



Fire Brigades Union Tayside

Making Tayside Safer

**Supplementary
Response
Number 1
PERTH**

TAYSIDE FIRE BRIGADES UNION



PROVISION OF FIRE & RESCUE COVER IN PERTH

A SPECIFIC
RESPONSE
TO THE
“TOWARDS A SAFER TAYSIDE”
DOCUMENT

PERTH RESPONSE TO IRMP

The Perth And Kinross area extends to some 788km² and is principally characterised by the Sidlaw Hills to the East, the Ochil Hills to the south and west, and the river valleys of the Tay, Earn and Almond. At the heart of this is the urban settlement of Perth, surrounded by 61 villages and small settlements. The M90 motorway, A9, A90 and A85 trunk roads all converge on Perth and the main Inverness and Aberdeen to Glasgow rail lines intersect there. Additionally a busy harbour at Perth has at least 10 ships docking there every month with a new wharf built to accommodate an increase in ships. There are also three airports in the area with various uses, with the Perth and Kinross draft local plan highlighting the fact that Scone airport in particular may see an increase in air traffic. Census data indicates a population of 75,524, with Perth itself having a population of 43,501.

Following on, the information in the Perth and Kinross draft local plan, indications show that the population will go through a substantial increase in both housing and industrial developments, for example the proposed development at Oudenard, Bridge of Earn, a minimum of 1200 houses.

Taking into account the tourist season, which sees a substantial increase in population figures, including an influx of foreign car drivers to the area, bringing a substantial increase in traffic to the road network. All these factors we believe will increase both fires and R.T.A's in this area.

This increase in both population and R.T.A's emphasises the FBU call for a third appliance for the Perth and Kinross area.



Supporting Evidence for Third Appliance

STANDBY STATISTICS

These are the times when a standby appliance has had to be mobilised to provide Perth with fire and rescue cover when the station appliances have been committed to an operational incident.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AV.TRAVEL TIME</u>
01/02	673	30.28 mins
02/03	603	30.53 mins
03/04	744	29.00 mins
04/05	679	31.19 mins

The 'total' figures equate on average, to an appliance being mobilised from their operational requirements in Dundee to Standby in Perth twice a day. The travel time figure is very important as this shows the time it takes for an appliance to arrive in Perth and be available for fire cover. The standby appliance travels at normal road speeds, obeying all traffic regulations and without blue lights and sirens. **Worryingly this travel time equals the time during which PERTH HAS NO FIRE AND RESCUE COVER!**

In the year 2004/05 if each mobilisation had required an appliance to get all the way to Perth Fire Station in would have equated to 353 hours or **Perth having no fire and rescue cover for two weeks!**

Even when the single stand-by appliance arrives in Perth it means that the **local people are being protected by half of the resources thought necessary.**

What if a house fire occurs during this time? By not addressing the obvious void in fire cover Tayside Fire Board are **deliberately placing the residents of Perth at risk!** Should an incident occur an appliance would be mobilised from the retained stations at Auchterarder, Coupar Angus or Dunkeld. The retained crew have to leave their place of employment or home, drive to the station, then drive the appliance to Perth. This delay puts **the residents of Perth at greater risk because of the absence of firefighting resource within Perth!**

If Tayside Fire Board believe in the principle of IRMP they must take note of this gap in fire cover.

SCENARIOS

HOUSE FIRE:

This situation in Perth requires a minimum of one rescue pump and a water tender ladder (WTL) giving you 9 firefighters. Because Perth only has one rescue pump and one WTL, as has been explained before an incident requiring these appliances leaves the city exposed for a period in excess of 30 minutes. At an incident, the command and control structure and the health and safety implications associated with a house fire shows that 9 firefighters are required to deal with the incident safely and efficiently. (see IRMP document or CAST planning scenarios). **A single stand-by appliance cannot conduct firefighting operations in accordance with the services own Safe Systems of Work.**

HOUSE FIRE PERSONS REPORTED:

This situation requires a minimum of one rescue pump and 2 WTL`s giving you 13 firefighters. A persons reported incident (an incident where people are believed to be trapped in a house on fire) is a nightmare scenario for the officer in charge, as even in normal circumstances the third appliance (nearest retained unit) is over 20 minutes away. On arrival firefighters will be forced to cut corners to achieve their goal of saving someone's life. Human nature takes over and it will only be a matter of time before a firefighter is killed or seriously injured at one of these incidents because Perth does not have the resources at hand to cope with such an incident. Remember Perth is once again without fire cover for over 30 minutes. Even when both of Perth's pumping appliances are available they **cannot conduct firefighting operations in accordance with the services own Safe Systems of Work.**

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT:

Road traffic accidents are a regular occurrence for Perth firefighters with the busy road/motorway network, the well publicised notoriety of the A9 and the accidents that occur at its black spots. Resource requirements at RTA`s are dependent on a number of factors, the location of incident, number and type of vehicles involved and the number of persons trapped. The fire and rescue service response to an RTA within the Perth area, as set by policy would be a rescue pump and a WTL from Perth. This has good and bad points. The good point being that the officer in charge now has 9 firefighters at the incident (as opposed to 8 firefighters under previous arrangements), the bad point from the view of the operational firefighters is that there is now only one set of cutting equipment for the incident (as opposed to three sets of cutting gear under the old arrangements).

This is an important issue to understand and the FBU while agreeing that the fire and rescue service capability is being enhanced throughout the wider Tayside area believe that capability is actually being **REDUCED IN PERTH!**

This again emphasises the need for a third appliance for Perth, and additionally the WTL already at Perth should be fitted with cutting equipment.

If the RTA occurs outside Perth's boundary and requires Perth's rescue pump or WTL to attend, again this leaves Perth with reduced fire cover, with only one appliance remaining available for at least 30 minutes. Under the previous arrangements the emergency tender would have been dispatched leaving Perth with 2 fire appliances. The knock on effect for Perth now having a rescue pump is it will be committed to more incidents in conjunction with our neighbouring retained stations, again leaving Perth short of fire cover on a more regular basis thus placing residents, their property and firefighters at greater risk.

HEAVY RESCUE UNIT (HRU);

This specialist appliance brings a different set of problems altogether with regard to mobilising and crewing. The HRU replaced the rapid response emergency tender, with a reduction of firefighters from 3 to 2. To make up for this deficiency, the WTL will now accompany the HRU as a support appliance whenever the HRU is mobilised. The problems for Perth become apparent when the WTL is already at one incident and the HRU is mobilised to another. The support appliance is then sent from Dundee to the HRU incident, with an inherent delay due to travel time. If this appliance is unavailable, another WTL is mobilised to relieve the Perth appliance at the incident and they will proceed to assist the HRU. Not an ideal situation, especially if the crew of the water tender have been working hard at the first incident then are needed for specific tasks at the HRU incident.



SUMMARY

It is evident that the **resources in Perth are inadequate** to deal with more than one incident at a time and this leaves Perth with no cover for a period of 30 minutes or more on a regular basis.

The Fire Brigade Union's CAST document shows that the scenarios described above represent **a short fall in the resources at Perth Fire Station.**

There is a case for a third pumping appliance to be based at Perth and if Tayside Fire and Rescue carries out their IRMP using the ODPM guidance then it should also show **a third Water Tender is needed to satisfy these short falls.**

The FBU believe that the resource of a third appliance at Perth would also enhance Tayside Fire and Rescue's commitment to community fire safety, by allowing allow community fire safety to be undertaken in outlying areas surrounding Perth which may not receive this at the moment due to restriction of the range of appliances based in Perth.

As has been shown **Perth currently exhibits major gaps in fire and rescue cover** but it should also be remembered that the modern firefighter is trained to deal with a wide variety of incidents, including building collapse and Hazardous Material/Chemical incidents. Perth firefighters are also trained to carry out Urban Search and Rescue tasks and are available as part of a national resilience capability.

With the possibility that Perth firefighters will be further trained in water and line rescue techniques, any commitment to any of these types of incidents - and this may include neighbouring fire and rescue service areas - means a commitment of a special appliance at Perth, its support appliance and crew. A scenario where Perth is left with reduced fire cover.

If Tayside Fire Board have confidence in the principle of IRMP they must take note of this gap in risk cover. The Fire Brigades Union believes there is an opportunity to provide an increase in the resource establishment within Perth by providing a third pumping appliance. This resource could be provided using a combination of whole-time, part-time and/or retained duty systems. The appliance and crew would then be available to undertake the full range of duties within the town of Perth but also could be utilised to undertake community fire safety work within a radius of Perth that extends the current working area. They would however be available to provide fire cover whenever required.

RESOURCES

For further information contact

Fire Brigades Union Tayside

www.fbutayside.org.uk
info@fbutayside.org.uk

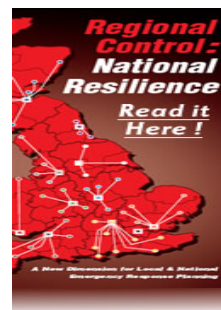
Jim Malone - Brigade Secretary 07801-047-613 bs01ta@fbu.org.uk
John Duffy - Brigade Chair 07801-047-618 john.duffy@fbu.org.uk

Fire Brigades Union Scotland

www.fbuscotland.co.uk

Fire Brigades Union

www.fbu.org.uk



The FBU National IRMP document is available from
www.fbu.org.uk

To see the Tayside IRMP Response 2007 document, go to
www.fbutayside.org.uk

Regional Control: National Resilience is available from
www.fbu.org.uk