANTS		
APPENDICES:	NONE		

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members on Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's (MFRS) approach to the management of contaminants and the measures in place to protect firefighters and staff from exposure to harmful substances.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members:
 - a) note the arrangements in place for the management of contaminants within MFRS, as detailed within the report and accompanying presentation; and
 - b) apply scrutiny to the approach adopted.

Introduction and Background

3. Firefighters can be exposed to a range of hazardous contaminants during operational incidents, training activities and post-incident activities. These contaminants can include products of combustion, particulates, chemicals and biological hazards.
4. Nationally, Fire and Rescue Services have increased their focus on the management of contaminants to reduce the potential long-term health impacts associated with exposure. This includes guidance produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and learning from national research programmes.

5. MFRS aim is to:
- a) reduce firefighter exposure to harmful contaminants wherever reasonably practicable.
 - b) ensure appropriate procedures are in place to manage contamination during and following operational incidents.
 - c) promote a culture of awareness and personal responsibility regarding contaminant management.
 - d) continually review and improve arrangements based on emerging evidence, national guidance and operational learning.
6. MFRS has implemented a range of measures to manage contaminants including operational procedures, decontamination processes, equipment provision, training, welfare arrangements and ongoing monitoring.
7. The contaminant management arrangements are fully operational and embedded within service policies and procedures.
8. A presentation outlining MFRS's approach to contaminant management will accompany this report at the meeting.

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. Whilst there are no direct implications arising from the scrutiny of this topic, Equality and Diversity considerations have been undertaken in terms of the implementation of measures to manage contaminants and any exposure thereof. No adverse impacts have been identified. The arrangements are designed to protect all employees and support the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce.

Staff Implications

10. Staff have been consulted throughout the development and implementation of contaminant management procedures, including through representative bodies, health and safety forums and operational working groups.
11. The arrangements support firefighters and managers in identifying, controlling and reducing exposure to contaminants through safe systems of work and operational procedures.
12. Ongoing training and awareness activities are delivered to ensure personnel remain competent and informed regarding contaminant risks and control measures.
13. Operational procedures, station routines and training programmes have been updated where necessary to reflect contaminant management requirements.

Legal Implications

- 14. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places a duty on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees.
- 15. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess risks and implement appropriate control measures.
- 16. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 require employers to prevent or adequately control exposure to hazardous substances.
- 17. MFRS arrangements are aligned with relevant legislation, national guidance and sector best practice relating to contaminant management.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

- 18. Costs associated with contaminant management, including equipment, training and welfare arrangements, are met through existing budgets and planned investment programmes.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

- 19. Effective contaminant management contributes significantly to reducing occupational health risks and supporting firefighter wellbeing.
- 20. Appropriate equipment, procedures and training have been implemented to minimise exposure and manage contamination risks.
- 21. MFRS continues to monitor emerging research, national developments and operational learning to ensure arrangements remain effective and proportionate.

Environmental Implications

- 22. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

- 23. Effective management of contaminants supports MFRS's commitment to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of its workforce whilst maintaining an effective and resilient operational response capability.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

COSHH	C ontrol o f S ubstances H azardous to H ealth
HSE	H ealth and S afety E xecutive
MFRA	M erseyside F ire and R escue A uthority
MFRS	M erseyside F ire and R escue S ervice
NFCC	N ational F ire C hiefs C ouncil