

Review of Charges for Special Services

Report of the Treasurer

For further information about this report please contact Keith Dixon, Treasurer, on 01743 260202 or Joanne Coadey, Principal Accountant, on 01743 260215.

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides detail to the Fire Authority about the number and nature of special services requested by the public, and reviews the current tariff for consistency with other brigades, both regionally and nationally.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the information on the nature of special service requests within the report;
- b) Note the regional and national comparisons of tariffs for special service charges; and
- c) Request that officers present an updated tariff of special service charges, incorporating inflationary increases, to the Authority in February.

3 Background

At its meeting on 14 February 2007, the Fire Authority approved the annual increase of charges for Special Services. Following approval, officers were requested to carry out a review of the cost base of the increased tariff of charges, and to review the level and nature of services requested by the public.

This report details work carried out by finance officers to collate and compare tariffs from across the West Midlands region, and also nationally, where information has been available, to assess whether charges set in Shropshire are realistic and consistent.



4 Nature of Special Service Requests 1998/99 to 2007/08

Appendix A to the report shows the number of special services within Shropshire that have been invoiced to members of the public over the last ten years. It should be borne in mind that a small number of charges may have been cancelled, following the provision of further information.

It can be seen that over 60% of the requests for special services have been for fire reports, which are requested by insurance companies dealing with claims. Lift rescues from properties make up just over 10% of requests, with flooding incidents making up 7%, and requests to attend various spillages totalling 5%. The remaining requests have been made for a number of different reasons, including assistance to other emergency services, making safe dangerous structures, and effecting entry to properties.

In monetary terms, the position is quite different, with the highest income coming from assistance to emergency services. This, however, includes the assistance recently given to Gloucestershire and South Yorkshire, and is not indicative of average annual income.

5 Tariffs of Charges

Appendix B to the report shows charges for special services from fire and rescue services across the West Midlands region, and also nationally.

Both regional and national comparisons have proved difficult due to the differing methods of applying charges that are apparent.

Regional Comparison

The regional comparison shows that Shropshire's charges are the lowest in terms of charging for appliances (it should be noted that the charge for Hereford & Worcester does not include personnel; these are charged separately). The charge we currently make is, however, justifiable in terms of cost recovery. It covers the cost of staff plus an on cost sufficient to meet all other, attributable costs. The Fire Authority cannot make a profit and the figures indicate that the charge is about right.

There may be scope for cost increases in future, following the allocation of eight-seat appliances at retained stations, as larger numbers of personnel may attend each incident.

National Comparison

The variation of charges contained within tariffs of national brigades is quite large, as the methods for calculating charges are inconsistent. This Authority's charge for appliances, whilst below average, is not out of line. The national rate for charging between brigades is £274, i.e. also higher. Again, however, in terms of cost recovery, any large increases made to Shropshire's tariff to reflect national costing practices would be difficult to justify.



Other Charges

Following the comparison exercise of nationwide tariffs, it is evident that costs are recovered by some brigades for items, such as replacement of gas tight suits and salvage sheets. These items are not currently included in Shropshire's tariff, and it may, therefore, be reasonable for the tariff to be updated to reflect such cost recovery.

6 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications other than those outlined within the report.

7 Legal Comment

The Fire Authority has the power to act as proposed in this report.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have decided that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

9 Appendices

Appendix A Analysis of Charges 1998/99 to 2007/08 (part)

Appendix B Tariff of Charges

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report, other than those, which are attached as appendices.



Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*



Appendix A to report on
Review of Charges for Special Services
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
19 December 2007

Analysis of Charges 1998/99 - 2007/08 (part)

Number	Total	Fire Reports	Lift Rescues	Effecting Entry	Spillage Agricultural	Spillage Commercial/ Industrial	Spillage Domestic	Flooding	Supply of Water	Other	Interview	Assistance to other Emergency Services	File Search	Make safe dangerous structure
1998/99	52	46						1		4	1			
1999/00	52	50									2			
2000/01	49	47			1						1			
2001/02	58	51	3			3					1			
2002/03	73	38	11	1		3	2	4	3		1	4	4	2
2003/04	86	31	16	6		6	1	12		3	2	5	1	3
2004/05	81	25	14	5	1	8		10	2	2	2	10		2
2005/06	57	43	1			1		5		1	2	3		1
2006/07	62	33	9	2	2	1		5	1		2	1	6	
2007/08	39	12	14	1		1		4	2		1	3		1
Total	609	376	68	15	4	23	3	41	8	10	15	26	11	9
		62%	11%	2%	1%	4%	0%	7%	1%	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%

Value	Total	Fire Reports	Lift Rescues	Effecting Entry	Spillage Agricultural	Spillage Commercial	Spillage Domestic	Flooding	Supply of Water	Other	Interview	Assistance to other Emergency Services	File Search	Make safe dangerous structure
1998/99	3,820	1,613						450		1,646	111			
1999/00	2,007	1,807									200			
2000/01	5,053	1,663			3,320						70			
2001/02	6,531	2,184	474			3,669					204			
2002/03	9,898	1,783	2,952	164		1,706	328	820	820		43	677	113	492
2003/04	22,121	1,435	3,071	1,026		6,559	171	4,542		563	416	3,306	40	992
2004/05	16,489	1,440	2,538	903	549	3,933		977	2,013	456	84	3,231		366
2005/06	12,638	1,917	191			2,609		685		3,782	100	2,972		382
2006/07	9,189	1,546	2,149	394	394	1,591		1,642	197		312	789	176	
2007/08	41,107	579	2,870	191		205		2,661	2,476		108	31,812		205
Total	128,853	15,966	14,245	2,678	4,263	20,272	499	11,776	5,506	6,447	1,647	42,787	329	2,437
		12%	11%	2%	3%	16%	0%	9%	4%	5%	1%	33%	0%	2%

Appendix B to report on
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Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
19 December 2007

Tariff of Charges

Fire Authority	Charges Updated	Pumping Appliance	LPP	TL/ALP	Gas Tight Suits	Effecting Entry	Fire Report	Fire Investigation Report	Interview	Fire Certificate				Salvage Sheets	Standby at Venues
										New	Copy	Replacement	Amended		
Hereford & Worcester	?	147.80	50.50	147.80		147.80	31.50		61.30						
Shropshire	01/04/2007	205.00	69.00	272.00			49.00	240.00	54.00			49.00			
Staffordshire	01/04/2007	271.00				71.00		65.00		71.00	48.00				
Warwickshire	01/04/2004	216.50													
West Midlands	?	308.00					37.00	210.00							
Avon	01/04/2007	348.00	193.00	348.00		159.00	30.00	80.00	80.00						
Bedfordshire	01/07/2007	425.00	213.50		573.00	213.00	73.00		195.00		73.00				
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes	01/04/2004	375.00			785.00	158.00	52.00		150.00					70.00	
Cambridgeshire	01/04/2007	335.00	168.00			168.00	67.00	281.00	182.00	147-295	60		147-295		
Cheshire	?						52.00		104.00						
Cleveland	01/04/2007	238.00	35.75	238.00	140.00										
Cornwall	01/04/2007	232.00	188.00	232.00			81.00	379.00							
Cumbria	01/04/2007	250.00	100.00	370.00			110.00		110.00					25	
Derbyshire	01/04/2007	118.10	34.10	118.10			48.00	178.50							
Devon	01/04/2006	294.00					52.00		114.00		34.50			65.00	
Dorset	01/04/2006	159.00	95.00	179.00		159.00	54.00		100.00		39.00				
East Sussex	01/04/2007	233.00	185.00	251.00	129.00	113.00	-		113.00		56.00			7.25	232
Hertfordshire	01/04/2007	395.40	197.07			199.60	66.45	267.00	183.08						
Humberside	01/04/2007	100.00	33.00	200.00			41.00							11.00	
Lancashire	01/07/2006	250.00	100.00	370.00	500.00			110.00			70.00				
Leicestershire	01/04/2006			140.00			50.00	294.00	164.00						
Lincolnshire	01/04/2007														
Mid Wales	01/07/2007	226.11	143.42	327.95				188.76	130.93						
North Wales	01/04/2007	320.40	48.50	320.40			37.00		112.50					26.50	
North Yorks	01/04/2007	137.84	31.48	199.69					78.21						
Nottinghamshire	01/04/2002							362.03	123.68				47.22	12.02	
Suffolk	01/09/2006	347.00	173.50	347.00	484.85		49.00		155.00	113-266	49.00	56-203	51-80	70	
West Sussex	01/04/2007			200.00											
West Yorkshire	01/08/2007	410.00	160.00	430.00	235.00										

LPP - Light portable pump
TL - Turntable ladder
ALP - Aerial ladder platform