



**Service Policy: RESPOL06
Operational Assurance Policy**

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18/03/08	April 2027			

Amendment History:

Version	Date	Author	Reasons for Change
0.1	21.1.08		Initial Draft
1.0	19.2.08		Comments from DCFO Hagen
1.1	18.3.09		Policy review
1.2	26.2.10		Policy review
1.2	01.4.11		Policy review
1.3	01.04.12		Policy Review & Rename
1.5	01.04.15		Policy moved from Preparedness to Response
1.6	01.04.17		Policy review
1.7	25.03.18		Policy Review & Rename of SM H&S Monthly Insp.
1.8	12.09.19		Policy Review & Change to Area Manager
1.9	23.11.20		Policy Review /Change to Area Manager
2.0	01.03.22		Annual Review and Change to Area Manager
2.1	23.03.23		Annual Review and update
2.2	18/03/24		Annual Review and Update

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Initial	Full	Date	Reviewed by	Comments
	X		ED&I TEAM	LOCATED ON PORTAL

Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment:

Date	Reviewed by	Comments

Related Documents:

Doc. Type	Ref No.	Title	Location
SI	0176	Operational Assurance	Portal
SI	0069	Incident Debriefs	Portal

Distribution List:

Name	Position	Department

Sign-Off List:

Name	Position
CFO	
SLT	

Target Audience:

All MFRS	Principal Officers	Senior Officers	Operational Crews	Fire Safety	Community Fire Safety	Support Staff
X						

Ownership:

FOI exemption required?	Yes	URL
	No	X Reason

Legislation:

Title	Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
	The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
	The H&S Portal

Contact:

Department	Email	Telephone ext.
Operational Response		

RESPOL06 Operational Assurance Policy

1. Policy Introduction and Background:

The Department for Communities and Local Government document, 'Health, Safety and Welfare framework for the operational environment', places a requirement on fire authorities, to have in place "appropriate arrangements for monitoring and measuring health, safety and welfare performance against predetermined plans and standards, including learning from incidents and using the information to improve operational performance".

Measurement is essential to maintain and improve health, safety, and welfare performance, although a low accident rate is not an indication that risks are being effectively controlled and managed.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MF&RS) has processes and systems which form an Operational Assurance Toolbox:

- Operational Assurance Team (OAT) morning meetings
- Regular Standardised audits
- Monthly Standardisation meetings
- Hot debrief facility (at scene and digital)
- Incident debrief module and OA officers reports (OSHENS)
- Organisational Debrief facilitation
- Active monitoring at operational incidents, tactical exercises, and training scenarios.
- Station Manager Monthly Health & Safety Inspection
- Incident Notes
- Officers Briefing Notes
- Case Studies
- Significant Incident Reports
- National Operational Learning (NOL)/Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Action and/or Information Notes
- Operational Assurance (OA) officer's handbook

Information from the debrief module, audits and inspections are captured on the OSHENS Health & Safety management system.

The MF&RS Operational Assurance Team work to ensure operational assurance activities align to the 'Operational Learning' Fire Standard and 'NOL Good Practice Guide' principles.

2. Policy Explanation:

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MF&RA) and the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) are responsible for ensuring that the Health, Safety and Welfare policy is implemented and that responsibilities are assigned, accepted, and fulfilled at all levels within Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

The Area Manager (AM) of Operational Response maintains overall responsibility for MFRS Operational Assurance on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer.

The Health and Safety Manager will be responsible for the day-to-day management of Operational Assurance on behalf of the MF&RA Chief Fire Officer,

The Operational Assurance Team monitors, audits and reviews the MFRS systems which capture the extent of compliance against the recognised standards. It uses the information to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of MFRS' Response and Preparedness activities.

The OAT function reports to the AM of Operational Response. To ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources, Operational Assurance within Merseyside is carried out on a sampling basis.

The main aims and objectives are to:

- Significantly contribute to the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's purpose. Here to serve. Here to protect. Here to keep you safe, and Service values.
- Assist the Authority to identify, and disseminate, notable practice and areas for improvement.
- Integrate with, complement, and support all Service functional departments.
- Support MF&RS operational improvement.
- Deliver a robust process for monitoring operational performance.
- Improve operational effectiveness and performance.
- Ensure results are fed back to personnel and relevant partners.

3. Policy Implementation:

MF&RS utilise the HSE's HSG 65 management system which is a proven framework for managing and continually improving the organisations policies, procedures, and processes. To deliver the necessary arrangements MF&RS will:

Plan - Through Policy and Planning.

Do - Through Risk Profiling, Organising and Implementing.

Check - By Measuring Performance, and Monitor before events, investigate after events.

Act - Through Reviewing Performance and take appropriate action.

The method of assurance determines how evidence is collected. A mixture of both quantitative and qualitative data is collected to provide a sound evidence base against which performance is assessed. Where possible, assurance will be achieved through evidence gathered from a range of sources i.e.

- Direct observation of operational incidents, tactical exercises, and training scenarios.
- Professional discussion at, or following incidents with crews and officers.

- Data collection through Incident Recording System (IRS) database, Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI/PORIS), Health & Safety database (OSHENS), Safe Person database (Operational Performance System), Training and Development Academy core training database, Tactical Command Assessments, Analytical Risk Assessment (ARA) information and other relevant sources.
- Thematic Reviews, which are agreed through the Operational Improvement Group (OIG) and are based on areas of organisational risk and/or opportunity.
- Different levels of Audit
- Debrief

The above areas can be audited through the collection of data and may not necessarily require direct observation by an Operational Assurance Team Officer.

The Operational Assurance Team will monitor, assess, and analyse the various sources of data and information to identify trends, notable practice, and areas for improvement. This information will also be used to help identify content areas for daily audits, incident monitoring and thematic reviews.

MF&RS Standard Operating Procedures and Service Instructions are used to underpin the Policy.

All staff employed by MFRA should continually familiarise themselves with MF&RS Standard Operating Procedures and Service Instructions; the following listed (below) are the responsibility of the Operational Assurance Team which sits within the H&S Department:

- SI 0176 Operational Assurance
- SI 0069 Incident Debriefs

All Policies can be found on the [Website](#)