

OFFICIAL

**When telephoning ask for  
Fire Engineering**

Tel: 01429 872311

Mobile:

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Changes in responding to fire alarm calls generated by Automatic Fire Alarm systems**

Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) is committed to 'Protecting Local Communities'.

As part of this commitment CFB will assist organisations in reducing the economic cost of lost productivity and business disruption due to false alarms generated by actuations of their Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) systems.

CFB class the actuation of an AFA which has not been caused by a fire as an Unwanted Fire Signal (UwFS). The reduction in the number of UwFS will have a positive economic impact on the business community and other sectors. The effect on the commercial sector alone in lost time, business disruption and productivity caused by false alarms is estimated, nationally to be in excess of £1 billion each year. (HM Government study 2004)

CFB have up until this point, responded to all AFA's generated with the full risk assessed Pre-Determined Attendance for each premises, treating each alarm as a full emergency.

This has an adverse effect on the premises in that each time an UwFS is generated an evacuation commences, together with the response time of CFB, the time taken to investigate the actuation and the time taken to repopulate the premises after the system is reset, all increases the economic cost to the organisation due to lost production/time and impacts upon business continuity.

There is no legal responsibility for any Fire and Rescue Service to respond to calls originating from an AFA system – to establish if there is a fire.

It is the legal responsibility as detailed within the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order of 2005 of the '*Responsible Person*' at the property to have in place a Fire Risk Assessment

that details amongst other measures what actions are to be taken upon actuation of the AFA system.

One such action is to investigate the reason for the actuation of the AFA system and then notify the Fire Brigade via the 999 system if a fire is confirmed.

In January this year Cleveland Fire Authority resolved to change the Fire Brigades response to fire calls generated by Automatic Fire Alarm systems.

I have made the following decisions in relation to implementation of the change in response:

- The change in response will commence from **Monday 2nd October 2017**
- As of Monday 2nd October 2017, Cleveland Fire Brigade will not attend AFA's to low and medium risk premises between 08:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays), unless a backup call is received from the premises via the 999 system, confirming there is a fire, or that physical signs of fire exist.

#### Risk Categorisation.

- Low or Medium Risk premises - This applies to the following premises;
  - Industrial premises
  - Business premises
  - Commercial premises
  - Schools
  - Public buildings
  - Leisure complexes
  - Hotels
  - Halls of Residence
  - Residential Care Premises
- Any premises determined as High or Special risk will receive one Fire Appliance for investigation purposes between 08:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays).
- Cleveland Fire Brigade will not attend Automatic Fire Alarms from Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs) between the hours of 08:00 and 17:00, Monday to Friday, unless they are backed up with a 999 call from premises to either ARC or to Fire Control.
- All premises will receive a full attendance on actuation of an AFA between the hours of 17:00 and 08:00 on week days and full 24 hour cover on Bank Holidays and weekends.
- Premises whose fire alarm system is configured to 'double knock' principles may (following consultation with CFB Fire Engineering Department) receive full emergency response.
- Where the premises can demonstrate that there are exceptional circumstances for that premises to receive a full AFA PDA then an exemption may be granted. Any request for an exemption due to significant risk will be considered by CFB.

The onus is on the responsible person to submit the case to CFB. The case must be based upon the high risk to persons resulting from the CFB UwFS policy. The premises must demonstrate good management of their fire alarm systems.

All single private domestic dwellings and sheltered housing (including bungalows and flats) are exempt from the conditions outlined above.

For any further information please visit <http://bit.ly/cfbufs> or contact Fire Engineering on 01429 872311.

Yours Faithfully

**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**