



Inspection Outline

Command and Control: Areas within the SFRS Incident Command System

1. Introduction

Fire-fighting and other emergencies are by their very nature, hazardous operations. Chapter 2 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 sets out the Principal Fire and Rescue Functions of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). The SFRS must make provision for the purpose of extinguishing fires in its area (section 9(1)(a) of the Act), and protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area (section 9(1)(b)), for road traffic accidents (section 10(1) of the Act) and for other emergencies (articles 3 to 6 of the Fire (Additional Function) (Scotland) Order 2005).

In making provision under section 9(1) of the Act, the SFRS must secure the provision of the personnel, services and equipment necessary to meet efficiently all normal requirements (section 9(2)(a) of the Act), secure the provision of training for personnel (section 9(2)(b) of the Act), and make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and summoning personnel (section 9(2)(c) of the Act).

The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016 (Chapter 1, Strategic Priority 3, Response and Resilience) requires the SFRS to work with other public sector partners to evolve a holistic and dynamic process of identification, evaluation and assessment of community risk and Best Value in order to prioritise and target its use of resources to ensure an appropriate response to incidents across Scotland and support improved outcomes for communities. As part of this approach, the SFRS should promote optimal command, control, communication and tri-service co-operation in response to incidents.

The Inspectorate's [scrutiny plan for 2016-21](#) identifies Firefighter Safety as an area of interest for Thematic Inspections. Having considered a wide range of topics and following previous discussions with the SFRS it was decided to focus on 'Areas within Command and Control' for the next Thematic Inspection.

Within this Thematic Inspection the Inspectorate will also review action taken by SFRS following a previous report that was laid before the Scottish Parliament in November 2014, with the title '*Risk-based operational decision-making in the Scottish Fire and*

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Rescue Service'. In particular two recommendations in the report fall within the scope of Command and Control, these are;

1. The SFRS should develop written guidance on the circumstances in which its staff can decide to depart from a Service policy or SOP, and the steps to be taken (such as record keeping) when this occurs.
2. The SFRS should continue to develop a national training needs analysis and national systems to allocate training and skills maintenance, with specific emphasis on training all front-line incident commanders to level 1, and identifying how skills maintenance will be provided to incident commanders at all levels.

The first recommendation describes what is referred to as Operational Discretion within the Foundation for Incident Command. It fits within the context of the proposed Thematic Inspection.

The Command and Control inspection provides an opportunity for the Inspectorate to follow up and review how the SFRS has implemented these two recommendations.

2. Areas of Interest

During the course of this Inspection and taking particular account of our stated purpose, we will be focusing our attention on the SFRS Incident Command System and incident command training and in particular the following areas:

- Defined roles and responsibilities on the Incident Ground and consideration of Interoperability and Intraoperability
- The command support structure and systems being used
- How the Service uses decision logs on the incident ground and how they are used to inform learning
- How the Service applies sectorisation and cordons at an incident
- The Debriefing arrangements in place for reviewing incidents, including how learning is fed back into policy and procedure development to improve performance
- With regard to the Service's Operational Discretion policy, how it is being implemented and what records are being kept
- How the SFRS delivers IC training levels 1 - 4, and ensures the maintenance of skills at all levels and reports and monitors IC competence

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- Identify and review a SFRS structured debrief of a large scale incident within the last 18 months

3. Methodology

When undertaking the Inspection it will follow the same guidelines as those used for the Local Area Inspections and previous Thematic Inspections. The Inspection framework will provide a structure that will be risk based, proportionate and focused on improving the Command and Control of Operational Incidents within the SFRS.

The Inspection will commence with a desk top review of the SFRS's Policy, Procedures and any data in relation to how the Service delivers any Command and Control and IC functions. This will be complemented by face to face interviews with the Directors of Service Delivery and Response and Resilience, Incident Commanders from levels 1 to 4, the Training Manager responsible for IC training, Operational and Control room staff who support IC functions and Operational Assurance staff.

The inspection will be delivered in four stages, some of which will be undertaken concurrently.

Stage 1 – Scoping

- Initial engagement with key stakeholders and to establish a single point of contact
- A review of existing documents in relation to Command and Control at Operational Incidents and IC Training
- Identify and review a recent Structured Debrief for a large scale incident

Stage 2 – Fieldwork

The fieldwork will focus on Response and Resilience, Training, Operational Assurance, Fire Stations, Control rooms and any areas of risk identified within the initial scoping phase. The fieldwork will involve;

- Interviews with Directors and other Strategic managers
- Interviews with level 1 - 4 Incident Commanders across all SDA's
- Interviews with Training managers
- Selected Inspection visits to Fire Stations and the Service's Control rooms

Stage 3 – Analysis of Evidence

During this stage, Inspectors will review and evaluate the information and evidence collected and if necessary expand the area of enquiry to address any areas of concern

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raised. This may result in further information being required from the SFRS and interviews with other members of staff.

Stage 4 – Publication and Reporting

We anticipate publishing a report of the Inspectorate’s findings in January / March 2020. A copy of the report will also be provided to the SFRS Board, the Chief Officer and laid before the Scottish Parliament. A copy will also be made publicly available on the HMFSI website.

The report will outline our methodology and approach, report on the Inspectorate’s key findings, conclusions and any recommendations. The results of our Inspection will;

- Provide independent assurance for effective and safe Command and Control within the SFRS; and
- Highlight areas of good practice and any areas for improvement

4. Timetable

The proposed outline timetable is:

May 2019	Pre-planning and consultation on the Inspection outline
June 2019	Data collection and review existing key documentation
June – August 2019	Interviews with Directors, Strategic managers and Inspection team on site visits
January / March 2020	Report drafting and consultation
January / March 2020	Report publication

5. The Inspection Team

The Inspection team members are:

Simon Routh-Jones – Chief Inspector
Graeme Fraser – Assistant Inspector
Andrew Thomas – Assistant Inspector
Brian McKenzie – Assistant Inspector
Martin Riach – Inspection Officer (Seconded from the SFRS)

The teams work is reviewed by an independent quality assurance panel.

6. Responding to this Inspection Outline Document

This Inspection Outline document has been prepared to describe why we are carrying out an inspection and how we will go about the work. It is also intended to support our consultation with Ministers, the SFRS management team and representative bodies. If you wish to make any comments or observations, these should be submitted to the Chief Inspector by emailing HMFSI@gov.scot

The team members can also provide clarification on any content and can be contacted through the same email address.