

COMPARTMENT FIRE BEHAVIOUR TRAINING UNIT

BACKGROUND

1. Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) is a critical element of experiential training for all operational firefighters. CFBT enables firefighters, under controlled conditions, to experience the realistic behaviour of fire, which they might otherwise only encounter on a real incident. With appropriate training and supervision CFBT can help firefighters improve their chances of managing serious fire incidents more safely.
2. CFBT has been a successful aspect of Fire and Rescue Service training since 1999. Whilst many Fire and Rescue Services purchased full sized demonstration and attack units the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HF&RS) decided to purchase a small scale simulator. This was primarily because realistic fire training units were in use at Service Headquarters, the Industrial Training Centre and at Immingham West Fire Station.
3. Over the years, through experience and use, national CFBT techniques improved and it became apparent that the small scale simulator operated by HF&RS was no longer satisfactory. This situation was compounded by the closure of the Industrial Training Centre in 2006 leaving the HQ and Immingham station as the only realistic fire training units available to the HF&RS. Neither of these units is able to provide CFBT.

DEVELOPMENTS

4. Research has been ongoing for approximately two years into the most appropriate and cost-effective way to provide this essential training for our staff.
5. During this period, the Operational Assurance Audit also highlighted the need for provision to be made in this risk critical area.
6. Feasibility studies into potential resource sharing agreements with our Regional partners in North, South and West Yorkshire have shown that either the type of facilities available or the cost of their utilisation were not viable.
7. Many types of CFBT units are in use around the country and our research has focused on the operational effectiveness, physical robustness and financial viability of such units for use in Humberside. There are also environmental and geographical issues to be considered before such units are installed.

PROPOSAL

8. A range of feasible options for CFBT have been evaluated and the ideal solution is to purchase a comprehensive package consisting of a demonstration unit, an attack unit and a window unit.

9. These are purpose built and are estimated to have a service life of 7 – 10 years before major refurbishment is required.
10. As these units burn plywood panels there will be some limited emissions. They should therefore be sited away from residential areas at either Immingham East or Immingham West Fire Stations.
11. The final decision on location will be made on the conclusion of consultation with the Environment Agency, Planning Officers and neighbouring premises.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. The purchase cost of the three units will be £50,000.
13. The cost of siting the units and providing additional facilities will be £30,000.
14. The annual cost of running and maintaining the units will be dependent on the fuel burnt i.e. if pallets are used the costs will be negligible, if chipboard is used the cost annually will be £8,500.
15. The purchasing and placing costs will be included in the capital plans 2007/08 - 2009/10 (capital budget) whilst the running and maintenance costs will be incorporated in the Learning and Development revenue budget.

RISK IMPACT ASSESSMENT

16. Failure to provide a CFBT unit represents a high risk to the Humberside Fire Authority. Whilst all personnel have been trained using the small scale simulator only recent wholetime trainees have been exposed to modern CFBT training. This poses a high potential risk of injury to operational personnel with consequent financial risk and loss of reputation for the Authority. This is particularly so as the lack of this facility has been noted by inspectors.

RECOMMENDATION

17. That the Authority approve the proposals detailed in Paragraphs 8 – 11 of this report.

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Background Papers: Nil
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