

SECTION ONE – WHOLETIME STATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Adequate crewing of appliances is a vital component of the Brigade’s response to operational incidents and plays an important role in firefighter safety, particularly in the initial stages of an incident. The ‘establishment’ of the Brigade is the term for the fixed number of operational personnel that is agreed by the Combined Fire Authority as the minimum necessary to provide adequate operational cover. Another important component of the standard of fire cover is the ‘confidence level’, where we currently aim to ensure that the first pumping appliance to arrive at an incident should have a minimum crew of five and the second should have four. In addition, SFRS’s Incident Command Structure requires a minimum number of personnel to enable the system to be effective.

CREWING LEVELS for APPLIANCES CREWED ON THE WHOLETIME SHIFT SYSTEM

The minimum number of station personnel necessary to ensure that all of the wholetime shift-crewed appliances are available is 29. Under normal circumstances, the Environment and Foam units are alternately crewed by the aerial appliance crew based at Telford Central, and the Incident Response Unit and the Rescue Boat are alternately crewed by a pumping appliance crew at Shrewsbury.

The following table shows the minimum crew for each appliance; those appliances crewed alternately are shown in brackets.

Appliance Station	Rescue Pump	Water Tender Ladder	Aerial Appliance	Rescue Tender	Incident Response Unit	Rescue Boat	Environmental Unit/Foam Unit
Shrewsbury	5	4	2		(2)	(3)	
Telford Central	5	4	2				(2)
Wellington	5			2			

Each appliance crew must include the following competent personnel:

Rescue Pump	1 Incident Commander	1 driver
Water Tender Ladder	1 Incident Commander	1 driver
ALP	2 trained personnel (one of whom must also be a driver)	

RT	2 trained personnel (one of whom must also be a driver)
IRU*	2 IRU fork lift truck trained personnel (one of whom must also be a driver)
Rescue Boat	2 boat handler and 1 SRT trained personnel from SY1 (or SY8)
Env/Foam Units	2 trained personnel from TC03 (or TW1)

* *This appliance will remain on the run if there is only one driver/fork lift truck operator but no second forklift truck operator.*

Watch managers must do their best to manage absences to ensure that the correct number of properly trained and competent personnel is available.

If the number of wholetime station personnel falls below 29, then appliances will normally be taken off the run as follows:

No of staff	Appliance or appliances off the run	Exception
28 or 27	Aerial SY	
26 or 25	WrL TC	Unless SY has < 10 personnel
24 or 23	Aerial SY and WrL TC	Unless SY has < 8 personnel
22 or 21	WrL TC and WrL SY	
20 or 19	WrL TC, WrL SY, and Aerial SY	

The aerial at SY will be taken off the run first as its absence will have the least affect operationally; the frequency with which aerials are required is limited, there is still an aerial available at TC (the crew of which will normally be used to mobilize the Environment or Foam Unit), aerials do not form part of the PDA for any Shropshire properties, and the parallel crewing of the other special appliances at Shrewsbury is not dependent upon the availability of the aerial. Once crewing levels are down by more than two, rather than take the second aerial or Rescue Tender off the run, a pumping appliance will be taken off the run; Telford's WrL will normally be chosen as there are still four pumping appliances available in the Telford area (TC8, WL8, WL1, TW1) and keeping the 2nd pumping appliance on the run at Shrewsbury better secures the availability of the IRU and Rescue Boat.

On occasions, the prevailing crewing levels or other circumstances may make it impractical or inappropriate to keep Telford's aerial on the run; in these circumstances the Principal Officer should assess all the relevant information and decide which appliances should remain available.

When crewing deficiencies are identified more than 24 hours in advance at wholetime stations, personnel detached to another station should report there for the start of the watch shift. In order to arrange detachments, Watch Commanders should obtain information on the availability of personnel at other stations from Fire Control. (See Managing Wholetime Crewing Shortfalls below.)

If an appliance at a wholetime station is off the run for a reason other than crewing shortages then any personnel without a riding position should standby at another station if a rider position is available.

AVAILABILITY OF APPLIANCES OFF THE RUN

Appliances that are off the run must be kept available for immediate use; daily routine checks must still be carried out. There are foreseeable reasons why we may wish to use an appliance that is off the run; although it would neither be a matter of course nor common.

MANAGING WHOLETIME CREWING SHORTFALLS

On occasion there will be crewing shortfalls on wholetime fire stations due to unpredictable causes such as sickness, paternity/maternity leave, special leave etc. These shortfalls may be overcome by the detachment of personnel from the other wholetime fire stations. The following paragraphs detail the procedure to be used on such occasions.

PRE-PLANNING

Watch Commanders will predict and plan for crewing short falls across the three wholetime stations. They may also pre-arrange the detaching of personnel to provide each station with the appropriate crewing. However if there is a decision required as to which appliance is to be OFF the run then the Watch Commander must liaise directly, or via Fire Control, with the duty Principal Officer. Watches must inform Fire Control of the proposed moves before the end of the proceeding tour of duty where possible, or as soon as possible where such notice cannot be given.

'ON THE DAY'

If at the start of a shift there are crewing shortfalls that differ from any pre-planning that may have occurred, Fire Control will liaise with the Watch Commanders to agree the most effective moves for the day. Where any such shortfall causes an appliance, or further appliances, to come off the run, Fire Control will liaise with the duty Principal Officer.