



# Shropshire

## Fire and Rescue Service

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page no</b>
Purpose	1
Strategic aims and objectives	1
Roles, responsibilities and review	1
Introduction	2
Pre-planning	2
Mobilisation	3
General	3
Firefighting	4
Safety of crews	4
Points of reference	4

**Brigade Order  
Operations  
11**

**Part 4**

**Fires in Prisons and  
Young Offenders  
Institutions**

## Part 4 – Fires In Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions

### Purpose

The purpose of this order is to outline the mobilisation and operational procedure for dealing with fires in Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions

### Strategic aims and objectives

This Order supports the following Strategic Aims and Objectives:

Strategic aim 2 – “Protect life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies”

### Roles, responsibilities and review

The **Head of Operational Response** is responsible for ensuring this Order is implemented across the Brigade.

The **Head of District Performance** will be responsible for the day to day operation of the Order.

The **Head of Operational Response** will review this Order biennially in **December** and as and when organisational changes take place.

## Introduction

Fires within prison establishments are not rare; indeed Prison Officers are frequently called upon to deal with fires in cells. Occasionally the fire service is called to these smaller fires. However, more rarely larger fires occur in prison premises that require a full fire service attendance this order sets out the standard procedures for these occasions.

This Order is of a general nature and cannot attempt to cover every eventuality, since the circumstances at prison incidents are likely to vary and may change dramatically during the course of operations.

Because of the nature of the design of prisons, the secure nature of the buildings and the occupants, Incident Commanders will always consider the safety of fire-fighters before taking any action.

## Pre-planning

The purpose of pre-planning should be to minimise the need to take 'on the spot' decisions in potentially stressful circumstances.

Contingency and Operational Plans for Prison Service Establishments must be as comprehensive as possible and each premises in Shropshire, will have a detailed plan produced and regularly checked and any specific procedure practised.

Prison Establishments vary considerably in layout and it is necessary for the detail of each plan to be determined by The Head of Operational Response in the light of local circumstances and after full consultation with Officers in Charge, Incident Commanders and the Prison Authorities. The plan must include a careful calculation of the size of first attendance and the number of Officers needed to ensure effective and safe operations.

The operational plan must be evaluated and refined by training and joint exercises involving Prison Personnel and those fire crews most likely to attend any fire or disturbance at the Establishment. It is important that officers and crews are made familiar with the provision and availability of fire fighting facilities available, particularly water supplies, and with agreed arrangements for ready access to secure areas, including individual cells.

Fire ground communications should be tested for effectiveness in the Establishment and if found to be poor, crews should inform the Head of Operational Response. During planning crews must ascertain the type of evacuation signal used in the Prison, together with any other signals that may conflict with our use of the 'Acme Thundered' whistle, which is part of our evacuation signal.

## **Mobilisation**

On notification of an incident involving a fire in a Prison or a Young Offenders Institution Fire Control will mobilise:

Two major pumping appliances  
Level 2 Incident Commander

## **General**

Whilst responding to incidents in prisons, crews should avoid the use of flashing lights and two tone horns, within sight of the prison grounds so as to avoid inflaming any situation. The Officer-in-Charge should on arrival take full control of fire fighting and rescue operations. The Prison Fire Officer will place him/herself under the direction of the Senior Fire Officer present. However, the circumstances likely to be encountered during a riot involving fire are such, that close liaison between the Senior Fire Officer and Prison Management is particularly important.

Effective fire ground command and control is essential at all times. Personnel should never work alone in the Prison environment. In the event of evacuation, normal procedures for the use of audible warning signals and use of nominal roll boards must be followed, however, fire-fighters must also be made aware of any site specific evacuation signal, prior to entering the building.

Many doors and gates within the prison are self locking, so crews must ensure that they do not become cut off from an exit route.

Crews must not be committed into any prison building unless the Senior Prison Officer present has confirmed that prison staff have control over the building.

Crews and Officers who may make an attendance at the local prisons should visit the Prison Establishments frequently (at least every 4 years) in order that operational plans can be checked and practised. Incident Command should arrange for a visit every 2 years.

Specific Incident Procedures and Contingency Plans for both HM Prison Shrewsbury and HM Youth Custody Centre Stoke Heath are available on the Mobile Data Terminals. All crews that could attend these premises must make themselves familiar with their contents.

## **Firefighting**

All Firefighters should be fully dressed in firefighting kit, including helmets, in order to ensure they are clearly identifiable.

Fire Service equipment should not be loaned to prison staff for any purpose.

Fire crews must not operate in situation where there is an unacceptable risk of physical abuse by inmates. Incident Commanders must confirm that areas where fire crews are required to enter have been previously secured by prison staff or police.

Fire Crews must be briefed in the method of unlocking secure doors. On no account should doors be locked behind fire crews during an operational incident.

When searching or firefighting in a prison cell, one member of the crew must remain at the cell door to prevent it from closing. Otherwise it could result in the crews becoming trapped inside should the door be closed inadvertently or deliberately by an inmate.

## **Safety of crews**

The safety of crews must be considered a major priority at any incident in a prison service establishment. Incident Commanders should not hesitate to withdraw personnel if their lives or safety are clearly at risk.

Fire fighters should work in teams of at least two, preferably accompanied by a prison officer.

Appliances must never be left unattended and equipment must be re-stowed when not in use. Particular attention should be taken not to park appliances close to walls, fences or buildings.

Personnel should be advised to observe the necessary precautions, against the possibility of infection by contact with body fluids.

## **Points of reference**

Specific Incident Procedures (SIP)  
The Guide to Operational Risk Assessment  
Accommodation

Prisons  
Fighting Fires in Secure

