

Seirbhís Dóiteáin agus Tarrthála Chontae Uíbh Fhailí



Offaly County Council Fire and Rescue Service

FIRE & EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

SECTION 26

FIRE SERVICES ACT 1981

September 2009



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SECTION 1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Fire & Emergency Operations Plan is to fulfil Offaly County Council's statutory obligation as a Fire Authority as outlined in Section 26 of the Fire Services Act, 1981.

Section 26 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states:

"Each Fire Authority which maintains a Fire Brigade shall prepare (and, as occasion requires, revise) plans for fire and emergency operations showing the provision made by it in respect of:

- *Organisation*
- *Fire Stations*
- *Appliances (fire tenders)*
- *Equipment*
- *Water supplies and extinguishing agents*
- *Training*
- *Operational procedure and such other matters as may be relevant for dealing with operations of an emergency nature under Section 25"*

The making and revision of a Fire & Emergency Operations Plan is a reserved function.

1.2 Health & Safety

The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005 imposed certain duties on both employers and employees. Offaly Fire and Rescue Service has taken many steps towards meeting its obligations. The current ancillary safety statement was prepared and published in February 2008 and established the Fire Service's current Health and Safety policies and procedures.

1.3 Operational Standards

The statutory responsibility for determining fire cover standards and providing response capability rests with the local Fire Authority. Offaly Fire Service has determined the following fire cover standards.

Standards of Fire Cover

Substantive Response Area	Attendance Time of Appliances (minutes)	
	1 st Appliance	2 nd Appliance
Tullamore, Birr, Edenderry urban areas	12	15
Other areas	21	24

These standards are based on Crewing Levels of 5 on 1st appliance & 4 on 2nd appliance. These standards must be met at least 75% of the time.

Performance indicators will be established to monitor the level of compliance with these standards.

1.4 Organisation

Offaly County Council is the Fire Authority for the total County of Offaly including the Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry Town Councils operating under the Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended and the Building Control Act 1990 as amended.

The Chief Fire Officer has responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service. Two (2no.) Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officers and two (2No) Assistant Chief Fire Officers report to the Chief Fire Officer. Provision is made for overlap and interchange of the operational and fire prevention roles of senior officers as the exigencies of the service requires. Training of officers caters for this situation. Four (4no.) Senior Fire Officers are rostered for calls to incidents 24 hours a day 365 days of the year.

The Operational Fire and Rescue Service is provided by retained firefighters reporting to a retained station officer. The station officers in turn report to the Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer(s) / Assistant Chief Fire Officer(s). There are five stations located as follows: Tullamore (Fire Service Headquarters), Birr, Clara, Edenderry, Ferbane.

In addition Offaly County Council Fire and Rescue Service provides fire cover for parts of Co. Laois, Co. Meath, Co. Westmeath Co. Galway and Co. Tipperary North Riding, while cover is provided to parts of Offaly by, Co. Tipperary North Riding, Co. Laois, by agreements signed by each Local Authority.

Retained firefighters must be available for duty at all times except with the permission of the retained station officer. This permission is given only in circumstances which will maintain the availability of an adequate crew at all times, including weekends and holidays.

1.5 Fire Stations

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service utilises five (5no.) fire stations as detailed above. Fire Station projects have usually received capital funding from Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The details of activities over the past five (5no.) year period as well as present activities are given below:

- A new fire station in Birr was constructed and opened in 2005.
- A new fire station in Edenderry was constructed and opened in 2007.
- A Site for a new fire station in Ferbane is currently being sought, (approval in principal from DoE)
- Approval has been sought for a new fire station in Clara.

1.6 Fire Appliances

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service maintain fire appliances in five (5no.) fire stations throughout the county. There are a variety of different types of appliances in operation, i.e. Water Tender (Class B), H.P. (Hydraulic Platform), E.T. (Emergency Tender), WrC (Water Tanker) and vehicles with off-road capabilities such as four-wheel drives.

The distribution of appliances in the county is outlined in Section 5.0 while a typical inventory of equipment carried on Water Tender/Ladder Appliance and held in stations is set out in Section 6.0

The disposition and status of the entire fleet is reviewed on an ongoing basis with a view to ensuring its maximum effective deployment.

The purchase of appliances and a certain amount of equipment attracts 100% funding from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Other purchases are met from the Offaly County Council's own resources.

1.7 Equipment

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service utilises a broad range of equipment in the delivery of the operational service (see below):

The types and quantities of equipment assigned to each brigade are continuously monitored and are deployed as operational requirements indicate.

General Firefighting and Rescue Equipment

The inventory of all equipment available to Offaly Fire Authority is on record in the Central Fire Station Tullamore.

Breathing Apparatus Equipment

Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) Sets, Breathing Apparatus Cylinders, Breathing Apparatus Compressor, Thermal Imaging Cameras.

Hazardous Materials Equipment

Gas Detection, Gas Tight Suits, Decontamination Shower.

Crash Rescue Equipment

Each fire station has a full set of crash rescue equipment incorporating principally hydraulic tools and some air operated tools etc

1.8 Water Supplies

Each Water Tanker appliance carries nine thousand (9,000 no.) litres of water in an on-board tank. This provides for approximately seventy (70no.) minute supply to one high pressure hose-reel and is likely to be capable of extinguishing small room fires, vehicle fires, small out-house fires, rubbish fires, chimney fires, roof space fires, etc. .

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service also advises on requirements for water supply for commercial and housing developments when dealing with planning referrals and Fire Safety Certificates applications.

1.9 Training

Section 15 of the Fire Services Act 1981, places a statutory duty on all fire authorities to make arrangements for the efficient training of personnel in the Fire Service. In general training there are three levels of training provided:

- National training courses provided for Junior Officers and Senior Officers by the Fire Services Council, a statutory body established under the Fire Services Act, 1981, to provide training to Fire Service personnel.
- Centralised training courses provided at County level.
- Local Brigade training.

1.10 Communications

Section 10(2)(C) of the Fire Services Act, 1981, requires the Fire Authority to make adequate provision for the reception of and response to calls for the assistance of the Fire Brigade. In order to fulfil this function Offaly County Council currently utilises Kildare County Council's Emergency Control Centre in Newbridge Fire Station.

All requests for the attendance of the fire brigade are directed via the 112 Telecom system to the Control Centre ('Control') in Newbridge. 'Control' uses a computerised system (involving an address database, a log of all available appliances and a locally pre-determined attendance for each address) to determine the appropriate weight of response. The appropriate fire appliances (hence Fire Stations) are then alerted by 'Control' and a printed message is sent out to their station(s).

1.11 Operational Procedures

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service aide memoir to brigade and operational procedures are in accordance with the Fire Service Drill Books, Fire Service Training Manuals and Manuals of Firemanship and as specified in Brigade Orders from time to time (Brigade Orders are mandatory instructions issued to all fire-fighters by the Chief Fire Officer). Breathing Apparatus procedures are in accordance with Breathing Apparatus Procedures as issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Under Section 25 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, Offaly Fire and Rescue Service equips itself for and responds to call outs for road traffic incidents, flooding, chemical incidents, spillages, storms/severe weather, and aircraft incidents/emergencies. Offaly Fire and Rescue Service also equips itself for participation in the event of a major emergency alongside the other Local Authorities in the Midlands Region, An Garda Síochána, the National Ambulance Service and the Health Service Executive (HSE).

1.12 Fire Prevention

It should be noted that this plan outlines only the arrangements made with regards to fire and emergency operations and does not take account of the substantial volume of fire prevention and fire safety work which is a discretionary power under the Fire Service Act, 1981 as amended carried out by Offaly County Council as a Fire Authority.

SECTION 2.0 Introduction

This plan is an update of the plan previously adopted and currently in use.. The purpose of this Fire & Emergency Operations Plan is to fulfil Offaly County Council's statutory obligation as a Fire Authority as outlined in Section 26 of the Fire Services Act, 1981. The Fire & Emergency Operations Plan also includes reference to operational duties imposed on the Fire Authority by Section 10(3) of the Fire Services Act, 1981. This plan shall be reviewed from time to time as deemed appropriate. It should be noted that the above function is a reserved function under Section 26(3) of Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended.

Section 26 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states:

"Each Fire Authority which maintains a Fire Brigade shall prepare (and, as occasion requires, revise) plans for fire and emergency operations showing the provision made by it in respect of:

- *Organisation*
- *Fire Stations*
- *Appliances (fire tenders)*
- *Equipment*
- *Water supplies and extinguishing agents*
- *Training*
- *Operational procedure and such other matters as may be relevant for dealing with operations of an emergency nature under Section 25"*

Section 10(2) of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states

"A fire authority shall

- (a) make provision for the prompt extinguishing of fires in buildings and other places of all kinds in it's functional area and for the protection and rescue of persons and property from injury by fire, and*
- (b) establish and maintain a fire brigade, provide premises and make other provisions as it considers necessary or desirable for such purposes and*
- (c) make adequate provision for the reception and response to calls for assistance of the fire brigade*

Section 10(3) of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states:

"A Fire Authority shall, in exercise of its functions under subsection (2), have regard (in addition to all other relevant considerations) to the nature of the fire hazards and the probable incidence and extent of fires in it's functional area, the character of the area and the value of the property liable to be damaged by fires."

Section 25 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states:

*"A Fire Authority **may** carry out or assist in any operations of an emergency nature, whether or not a risk of fire is involved, and a Fire Authority may accordingly make such provision for the rescue or safeguarding of persons and protection of property as it considered necessary for the purposes of that function."*

Note:

Definition of Fire Brigade in Fire Services Act 1981

"A Fire Brigade means an organised body of persons trained and equipped for extinguishing fires occurring in buildings and other places and for rescuing persons and property from such fires and includes the vehicles and equipment with which that body is equipped"

Definition of extinguishing of a fire in Fire Services Act 1981

Extinguishing of a fire shall be construed as including the prevention of a fire from spreading.

SECTION 3.0 Health & Safety

3.1 Health & Safety Management

The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005 imposed certain duties on both employers and employees. Offaly Fire and Rescue Service have taken many steps towards meeting its obligations. The current Ancillary Safety Statement was prepared and published in February 2008 in accordance with guidelines issued by the Health and Safety Authority incorporating the following:

- Policy Statement
- Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
- Safety Management Programme
- Structure and Responsibility
- Resources
- Training, Awareness & Competence
- Communication
- Document Control
- Operational Control
- Emergency Response
- Records
- Audits
- Management Review

The Fire and Rescue Service has a safety representative and meeting take place between the safety representative and the management of Offaly Fire and Rescue Service. Such meetings facilitate ongoing communication regarding health & safety issues arising such as new hazards identified, status of safety management programme and safety training, etc.

3.2 Incident Command System

Offaly Fire Service operates the National Incident Command system. The system sets out good practice and offers supporting advice and guidance in those areas of operational activity considered to be critical to the health and safety of fire service personnel, of which the safe and competent command of operational incidents is key.

The incident command system provides for the safe, effective and efficient management and deployment of resources, both human and material at all types of emergency incidents.

3.3 Standards for Recruitment (Safe person concept)

Standards for recruitment to the fire service are laid down to ensure that personnel have appropriate qualities and capabilities for the job. At interview stage potential candidates have to successfully complete some pre-entry tests in reading, writing and numeracy. Candidates are also assessed for claustrophobia, heights, dexterity, strength and stamina. Candidates have to undergo a full occupational medical, which includes

strength and fitness tests. Candidates are then appointed on a probationary basis until they have successfully completed a Recruit Course and a Breathing Apparatus Course.

3.4 Occupational Health System

An Occupational Health System is in place in the Fire and Rescue Service. This system is a national occupational health system as agreed between SIPTU and the local government management services board (LGMSB). To ensure that firefighters are capable of safely and efficiently undertaking the tasks which they are required to perform, it is necessary to put in place arrangements for ensuring that fire-fighters are healthy and fit. Medical surveillance of existing fire-fighters takes place on a regular basis as set out in the occupational health scheme for members of the retained fire and rescue service. This surveillance will include an assessment of physical fitness. During this surveillance, principles of health education will be introduced focusing particularly on smoking, diet and alcohol in relation to work as well as on questions relating to infectious diseases, immunisation and care of the skin.

The preferred retirement age for retained firefighter is fifty-five (55no.) years with an extended optional period to age fifty-eight (58no.) years. Such firefighters have the option to continue working for a defined limited period subject to compulsory medical assessment measured against agreed standards. Any significant change in a firefighter's medical condition must be notified to Offaly Fire and Rescue Service. Offaly County Council Fire & Rescue Service reserve the right to send any member of staff for medical assessment outside compulsory dates in the interest of health and safety.

3.5 Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

Critical Incident Stress Management service launched in 2007 provided a range of educational, training and counselling that can be used in dealing with stress and trauma that can arise in the course of the job and can prepare the firefighters to deal with potentially traumatic situations. This confidential Critical Incident Stress Management counselling and support service is available to all members of Offaly Fire and Rescue Service.

3.6 Grievance and Disciplinary Policy

In Offaly Fire and Rescue Service, it is essential that certain standards of behaviour and performance are maintained to protect the smooth operation of the Fire and Rescue Service and the well-being of its staff. The Disciplinary Procedure, Grievance Procedures, and Harassment/Bullying and Sexual Harassment are outlined in the relevant policy document.

SECTION 4.0 Operational Standards

4.1 Overview

The statutory responsibility for determining fire cover standards and providing response capability rests with Offaly County Council Fire Authority

Offaly Fire Authority has set the following standards in terms of response time and weight of attack as shown below.

4.2 Standards of Fire Cover – Speed of Response

Substantive Response Area	Attendance Time of Appliances (minutes)	
	1 st Appliance	2 nd Appliance
Tullamore, Birr, Edenderry urban areas	12	15
Other areas	21	24

These standards are based on Crewing Levels of 5 on 1st Appliance & 4 on 2nd Appliance. These standards must be met at least 75% of the time.

Tullamore, Birr & Edenderry Urban Areas:

The standard set down for these areas is based on the fact they contain built up areas of substantial size. Concentrations of property may vary but will generally be of limited extent. Examples of such areas might include:

- Developments of housing including terraced and multi-storey dwellings, deck access and blocks of flats
- Areas of older detached and terraced multi-storey dwellings, with a Predominance of property converted to multiple occupation.
- Areas of suburban terraced, semi-detached and detached residential properties.
- Mixed low-risk industrial and residential areas.

The minimum first attendance in these areas shall be one pump in under 12 minutes with a crew of five firefighters on 75% of occasions.

Other Areas:

The minimum first attendance in other areas shall be one pump in 21 minutes with a crew of five firefighters on 75% of occasions.

Outlined on Appendix C is the effective radius of each fire brigade.

4.3 Standards of Fire Cover – Weight of Response

In terms of manning levels in each of the stations in Offaly the table below indicates the manning levels required in each station while operational.

Station	Minimum Levels Required
Tullamore	12
Edenderry	12
Birr	12
Ferbane	8
Clara	8
	52

Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry are considered 2 pump stations, and the remainder are considered 1 pump stations. The manning levels required are based on 8 firefighters in one pump stations and 12 in 2 pump stations to guarantee the availability of 5 firefighters in one pump stations and 9 in two pump stations.

4.4 Fire Service Performance Indicators

4.4.1 National Performance Indicators

The following indicators are recorded nationally and appear in the LGMSB Service Indicators in Local Authorities reports

FI: Fire Service Mobilisation

The following **indicator** is presented in the service indicators report:

- A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire
- B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire
- C. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other emergency incidents
- D. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other emergency incidents

The time taken is measured from the time of the fire call-out (i.e. the notification of the location of the fire) until the time when the vehicle leaves the station. In the case of retained fire services, time of the call-out should be taken as the time of the activation of the alerters

F2: Percentage of Attendances at Scenes

The following **indicator** is presented in the service indicators report:

- A. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes
- B. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes
- C. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes
- D. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes
- E. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes
- F. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes

“attendances at scene” refers to the arrival of the first fire tender at the scene of an incident. Again, this time is measured from the time of the fire call-out in the case of the retained fire services, time of call-out shall be taken as the time of activation of alerters.

This indicator is presented as three percentage figures which together should total 100%.

4.4.2 Local Indicator

Weight of Response

- 1. The average number of firefighters on the 1st appliance mobilised to an incident shall be measured for each fire station
- 2. The percentage of incidents in each station where the minimum manning level is not achieved will be recorded.

Section 5.0 Organisation

Offaly County Council is the Fire Authority & Building Control Authority for all of County of Offaly operating under the Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended and the Building Control Act 1990 as amended.

At present the Director of Service for, Roads and Emergency Services is responsible for the Fire Authority of Offaly County Council. The Director of Services for Roads and Emergency Services is the designated officer for the executive functions under the Fire Services Act 1981 as amended and the Building Control Act 1990 as amended (see organisational charts one to four).

It should be noted that the final operations plan is a reserved function under the Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended and has not been delegated to the Director of Service in a formal sense.

The Fire and Rescue Service is organised under the Chief Fire Officer who is a professional technically qualified officer. The following organisational charts represent the organisation of the Fire Service:

- Organisational charts 1 - Offaly County Council Fire and Rescue Service
- Organisational charts 2 – Brigade Reporting Structure
- Organisational charts 3 - Chain of Command
- Organisational charts 4 - Administration

5.1 Senior Fire Officers

There are five senior fire Officers in Offaly Fire Service. These senior officers are all professional technically qualified officers.

- 1 No. Chief Fire Officer (CFO)
- 2 No. Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer (SACFO)
- 2 No. Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO).

5.2 Provision of the Operational Fire Service:

This is provided by crews of retained firefighters reporting to a station officer in each station. The station officers in turn report to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer(s)/Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer(s).

In addition at least one Senior Fire Officer is rostered on-call at all times (24 / 7 / 365), to direct and control emergency incidents, where required. All four Rostered Senior Fire Officers are authorised under Statutory Instrument No. 210 of 1987 as Officers to take control of non fire operations as per Section 27 of the Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended.

The Operational Fire Service in County Offaly is a Retained Fire Service, i.e. firefighters carry a pager and are expected to report to their Fire Station and go mobile to the incident within 5-6 minutes as is the norm for rural counties in Ireland at present.

The five (5no.) Fire Stations are located as follows:

- OY11 - Tullamore
- OY12 - Edenderry
- OY13 - Clara
- OY15 - Birr
- OY16 - Ferbane

Table 5.1 – Breakdown of firefighter personnel

Brigade	Station Officer	Sub-Officer	Driver/ Mechanic	Firefighter	Sub-total
OY11 - Tullamore	1	2	1	8	12
OY12 - Edenderry	1	2	1	8	12
OY13 - Clara	1	1	1	5	8
OY15 - Birr	1	2	1	8	12
OY16 - Ferbane	1	1	1	5	8
Sub-total	5	8	5	34	
Total	52				

Retained firefighters must be available for duty at all times except with the permission of the station officer. This permission is given only in circumstances that will maintain the availability of an adequate crew at all times, including weekends and holidays.

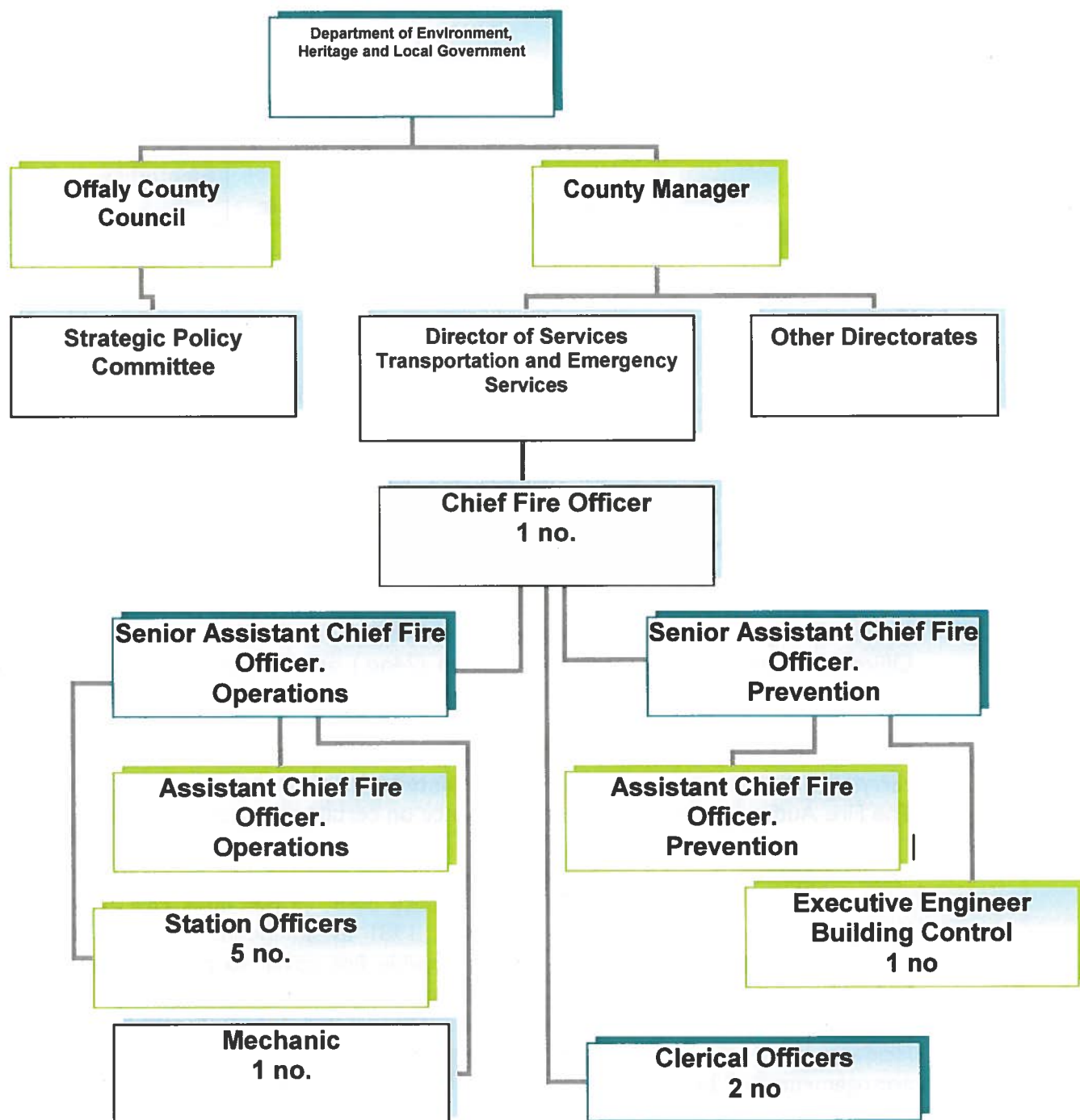
There are fifty two (52no.) Fire Fighters in total including one (1no.) full-time Station Officer in Tullamore and there are eighteen (24no.) operational vehicles and three (3no) reserve/training vehicles at present in the Offaly Fire and Rescue Service.

There is one (1no.) qualified mechanic assigned to the service on a full-time basis carrying out essential and preventative maintenance of appliances and equipment. The Fire Authority contracts out maintenance on certain specialist equipment.

North Tipperary & Laois Fire and Rescue Services provide fire cover to parts of south and east Offaly respectfully on an agency basis, as per Inter Fire Authority arrangements under the Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended. Similarly, Offaly County Council Fire and Rescue Service provide fire cover to parts of Tipperary N.R., Meath, Kildare, Westmeath and Galway. Resources (both equipment and/or personnel) may also be deployed upon a request for assistance to large scale incidents from neighbouring counties as and when the situation arises. Alternative arrangements will be put in place in Offaly by the Roster Senior Fire Officer in this instance.

Kildare County Council provides the statutory obligation as regards call-out of the Fire and Rescue Service for Offaly County Council on an agency basis through the Control Centre attached to Newbridge Fire Station.

Offaly County Council with Fire and Rescue Service Organisation Chart I
(The management structure)



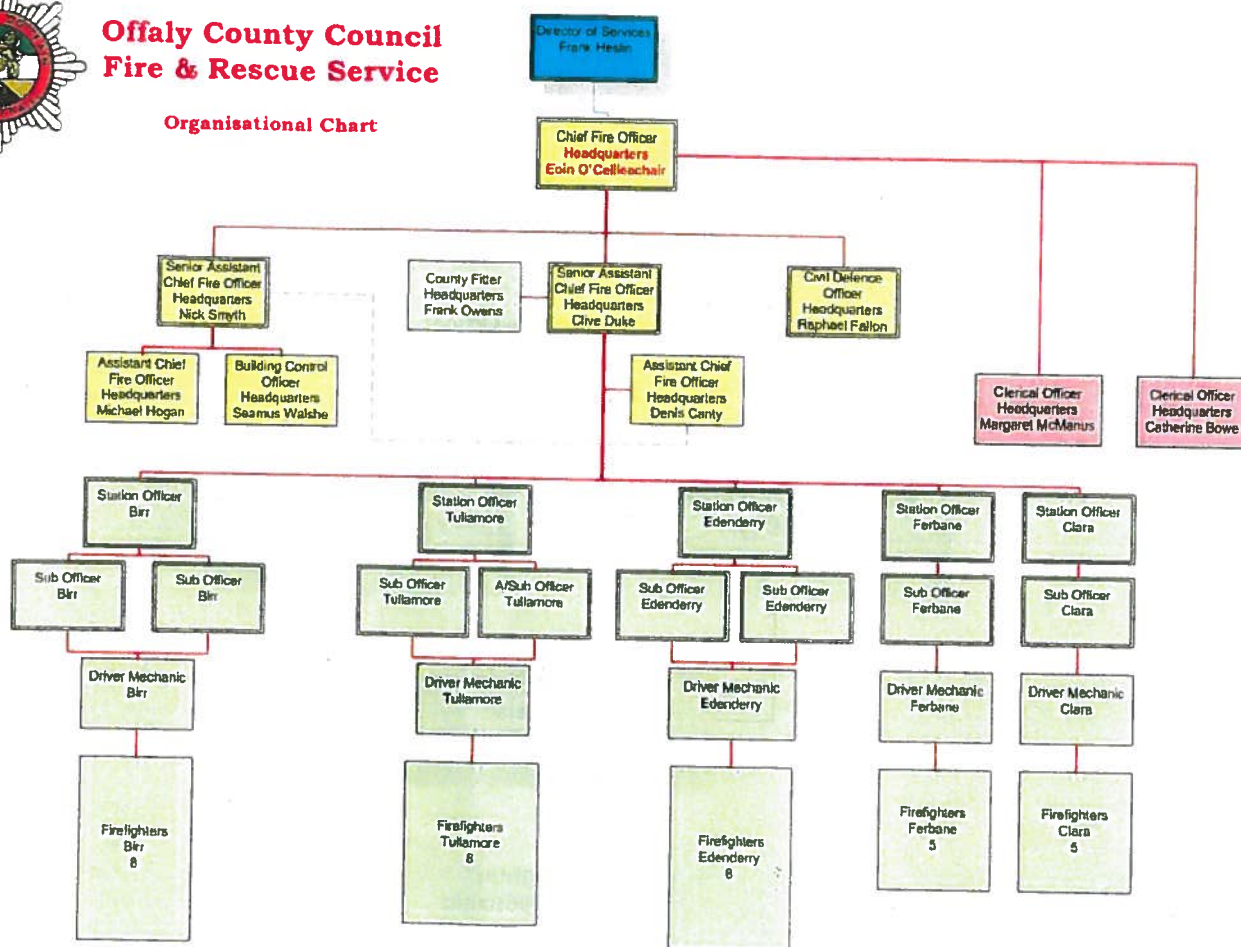
Offaly with Fire and Rescue Service Organisation Chart 2

(The reporting structure)

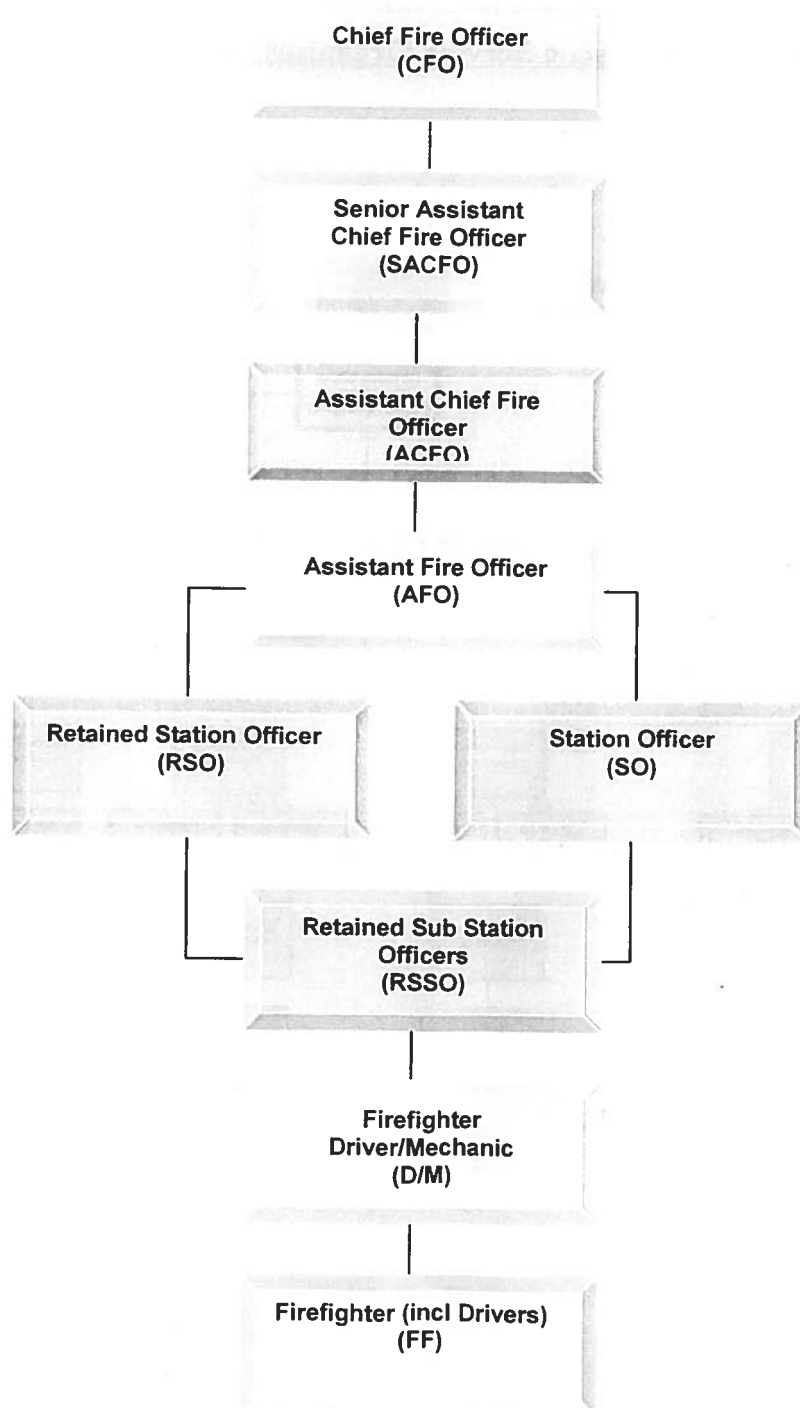


Offaly County Council Fire & Rescue Service

Organisational Chart



Offaly with Fire and Rescue Service Organisation Chart 3
(The chain of command)



Section 6.0 Fire Stations

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service utilises five (5no.) fire stations in the following locations: Tullamore, Birr, Clara, Edenderry, and Ferbane. A brief description of all fire stations is outlined in the following sections.



Figure 6.1, Map of Offaly County showing all Offaly fire stations

Tullamore (OY 11)

Fireground Population: 22,883 (Census 2006)
Total number of calls/annum: 254 (2008 Turn-out Statistics)

Station Officer 1no.
Retained Sub-Station Officer 2no.
Retained Driver/Mechanic 1no.
Retained Firefighters 8no.



Figure 6.2, Photograph of Tullamore Fire Station and Fire Service Headquarters

Tullamore Fire Station, Fire Service Headquarters, Kilcruttin, Tullamore was completed in 1992 and it contains a retained fire station for Tullamore in addition to the county headquarters. It is a purpose built station comprising of five operational bays and a maintenance bay. A specially constructed training centre in Tullamore is used for Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus training. In this, it is possible, in a controlled environment, to create claustrophobic conditions of extreme heat, humidity, and disorientation. This facility is used by all brigades as well as by other fire and rescue services.

The Retained Station accommodation and facilities consists of a five bay appliance room and one maintenance bay and houses two (2no.) WrL appliances, one (1no.) Emergency Tender, one (1no.) HP, one (1no.) WrC (Water Tanker), one (1no.) four-wheel drive, B.A. room, muster bay, maintenance bay, drying room, toilet/shower facilities, locker room, lecture room, breathing apparatus compressor and storage bank, drill yard and Breathing Apparatus training building. The administration section of the building accommodates the Chief Fire Officer as well as the full time senior fire officers and administrative staff.

Edenderry (OY12)

Fireground Population: 11,172 (Census 2006)
Total number of calls/annum: 214 (2008 Turn-out Statistics)

Retained Station Officer	1no.
Retained Sub-Station Officer	2no.
Retained Driver/Firefighter	1no.
Retained Firefighters	8no.

The Edenderry Fire Station is located in St Mary's Road, Edenderry.



Figure 6.3, Photograph of Edenderry Fire Station

This retained station accommodation consists of a four bay appliance room housing one (1no.) WrL appliance, one (1no.) Emergency Tender (ET), One (1no.) WrC (Water Tanker) and one (1no.) four wheel drive vehicle, watch room, muster bay, locker room, lecture room, canteen, toilet/shower facilities, breathing compressor and store. The yard to the rear of the station though confined in space provides for limited training facilities.

Clara (OY13)

Fireground Population: 7,250 (Census 2006)
Total number of calls/annum: 92 (2008 Turn-out Statistics)

Retained Station Officer	1 no.
Retained Sub-Station Officer	1 no.
Retained Driver/Firefighter	1 no.
Retained Firefighters	5 no.



Figure 6.4, Photograph of Clara Fire Brigade

At present the station accommodation consists of a one bay appliance room housing one (1 no.) WvL appliance. There are basic toilet facilities, office/room and store room.

Birr (OY 15)

Fireground Population: 11,126 (Census 2006)
Total number of calls/annum: 117 (2008 Turn-out Statistics)

Retained Station Officer 1no.
Retained Sub-Station Officer 2no.
Retained Driver/Firefighter 1no.
Retained Firefighters 8no.



Figure 6.5, Photograph of Birr Fire Station

Birr Fire Station is located on the McAuley Drive. The station was completed in 2005.

This retained station accommodation consists of a two bay appliance room housing one (1no.) WrL appliance, one (1no.) four-wheel drive, and one (1no) WrC (Water Tanker) lecture room, Station Officer's office, B.A room, store room, breathing apparatus compressor, drill yard and drill tower, drying room, muster bay, canteen and toilet/shower facilities.

Ferbane (OY 16)

Fireground Population: 8,640 (Census 2006)
Total number of calls/annum: 54 (2008 Turn-out Statistics)

Retained Station Officer	1 no.
Retained Sub-Station Officer	1 no.
Retained Driver/Firefighter	1 no.
Retained Firefighters	5 no.



Figure 6.6, Photograph of Ferbane Fire Station

Ferbane fire accommodation consists of a single bay appliance room housing one (1 no.) Vw1 appliance, basic toilet and shower facilities and a small office. Approval has been granted from the Department of Environment for the construction of a new Station and negotiations are currently under way with a view to securing a site.

Section 7.0 Appliances

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service maintain fire appliances in five (5no.) fire stations throughout the county. There are a variety of different types of appliances in operation, i.e. WrL (Water Tender/Ladder), HP (Hydraulic Platform), ET (Emergency Tender), WrC (Water Tanker) and vehicles with off road capabilities such as four-wheel drives.

Table 7.1 details the number of each type of appliance accommodated in each fire station throughout the county as of June 2009. Table 7.2 details the age of the appliances at each fire station throughout the county as of June 2009. Figure 7.2 gives an overview of the current status, in terms of age, with respect to the fire fighting and special appliances in each fire station. In terms of life span, the life span of vehicles would be generally twenty (20no.) years, in particular with respect to the WrL appliances this would be achieved by using the appliance as first response vehicle for fifteen (15no.) years and as second response vehicle for a further five (5no.) years.

Table 7.1 – Number of vehicles in fleet

Brigade	No. of Vehicles/Appliances					
	Mi-Sized WrL⁽¹⁾	WrL⁽¹⁾	ET⁽²⁾	HP⁽³⁾	4x4	WrC⁽⁴⁾
Tullamore(OY11)		2	1	1	2	1
Edenderry (OY12)	1	1	1		1	1
Clara (OY13)		1				
Birr (OY15)		1			1	1
Ferbane (OY16)		1				
Senior Fire Officer					1	
Reserve / Training		4			1	
Mechanic Van					1	
Sub-total number of vehicles	1	10	2	1	7	3
Total number of vehicles						24

[1]WrL = Water Tender/Ladder; [2]ET = Emergency Tender; [3]HP = Hydraulic Platforms; [4]WrC = Water Tanker

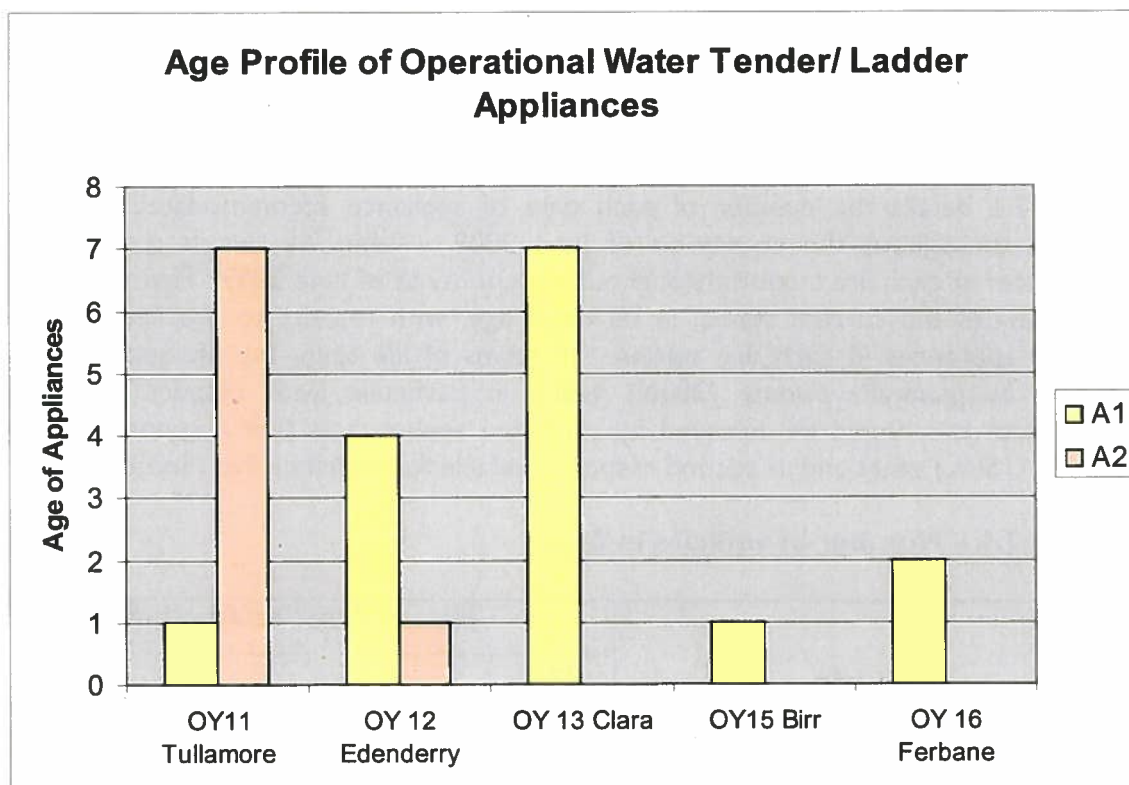


Figure 7.1, Age profile of Water Tender/Ladder Appliances for Offaly Fire Rescue Service

Table 7.2 - Age profile of Offaly Fire and Rescue Service Fleet

Brigade	Appliance Age								
	A1	A2	ET	HP	WT	4WD	4WD	4WD	Van
OY11 Tullamore	1	7	3	5	1	2	9	3	3
OY 12 Edenderry	4	1	18		18	3			
OY 13 Clara	7								
OY15 Birr	1				9	1			
OY 16 Ferbane	2								
Reserve Standby	7	22				21			
Training	23	21							

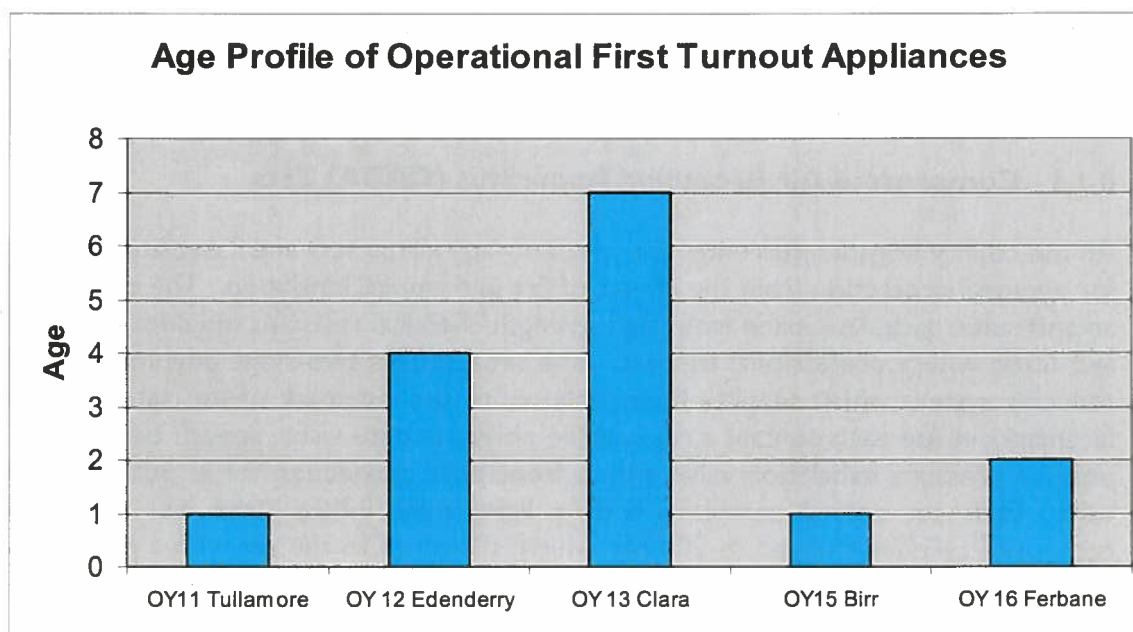


Figure 7.2, Age profile of First Turn-Out Water Tender/Ladder Appliance for Offaly Fire and Rescue Service

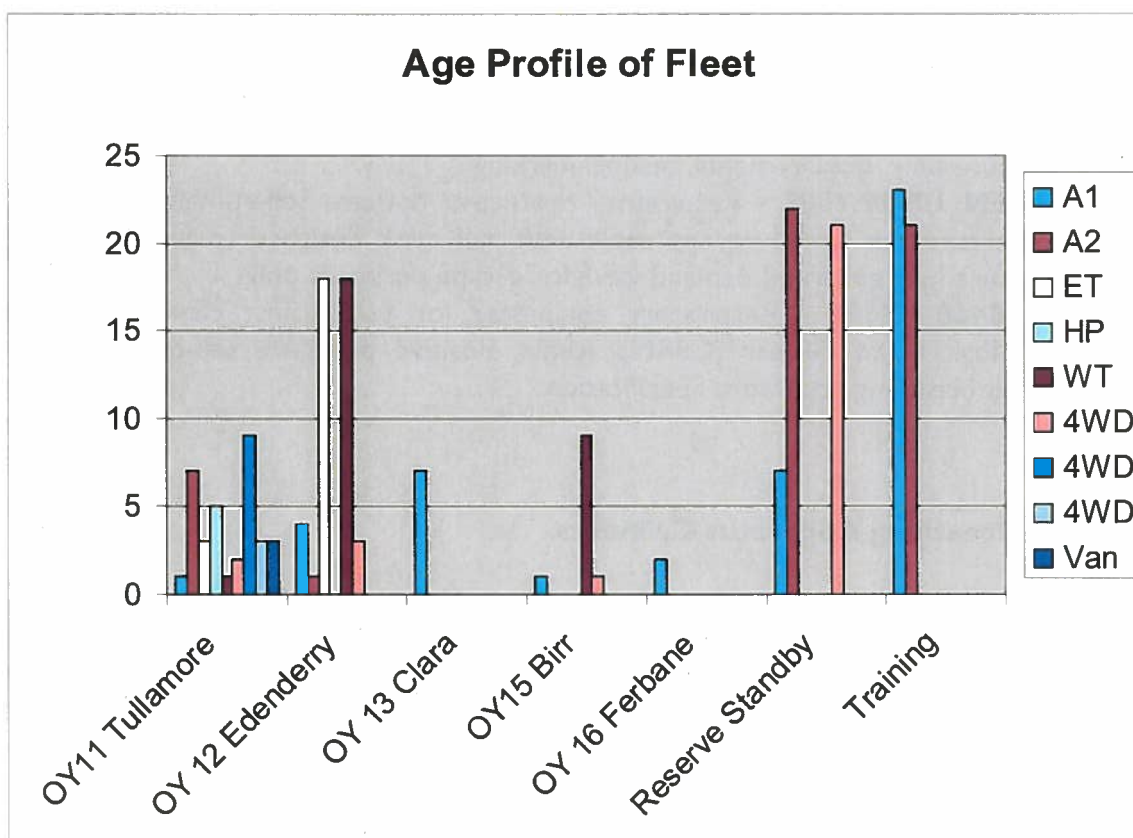


Figure 7.3, Age profile of Offaly Fire and Rescue Service Fleet

SECTION 8.0 Equipment

8.1 Breathing Apparatus Equipment

8.1.1 Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) Sets

All the county brigades currently use breathing apparatus sets and associated equipment for personal protection from the effects of fire and smoke inhalation. The sets comprise an anti-static backplate made from high strength chemical resistant moulded carbon fiber and fitted with a professional harness. The set contains two-stage pneumatic pressure reducing system which supplies breathable air to the facemask of the set. All types of facemasks in use each contain a replaceable polycarbonate visor, speech transmitter and positive pressure exhalation valve with a front port connection for a 'push-in' demand valve. Each set comes complete with a lightweight 9-litre (free air) carbon fibre composite cylinder charged to 200 bar which is secured to the set with a cylinder strap constructed of kevlar material.

The breathing apparatus sets are serviced after use, quarterly and annually and as required to ensure that the equipment is always compliant with the required standards as set out in the following British Standards -

- (a) **BS EN 402:2003** - Respiratory protective devices. Lung governed demand self-contained open-circuit compressed air breathing apparatus with full face mask or mouthpiece assembly for escape. Requirements, testing, marking
- (b) **BS EN 14435:2004** - Respiratory protective devices. Self-contained open-circuit compressed air breathing apparatus with half mask designed to be used with positive pressure only. Requirements, testing, marking
- (c) **BS EN 14529:2005** - Respiratory protective devices. Self-contained open-circuit compressed air breathing apparatus with half mask designed to include a positive pressure lung governed demand valve for escape purposes only
- (d) **BS 8468-1:2006** - Respiratory equipment for use against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) agents. Positive pressure, self-contained, open-circuit breathing apparatus. Specification

8.1.2 Breathing Apparatus Cylinders

All CABA cylinders are lightweight 9-litre carbon fibre composite cylinder manufactured by Saber. The lightweight cylinders must be tested every five years and have a life span of fifteen years. Testing of all cylinders is on-going. A number of BA cylinders have been retained in each station for use with crash rescue air equipment.

8.1.3 Breathing Apparatus Compressor

Three breathing apparatus air compressors are located in Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry. The servicing of the compressors take place as required annually to ensure

that the air quality produced achieves the required standards as set out in the following British Standards -

- (a) BS EN 134: 1998 - Respiratory protective devices. Nomenclature of components
- (b) BS EN 12021: 1999 - Respiratory protective devices. Compressed air for breathing apparatus
- (c) BS EN 13274-2: 2001- Respiratory protective devices. Methods of test. Practical performance tests
- (d) BS EN 402:2003 - Respiratory protective devices. Lung governed demand self-contained open-circuit compressed air breathing apparatus with full face mask or mouthpiece assembly for escape. Requirements, testing, marking
- (e) BS EN 14435:2004 - Respiratory protective devices. Self-contained open-circuit compressed air breathing apparatus with half mask designed to be used with positive pressure only. Requirements, testing, marking
- (f) BS EN 14593-2:2005 - Respiratory protective devices. Compressed air line breathing apparatus with demand valve. Apparatus with a half mask at positive pressure. Requirements, testing, marking
- (g) BS EN 14529:2005 - Respiratory protective devices. Self-contained open-circuit compressed air breathing apparatus with half mask designed to include a positive pressure lung governed demand valve for escape purposes only
- (h) BS EN 1146:2005 - Respiratory protective devices. Self-contained open-circuit compressed air breathing apparatus incorporating a hood for escape. Requirements, testing, marking
- (i) BS EN 137:2006 - Respiratory protective devices. Self-contained open-circuit compressed air breathing apparatus with full face mask. Requirements, testing, marking
- (j) BS 8468-1:2006 - Respiratory equipment for use against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) agents. Positive pressure, self-contained, open-circuit breathing apparatus. Specification

8.1.4 Thermal Imaging Cameras

Thermal imaging cameras supplement a firefighter's sight in low visibility situations such as smoke logged buildings and river rescue at night. The camera can be of benefit in buildings of all sizes. The camera essentially detects infra red radiation emitted by body heat and fires and converts this radiation into a visual image. Each Station is provided with a thermal imaging camera. Thermal imaging cameras are also available in Tullamore BA training facility.

8.2 Hazardous Materials Equipment

8.2.1 Gas Detection

4 no. Gas Detectors are located in Tullamore, Edenderry, Birr and Ferbane fire stations.

8.2.2 Gas Tight Suits & Splash Suits

Ferbane, and Clara, stations are equipped with two (2no) splash suits and Birr and Edenderry with two (2no) gas tight suits and 2 (2no) splash suits. Tullamore station holds four (4no) gas tight suits 6 (6no) splash suits also. All gas tight and splash suits are

serviced as required and Certificates of testing are issued on completion of servicing and recorded accordingly.

8.2.3 Decontamination Showers

After a hazardous material (haz-mat) incident, all suits and equipment used may need to be decontaminated. This is done using decontamination showers. The Tullamore Fire Brigade has one decontamination shower primarily for use by firefighters, and is located at the headquarters station for carriage to an incident, if and when necessary. All Firefighters are trained to use of standard equipment to construct a small scale decontamination area if necessary. If decontamination is required for large numbers of members of the public, the Health Service Executive (HSE) mobile decontamination unit can be requested. The nearest HSE mass public decontamination unit is currently stationed at Midlands Regional Hospital, Portlaoise. In addition, a mass decontamination unit is also held at Mullingar Fire Station.

8.3 Crash Rescue Equipment

Each First Line Appliance including the Emergency Tender in Tullamore has a full complement of crash rescue equipment incorporating hydraulic tools and in some cases air operated tools. The air-operated tools include lifting bags with ancillary equipment. The hydraulic operated tools include engine-driven hydraulic pump, cutters, spreaders, rams and other ancillary equipment. The Emergency Tender stationed in Tullamore has additional heavy rescue equipment. The types and quantities of equipment assigned to each brigade are continuously monitored and are deployed as dictated by operational requirements.

It is the policy of Offaly Fire and Rescue service to ensure that all fire stations in County Offaly have at least one first response unit (Alpha One) which has sufficient equipment to respond initially to Road Traffic Collisions (RTC). In Tullamore and Edenderry where there is an Emergency Tender (ET) deployed, some of this equipment is carried on this appliance. It is considered that in order to provide an efficient and effective response to R.T.C's each first response unit should have the equipment detailed below, as a minimum standard:

- Glass Management Kit
- Chocks, blocks & Wedges
- Powered hydraulic pump
- Manual hydraulic Pump
- 10m hydraulic hose reel
- Single 5M Hydraulic Hose Set
- Cutter
- Spreader or Combi
- Telescopic ram and ram supports

- Pneumatic lifting bags: 1, 10, 20 and 32 tonnes capacity
- Double control unit with pressure regulator
- Pneumatic airlines
- Longboard + head huggers with spider web restraining system
- Set of neck collars
- First aid box
- First responder bag
- Burns kit

The Emergency Tender (OY11 B1) in Tullamore and (OY12 B1) Edenderry would supplement this basic equipment on each appliance with specialist equipment if required at an incident. This extra equipment includes, a high level working platform, a selection of high pressure airbags, a dual powered hydraulic pump, a tirfor winch, hydraulic hose reels, medical rescue equipment, lighting mast, generators and lights. Other items of equipment are carried and are specific to the station turnout areas.

8.4 General Equipment

The crash rescue equipment accommodated on the first response unit has been detailed above. The typical inventory of the general equipment on the first response unit (WrL) is detailed in table 8.4.

Table 8.4 – Standard equipment list for an Water Tender/Ladder Appliance

EQUIPMENT DESCRIPTION	Number of.
Hose length 70mm	16
Hose lengths 45mm	4
Hose reels	2
Branches	Selection of
Key & bar	1
Standpipe	3
False spindle	1
Suction hose 100mm	4
Suction keys (pair)	2
Collecting head	1
Portable pump	1
Ladder 13.5m	1
Ladder 10.5m/9m	1
Short extension	1
Roof ladder	1
Foam equipment- Low Exp. Branch	1
Foam equipment - AFFF foam (litres)	100
B.A. sets complete	4
B.A. cylinders (spare)	4
B.A. control boards + tabard + whistle	1
B.A. guidelines + set tallies	1
Hearth kit – ground sheets	1
Chimney rods	9
Chimney scrapers	2
Stirrup pumps	1
Hose ramps	2
Crash rescue equipment	Yes (selection of)
Salvage sheets (ground sheets)	2
Shovels	2
Spades	1
Yard brushes	2
Buckets	2
Fire extinguishers Dry Powder	1
Fire extinguishers Foam	1
Fire extinguishers CO2	1
Fire blankets	2

Table 8.4 contd.

EQUIPMENT DESCRIPTION	Number of.
Lighting generators (onboard/portable)	1 (E.T.)
Lighting reels	Yes (selection of)
110V lights (tripod and ground)	Selection of scene lights
Ceiling hooks	1
Breech dividing	1
Breech collecting	1
General Purpose Rescue lines	3
Petrol jerry cans	1
Hose slings (beckett)	2
Accident warning signs	4
Traffic cones/bollards	Yes, Selection of rigid and collapsible
Amber/Blue flashing units (handheld)	4
Blue flashing units	8
Bolt cutters	1
Large tools (crowbar, sledge, small axe, large axe etc.)	Selection of
Small tools (hammer, saw etc.)	Selection of
Towing chains	1
Hand lamps	6
Safety glasses/goggles	2
Hand portable radios	4-6
First Aid – First Responder Bag	1
Burns Kit	1
Lifejackets	2-4

SECTION 9.0 Water Supplies

Each Water Tender/Ladder Appliance (WrL) carries one thousand and eight hundred (1,800no.) litres of water in an on-board tank. This typically provides a twenty (20no.) minute water supply to one high pressure hose-reel and is likely to be capable of extinguishing most room fires, vehicle fires, small out-house fires, rubbish fires, chimney fires, roof space fires, etc. Other fire fighting appliances carry varying amounts of water. Where water mains, open source supplies or stored water supplies are available, each WrL appliance has the capability to pump thirty-eight (38no.) litres per second from a fixed pump or a minimum of nineteen (19no.) litres per second from a light portable pump. Water Tankers carrying approximately nine thousand (9,000no.) litres are based in Tullamore Birr and Edenderry Fire Stations to assist in rural fires and other fires where local water supplies may be deficient.

Each Fire Brigade surveys the condition, accessibility, water flow and marking, of all public fire hydrants in its operational area on a regular basis. Responsibility for the provision, care and maintenance of all water supplies i.e. hydrants, rests with the Sanitary Services Section of the Local Authority. Each fire brigade is familiar with the public piped water supply in each area and reasonably familiar with most open sources..

The role of maintaining adequate public water supplies for fire-fighting purposes is the role of the Sanitary Authority of Offaly County Council as per Section 29 of Fire Services Act 1981 as amended.

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service also advise on requirements for water supply for commercial and housing developments when dealing with planning referrals and Fire Safety Certificates.

SECTION 10.0 Training

10.1 Introduction

Section 15 of the Fire Services Act 1981 as amended, places a statutory duty on all fire authorities to make arrangements for the efficient training of personnel in the Fire Service. The Fire Services Council can assist fire authorities with specialised courses under its annual training programme. The primary responsibility for the overall training of brigades rests with the individual authority.

In general training there are three levels of training in accordance with Department Guidelines

- National training courses provided for Junior Officers and Senior Officers by the Fire Services Council, a statutory body established under the Fire Services Act, 1981, to provide training to Fire Service personnel.
- Centralised training courses provided at County level.
- Local Brigade training.

10.2 Senior Officer Training

The Fire Services Council provides training courses for senior officers. Courses for senior officers are delivered both in Ireland and England. The current status of senior officer training/specialist training is detailed in table 10.1 and table 10.2.

Senior officer courses available:

- (a) Operational Foundation/Induction Training
- (b) Breathing Apparatus Wearer
- (c) Breathing Apparatus Instructor
- (d) Operational Command
- (e) Senior Command
- (f) Incident Command System

Table 10.1* - Senior Officer Training Courses

Grade	Operational Foundation/ Induction Training	Breathing Apparatus Wearer	Breathing Apparatus Instructor	Operational Command	Senior Command	Incident Command System
CFO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SACFO	Yes -ALL	Yes -ALL	Yes -(one)	Yes -ALL	Yes -ALL	Yes -ALL
ACFO	Yes ALL	Yes (1)		Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)

* - This is the current status of training of Senior Officers dated June 2009; this will change with future retirements etc.

Senior officer specialist/instructor courses available:

- Hazardous Materials (HAZ-MAT)
- Road Traffic Collision Instructor (RTCI)
- Methods of Instruction (MOI)
- Breathing Apparatus Instructor (BAI)
- Compartment Fire Behaviour Instructor (CFBI)
- First Responder Course
- Incident Command System Instructors(ICS)

Table 10.2* - Senior Officer Specialist/Instructors Training Courses

Courses	Grade		
	CFO	SACFO (2)	ACFO (2)
Operational Foundation/ Induction Training	Yes	Both	Both
Breathing Apparatus Wearer	Yes	Both	One
Breathing Apparatus instructor	Yes	One	
Compartment Fire Behaviour Instructor		One	
Operational Command	Yes	Both	One
Senior Command	Yes	Both	One
Methods of Instruction	Yes		
Hazardous Materials	Yes	One	
Road Traffic Collision Instructor		One	
First Responder Course	Yes	Both	One
Incident Command System Instructor	Yes	One	

* This is the current status of training of senior officers dated June 2009; this will change with future training etc.

Some of the courses listed above have been completed by the Senior Fire Officers for Offaly Fire and Rescue Service. Other officers, both senior and junior, have completed some of these courses as part of the ongoing updating and improvement of the service to the public and as positions become available, more courses will be undertaken.

10.3 Junior Officer Training

The Fire Services Council provides training courses for Junior Officers including Station Officer, Sub-Station Officer and Driver Mechanics. The current status of Junior Officer and Driver Mechanics training/specialist training is detailed in tables 10.3 and 10.4

Junior Officer courses available:

- Unit I & Unit II (emphasising command & control, special incident procedures, methods of instruction etc.)

Table 10.3* - Junior Officer Training Courses

No. of Junior Officers*	Unit I*	%	Unit II*	%
13	13	100%	11	84%
RSO – 5no.	5	100%	5	100%
RSSO – 8no.	8	100%	5	63%

* This is the current status of training of junior officers dated September 2009; this will change with future retirements etc.

Junior officer specialist courses available:

- Hazardous Materials (HAZ-MAT)
- Compartment Fire Behaviour Instructor (CFBI)
- Road Traffic Collision Instructor (RTCI)
- Breathing Apparatus Instructor (BAI)
- Brigade Instructor (BI)
- First Responder Course (FRC)
- Advanced Driving Course (ADC)
- Incident Command System (ICS)
- Pump Operators Instructor (POI)

Table 10.4* - Junior Officer Training Courses

No. of Junior Officers	Haz-Mat	CFBI	RTCI	BI	BAI	POI
13	3	1	4	2	5	1
RSO – 5no.**	3	1	3	0	2	1
RSSO – 8 no.	0	0	1	2	3	0

* This is the current status of training of junior officers dated June 2009; this will change with future retirements etc.

** Including one (1 no) full time Station Officer, Tullamore.

10.4 Driver Training

All drivers must have passed the appropriate Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government driving test and have obtained the appropriate to drive HGV vehicles. A person holding a Class C vehicle licence is qualified to drive a Fire Appliance. The process involved in becoming a qualified experienced driver is outlined below:

- 1) Successful completion of theory test for provisional C licence.
- 2) Students are provided with the opportunity to take lessons, generally provided by brigade driving instructor(s). In parallel to taking lessons, the driver is encouraged to get as much driving experience as possible during Station time in the presence of an experienced driver.
- 3) Following successful completion of the test for the C licence, the driver should acquire operational experience in the following order:
 - Practising during drill nights and driving return journey from incidents
 - When completed a predetermine number of hours of both day and night driving the driver will then be given an EFAD Course (Emergency Fire Appliance Driving). Upon successful completion of same the driver will be permitted to drive under blue light conditions.
- 4) If the driver does not successfully complete the test or the EFAD Course, the driver will generally be afforded a second opportunity. On an individual basis Offaly County Council may allow for further lessons to facilitate passing, upon consideration of advice from the driving instructor.
- 5) A 3-Day Pump Operator Course is held as required for drivers.

10.5 Firefighter Training

10.5.1 Recruit Training

The recruit courses provide the basic “building block” of fire service training. The syllabi are based on modular format, which provide for a core practical fire fighter module together with five other specialised modules. The modules are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Recruit Course | (2 weeks) |
| 2. Breathing Apparatus Wearers Course | (2 weeks) |
| 3. Road Traffic Collision Course | (3 day) |
| 4. Pump Operator Course | (3 day) |
| 5. Hazardous Materials Course | (3 day) |
| 6. Emergency Medical First Responder | (1 week) |

The practical difficulty of the availability of retained personnel for prolonged in service training is recognised and the layout of the modules will facilitate flexibility in the

provision of courses. However, it is recommended that all personnel complete these modules within a five year period.

10.5.2 Station Level Training

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service brigades undertake weekly training in all stations. This consists generally of checking and maintenance of equipment, standard drills, exercises and carrying out familiarisation visits to high fire risk sites. The Department guidelines on fire station training programmes form the basis of in-Station training. Training carried out in stations on a weekly basis is as set out in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines.

10.5.3 Specialist Fire Fighter Training

Table 10.5 details the specialist training carried out by firefighters.

Table 10.5 – Specialist firefighter training courses

Courses	Number of personnel attended		
	Year 2008	Year 2007	Year 2006
Breathing Apparatus Initial Wearers	3	10	9
BA Refresher Training	54	0	50
Pump Operators			27
RTC		13	29
Manual Handling Refresher		47	
First Responder			15
First Responder Refresher (3day)	24		
Compartment Fire Behaviour	22	24	
Health Care Provider AED	44		
Compressed Air Foam Systems	21	8	
Incident Command	45		

SECTION 11.0 Communications

11.1 Response to Calls

Section 10(2)(C) of the Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended, requires the Fire Authority to make adequate provision for the reception of and response to calls for the assistance of the fire brigade. In order to fulfil this function Offaly County Council and Kildare County Council share a Control Centre attached to Newbridge Fire Station. It is envisaged that in the future control for Offaly County Council will be through “Eastern Regional Control Centre” (ERCC) at Tara Street Fire Brigade, Dublin.

All requests for the attendance of the Fire Brigade are directed via the “999/112” Emergency Telecom System to the Kildare Control Centre in Newbridge. Control uses a computerised system (involving an address database, a log of all available appliances and a locally pre-determined attendance for each address) to determine the appropriate response. The appropriate fire appliances hence fire stations are then alerted by Control and a printed message is sent out to their station(s).



Figure 11.1, The European Union emergency response number

It is important to note that while Control offers a mobilisation service and communication; it has no command and control function. Command is always exercised by the Incident Commander (IC) as defined by the Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended. Offaly County Council retains control of its own Fire and Rescue Service. Brigade Orders relating to contact with Control have been issued to each Retained Station Officer and are available at each fire station. Brigade Orders are mandatory instructions issued to all firefighters by the Chief Fire Officer.

11.2 Communications Equipment

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service utilises a broad range of communications equipment in order to deliver an effective and efficient service, see figure 11.1. The equipment utilised and the location of such equipment is detailed below.

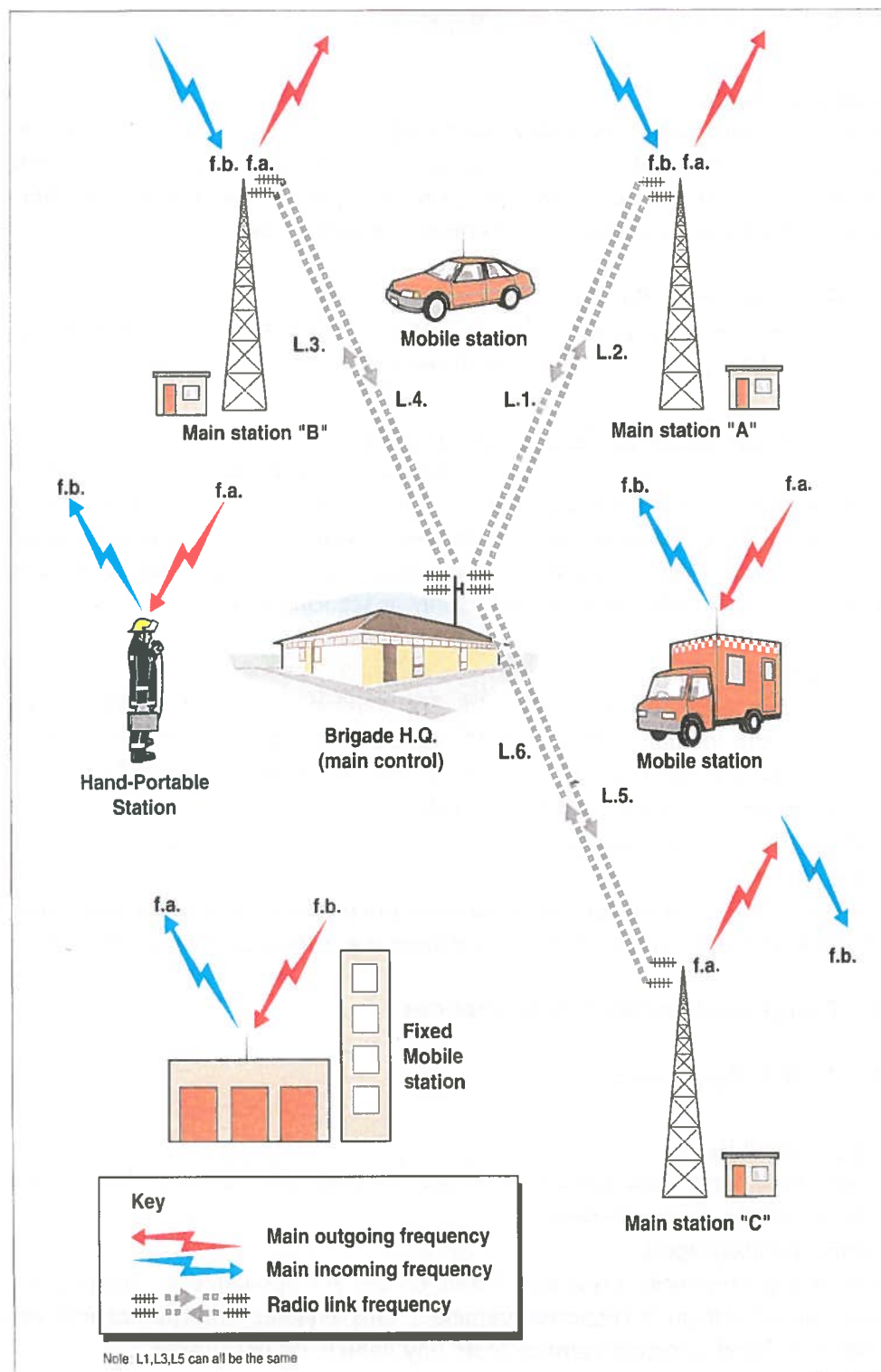


Figure 11.2 – Diagrammatic view of fire brigade radio communications

11.2.1 Equipment located in Fire Stations

- Base VHF Radio

This is a mains operated radio operating on OFFALY's unique frequencies, one in each fire station. This radio is essential in maintaining communication with both the appliances on the road as well as Control. Offaly Fire and Rescue Service has its main radio mast is based on the Wolftrap, Slieve Bloom.

- UHF Handportable Radios

All stations are equipped with a minimum of 6 (6no.) intrinsically safe UHF handportable radios for use on the fireground.

- MG4 Transmitter/Pager System for Firefighters

The MG4 transmitter will set off the firefighters alerters on receipt of communication from the Control radio in the event of an incident. Each fire station has an MG4 transmitter system in the station that is activated remotely by the Kildare Control and is activated after receiving the "112" emergency call. The MG4 transmitters can also be activated locally at station level.

- Fax Machine

Kildare Control currently use the fax machine to send details of the incident, including the incident address, PDA, special requirements, to each station and may also be used in the event that chemical data is requested from Control in the event of an incident. Control will fax the relevant chemical data to the station and this will then be relayed by radio to the appliance.

- Telephone

The telephone is used for administration purposes as well as for communication with those who have mobile phones at incident e.g. senior and junior fire officers.

11.2.2 Equipment located in appliances

11.2.1.1 WrL Appliances

- VHF Mobile Radio

These radios are used to relay messages through the repeaters located at:
The Wolftrap, Slieve Bloom.

- UHF/VHF Repeater

There are UHF/VHF repeaters fitted to the A1 appliance in Tullamore and also to the Senior Officer's response vehicle. This enables communication with the VHF radio via hand portable remote from any vehicle or base radio.

- Mobile Phone

Each fire station has a mobile phone and is also used in the relaying of sensitive communication via a secure network.

- Hand-Held UHF

These mobile radios are used by the firefighters for fireground communication and are ATEX approved for use in hazardous environments.

11.2.1.2 Emergency Tender Appliances

- UHF/UHF Repeater

As well as the communications equipment detailed for WrL appliances, the AI WrL (OY11AI) appliance has a UHF/UHF repeater. This repeater can be used for extended fire ground communications between the firefighters during the course of the incident.

11.2.1.3 Other Appliances

- VHF Mobile Radio

These radios are used to relay messages through the repeaters.

- Hand-held UHF

These mobile radios are used by the Fire Fighters for fireground communication.

- Hand-held UHF (Intrinsically safe)

These mobile radios are intrinsically safe and are used by the firefighters for fireground communication in adverse and toxic atmospheres.

11.2.3 Equipment used by Fire Fighters

- Alerters

The alerter is carried by all firefighters and is the means by which the firefighter is informed of an incident. The MG4 transmitter relays the message from the Control radio to the alerter. The alerters are programmed to recognise only the signal from the MG4 transmitter in their home station.

11.2.4 Equipment used by Senior Officers

- Pagers

All Rostered Senior Fire Officers carry a pager. This allows for telephone communication with the paging service that has national coverage. This telephone communication is then relayed via a test stream to the pager by the service.

- Mobile Phones

All Senior Fire Officers carry mobile phones. These can be used for communication with the station officer and other parties during an incident.

- VHF Mobile Radio

All Rostered Senior Fire Officers have VHF mobile radios permanently mounted in their private vehicles.

- Ruggedised Laptops

The practicability and functionality of ruggedised laptops is currently being investigated for the use of Senior Fire Officers on the fire ground with respect to Health & Safety, Risk Assessment and Command +Control requirements during an incident.

- Satellite Phones

The practicability and functionality of satellite phones is currently being investigated for the use of Senior Fire Officers for their use on the fire ground with respect to Health & Safety, Risk Assessment and Command + Control requirements during an incident.

SECTION 12.0 Operational Procedures

12.1 Overview

Operational practices and procedures are generally in accordance with the Fire Service Drill Books, Fire Service Training Manuals and Manuals of Firemanship and as specified in Brigade Orders from time to time (Brigade Orders are mandatory instructions issued to all firefighters by the Chief Fire Officer). Breathing Apparatus procedures are in accordance with B.A. Procedures as issued by Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and/or Fire Services Council

Firefighters carry a pocket alerter which can be activated by Control via a transmitter in their home station. They must be in a position to turn out the appropriate fire appliance from their station within a period of five minutes. Communication is maintained between appliances and Control on the designated Offaly County Council radio frequency. Relevant messages e.g. 'mobile to incident', 'in attendance' 'defensive/offensive mode' and 'mobile and available' etc. are passed from appliances to Control so that the status of all vehicles is known at all times.

Pre-determined attendances (PDA's) have been established for various incidents and types of fires as set out in Control Room Procedures for Call-Out System. These P.D.A.'s are included in Appendix A.

Predetermined arrangements for Major Emergencies are set out in the overview of the Major Emergency Plan detailed in Section 11.4 and in appendix A.

Junior officers may seek the advice/attendance of a senior officer at the scene of any incident.

Formal pre-fire planning, i.e. drawing up plans of premises which summarises the critical aspects of a building as regards fire operations is also undertaken. In addition, regular fire brigade exercises and familiarisation visits are conducted involving one or more adjacent brigades usually in high-risk facilities.

12.2 Incident Command System

Offaly Fire Service operates the National Incident Command system. The incident command system provides for the safe, effective and efficient management and deployment of resources, both human and material at all types of emergency incidents.

Key elements of the system are:

- (a) A standard structure for organising resources, which assists decision-making and encourages effective communications and delegation.
- (b) Dynamic risk assessment process that ensures safety is at the forefront of command decisions and is clearly understood and demonstrated.
- (c) A structured support system to assist the incident commander.
- (d) A national framework, describing tasks and performance standards expected of emergency incident commanders.
- (e) Consistent methodology and terminology, for exercising operational command, which will contribute to safer systems of work, both in training and at operational incidents.
- (f) Recognition of the role of performance management and review, which in the operational context, centres particularly on post incident debrief procedures.
- (g) Changes to a learning organisation that reviews its performance and strives for continuous improvement through risk informed methods.

12.3 Operations of an Emergency Nature (non fire emergencies)

Section 25 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states:

"A Fire Authority may carry out or assist in any operations of an emergency nature, whether or not a risk of fire is involved, and a Fire Authority may accordingly make such provision for the rescue or safeguarding of persons and protection of property as it considered necessary for the purposes of that function."

The principle "operations" to which Section 25 applies are as follows:

(a) Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's)

Each fire station is provided with an appliance with crash rescue capability. This has been outlined in detail in Section 6.0 Equipment.

(b) Flooding

Brigades respond to rescue persons trapped by flooding and houses in danger of being flooded, and to assist the Engineering Services of Offaly County Council in flood emergencies, if required.

The Offaly County Council non-fire emergency contact telephone number is Local 1890 750 750.

(c) Hazardous Materials

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service has made provision for the response to incidents involving hazardous materials. Offaly Fire and Rescue Services Control Centre at Newbridge Fire Station is provided with a computerised database of known chemicals (Chemdata). This database provides details such as recommended emergency actions, environmental issues and first aid action etc.

(d) Spillages/Pollution Incidents

The Fire and Rescue Service response to calls, generally from An Garda Síochána, members of the public or the local authority road overseer, to assist in making roads safe after the spillages of oil, etc. Each first line appliance has a limited amount of oil dispersant and applicator to handle small spillages of oil/petroleum e.g. at RTC's.

(e) Storms/Severe Weather

Offaly County Council responds to calls for aspects of severe weather. Offaly Fire & Rescue Service provides training on the use of chainsaws to a small number of firefighters in Tullamore and Edenderry. Appropriate personal protective clothing has been issued to each of these stations. It is not the policy of this Fire Authority to clear fallen trees from roads. This is a specialist skill that is currently not available within this Fire Authority. The Fire & Rescue Service will however respond to calls where persons are reported.

(f) General Rescue

The Fire and Rescue Service responds to a number of other non-fire emergencies including assisting the national ambulance service – when requested.

(g) Agreements between other Fire Authorities

Offaly Fire and Rescue Service has agreements with

- Laois Fire and Rescue Service,
- Kildare Fire and Rescue Service,
- Meath Fire and Rescue Service,
- Westmeath Fire and Rescue Service,
- Galway Fire and Rescue Service,
- North Tipperary Fire and Rescue Service,

to provide emergency cover for parts of each others areas as and when the needs arise.

12.4 Special Services

The Fire and Rescue Service are available and provide their personnel, equipment, training and professional expertise in assisting the community in times of special need e.g. delivery of potable water and assisting other emergency services.

12.5 Major Emergency Management

12.5.1 Background

The implementation of the new Framework for Major Emergency Management has been approved by Government decision. The Irish Government has also approved a two-year Major Emergency Development Programme 2006-2008 (MEDP) to allow for the structured migration from previous arrangements to an enhanced level of preparedness via the new emergency management process.

12.5.2 Definition of a Major Emergency

"A Major Emergency is any event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the principal emergency services in the area in which the event occurs, and requires the activation of specific additional procedures and the mobilisation of additional resources to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response."

12.5.3 Current Situation

The Offaly County Major Emergency Plan which was published on September 30th 2008 complies with the arrangements set out in the 2006 document: *A Framework for Major Emergency Management*, and is interoperable with the plans of the other Principal Response Agencies, An Garda Síochána, and the Health Service Executive. The Major Emergency Plan of each agency sets out that agency's response, as well as its contribution to the combined response of all agencies.

12.5.4 Purpose

The Purpose of the new framework is to put in place arrangements which will enable the three Principal Response Agencies (PRAs), The Local Authorities, An Garda Síochána, and the Health Service Executive to co-ordinate their efforts whenever a Major Emergency occurs.

A responsibility rests with Offaly County Council to implement fully the requirements of Major Emergency Development Programme 2006-2008. Such responsibilities also rest with An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive, and the other relevant agencies in other Government Departments such as Defence and Justice etc.

12.5.5 Organisation

12.5.5.1 Overall

The overall MEDP project organisation is broken down as follows:

- National Level
- Regional Level
- Local Authority Level

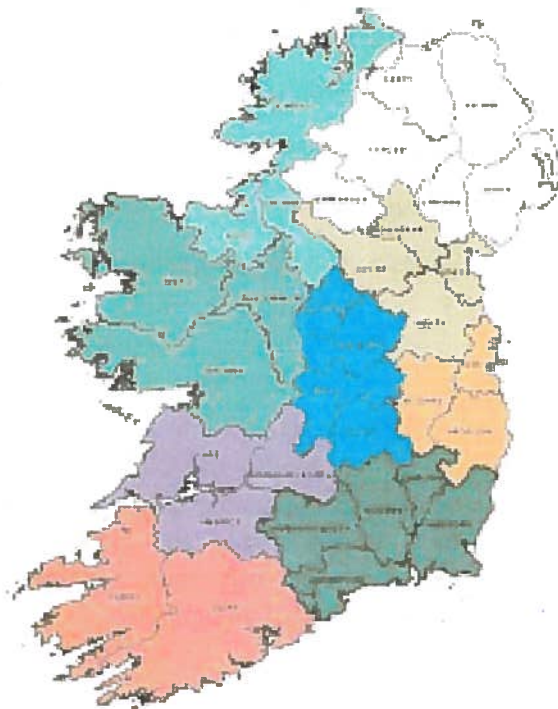


Figure 12.2, Map of Eight (8no.) Major Emergency Management Regions

12.5.5.2 National Level

National Steering Group

National Working Group

12.5.5.3 Regional Level

Regional Steering Groups

Regional Working Groups

Local Authority Level

Responsibility for overseeing the Framework implementation within Offaly County Council has been assigned to the Director of Services for the Emergency Services. He will be supported by the Chief Fire Officer, Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer. There will also be appropriate inputs from the other sections of the local authority.

A Major Emergency Management Committee has been established and is chaired by the Director of Service. The Major Emergency Management Committee (MEMC) and will liaise with all departments within Offaly County Council to facilitate maintenance of the plan through updating staff changes, training requirements, and managing and organising exercises.

SECTION 13.0 Fire Prevention

It should be noted that this plan outlines only the arrangements made with regards to fire and emergency operations and does not take account of the substantial volume of fire prevention and fire safety work which is a discretionary power under the Fire Service Act, 1981 as amended carried out by Offaly County Council as a Fire Authority.

The following are discretionary functions under Fire Services Act 1981-

- Advice to Planning Authorities under Section 13 of the Fire Services Act, 1981.
- Advice on fire safety and inspection of existing public premises under Section 18 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, and associated Regulations.
- Inspections of licensed premises under Section 24 of Fire Services Act, 1981, and associated Licensing Acts.
- Recommending fire safety certificate for new buildings, change of use, material alterations and/or extensions to existing buildings under Section 6 of Building Control Act, 1990, and associated Regulations.

Note this a statutory duty under Building Control Act, 1990 currently assigned to the Chief Fire Officer as the principal Building Control Officer with respect to Fire Safety Certificate application assessments and recommendations for either grant or refusal.

- Inspection of petroleum installations, retail and bulk, under Dangerous Substances Act, 1972, and associated Regulations.
- Major emergency management (MEM) and preparation for major emergencies.
- SEVESO II declared premises under Statutory Instrument No. 74 of 2006 'European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations', 2006.

The Fire Service Act, 1981 as amended assigns sole legal responsibility for fire safety in premises onto owner/occupiers of premises.

Offaly County Council Fire and Rescue Service have five (5no.) Senior Fire Officers, including the Chief Fire Officer, who advise on current fire safety standards required for proposed and existing developments. These Senior Fire Officers also carry out inspections of Places of Public Assembly (i.e. nightclubs, pubs and dance halls) and other high-risk premises (i.e. hospitals and nursing homes) in County Offaly.

The number of commercial & multiple housing planning applications dealt with by the Fire and Rescue Service under Planning Acts - in 2008 was two hundred and twenty three (223no.)

In addition, the Senior Fire Officers of Offaly Fire Authority inspected premises under the following legislation:-

- Public Dance Hall Act 1935,
- Licensing Acts (1833-1988),

- Gaming/Lottery Acts 1956-1979,
- Dangerous Substances Act 1972, as amended.
- Dangerous Substances Regulations 1979, as amended.
- Building Control Act 1990, as amended in 2006
- Building Control Regulations 1997, as amended.
- Fire Service Act 1981, as amended.

In 2008, the Fire Authority carried out in excess of One thousand and three hundred and fifty (1350no.) inspections of premises under the above legislation throughout Offaly County.

The Building Control Section of the Building Control Authority of Offaly County Council is operated from the Central Fire Station at Executive Engineer level. Statistics of Building Control inspections of both commercial and domestic developments in County Offaly are available separately from Offaly County Council Building Control Section.

The Fire Authority Senior Fire Officers advise on current Building Regulations, specifically Part B (fire safety) and guidance documents as published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), including fire safety standards required for proposed developments. The statistics for Fire Safety Certificates for recent years are detailed in Table 1.0:

Table 1.0 – Fire Safety Certificates Statistics

YEAR	FIRE SAFETY CERTS. RECEIVED	DEEMED INVALID FIRE SAFETY CERTS.	FURTHER INFORMATION	GRANTED	REFUSED
2008	104	4	10	109	2
2007	132	2	9	115	4
2006	153	4	9	156	0
2005	129	2	54	126	0
2004	125	8	45	107	0

SECTION 14.0 Nomenclature

EXTINGUISHING OF A FIRE

"Extinguishing of a fire shall be construed as including the prevention of a fire from spreading" as extracted from in Fire Services Act 1981.

FIRE BRIGADE

"A fire brigade means an organised body of persons trained and equipped for extinguishing fires occurring in buildings and other places and for rescuing persons and property from such fires and includes the vehicles and equipment with which that body is equipped" as extracted from in Fire Services Act 1981.

FIRE SERVICE COUNCIL

This was established under Section 16 of the Fire Services Act, 1981. Among its functions are the provision of training and instruction on a national basis, and, assisting in the preparation of guidelines, codes of practice and fire safety regulations.

FUNCTIONAL AREA

The functional area of Offaly County Council Fire Authority is the administrative area of Offaly County Council as defined in the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1899, and the Local Government (Re-organisation) Act, 1985. The area is sub-divided into geographical areas assigned to particular stations as their areas of responsibility i.e. their 'Fire Ground'.

JUNIOR OFFICER

The term Junior Officer applies to all the retained fire brigade personnel holding a rank of Retained Sub-Station Officer or Retained Station Officer.

MAJOR EMERGENCY

A Major Emergency is any event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the principal emergency services in the area in which the event occurs, and requires the activation of specific additional procedures and the mobilisation of additional resources to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response.

(as extracted from A Framework for Major Emergency Management, November 2006)

OFFALY FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

An organisation of permanent technical and administrative staff and retained fire brigade personnel in Offaly County Council which comprises the Fire Authority which has been established and maintained in accordance with Sections 9 and 10 of the Fire Services Act, 1981 as amended.

SECTION 13.0 Nomenclature contd.

RETAINED PERSONNEL

This refers to the Officers and Firefighters of local fire brigades who are part-time permanent and non-pensionable employees of Offaly County Council in accordance with the Conditions of Employment, Duties, Pay etc., relating to these posts which are determined at National level.

ROSTERED SENIOR FIRE OFFICER

A Senior Fire Officer available to direct and lead the response to fire and emergency incidents twenty-four (24no.) hours a day throughout the year on a rostered basis.

SENIOR FIRE OFFICER

The term Senior Fire Officer applies to any fire brigade personnel holding a rank of Assistant Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer or Chief Fire Officer.

Appendices

Appendix A - Pre Determined Attendances (PDA)

Appendix B - Incidents about which Rostered Senior Fire Officers are notified

Appendix C - County Map indicating the Effective Radius of Each Brigade

Appendix A - Pre Determined Attendances (PDA)

OFFALY PDA

OFFALY
CALLS REFERRED TO OTHER AGENCIES-
Flooding- Offaly Co. Co (I)
Inspection of dangerous TV, aerials, chimneys, etc. - Offaly Co. Co. (I)
Tip fires - Offaly Co. Council (I)
Oil spills - Offaly Co. Council (I)
Fallen E.S.B. lines – Gardai/ESB/Co. Co (I)
Fallen trees-Offaly Co. Co. (I)
NOTE (I) - IWRL if no response or requested by Offaly County Council

PDA FOR FIRE CALLS OFFALY

ONE APPLIANCE WRL ONLY-

Derelict property fires
Bog fires
Chimney fires
Crop fires
Flooding
Minor house fires - cooker etc.
Grass, trees, hedge fires, gorse fires.
Skip fires
Rubbish fires
Calls from security firms or Phone watch
(Note- OIC decide further resources)

**HOUSE FIRES
PERSONS NOT REPORTED**

"Persons not reported"

Tullamore - 2WRLs.

All other stations - 1WRL.

Note: OIC to determine additional resources if required.

HOUSE FIRE "PERSONS REPORTED"

Alert Full Crew.

Refer to PDA for Minor Stations

Turn out - A) Tullamore: 2WRL or 1WRL + 1WRC.

- B) All other stations: 2WRL (call in nearest brigade)

Inform

- Duty Senior Officer, Offaly.

- Midland Ambulance Control & request attendance of at least 1 ambulance
0599358176

- Dial

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

- Tullamore: 1WRL, 1ET.

- All other Stations: 1WRL with cutting gear.

Inform:

- Gardai

- Midland Ambulance Control & request attendance of at least 1 ambulance
- Dial 0599358176

R.T.A "WITH FIRE"

Tullamore: 1WRL, 1ET, 1WRC

- All other Stations: 1WRL with Cutting gear.

Inform

- Gardai

- Senior Officer for Bus/ Chemical RTA only.

- Midland Ambulance Control & request attendance of at least 1 ambulance
- Dial 0579358176

FOREST & BOG FIRES

Bog fires - Tullamore: IWRL & IWRC
All other stations - IWRC (IWRC from Tullamore on request of O.I.C.)
Inform - Bord na Mona after brigade gone out to incident, check manual PDA.
Forest Fires - Tullamore: IWRL & IWRC
All other stations - IWRC (IWRC from Tullamore on request of O.I.C.)
Inform Coillte, Portlaoise: 059-86-21617

SPECIAL RISKS

Boarding & Day Schools
Industrial Premises
Hospitals
Hotels
Train Fires
Church Fires
Discos and Nightclubs
Buildings in the Town centre
Turn Out-Tullamore: 2WRLs, IWRC & IHP
All other stations 2WRLs
Inform Senior Officer –Offaly

ANHRAX ALERT

Alert Crew as Normal
Contact Duty Senior Officer for further instructions.

CHEMICAL INCIDENT + R.T.A

Turn Out - Tullamore IWRL, IWRC & IET.
- All other stations 2WRLs.
Inform Senior Officer Offaly.
Note: Officer in Charge will decide & request additional attendance.

FIRE BOMB SCARE CALLS

Inform - Local Garda or nearest Divisional Headquarters.
Send - One appliance on standby - only on direct request from Gardai.
Inform - Ambulance Control
- Dial 0599358176

BREATHING APPARATUS EMERGENCY

On receipt of **"BREATHING APPARATUS EMERGENCY"** MESSAGE from O.I.C: -

Control will mobilise - at least 1 ambulance

(More than 2 wearers = 2 ambulances)

- 2 nearest pumping appliances

- 2 Senior Officers

- Specialist equipment requested by O.I.C

MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN

SEND:

3 Water Tenders,

Emergency Tenders,

Duty Senior Officer,

INFORM / MOBILISE:

Chief Fire Officer,

Local Authority Key Personnel – See Major Emergency Plan

Civil Defence Officer.

Off-Duty Control Operators

Confirm with Garda & Ambulance of MEP,

Note: OIC To determine any additional resources.

Special Notes

At any given time the Control room in Kildare may have special standing orders which they would put into practice when the need arises.

For example if control room receives a call for a fire in Kilcormac turnout area they will automatically alert next nearest station first then alert kilcormac to respond as per the standing order...

It should be noted that PDAs are under constant review and will be amended as and when operational needs require

Appendix B

Incidents about which Rostered Senior Fire Officers are notified

The rostered Senior Fire Officer is to be notified via the Mobilisation Control Centre, without delay, in the event of any of the following incidents occurring: -

1. Incident involving three (3) or more Class B appliances.
2. On declaration of a Major Emergency
3. Incidents where the Officer-in-Charge considers that the Major Emergency plan may require implementation.
4. At the request of the OIC (Officer-in-Charge) of an incident
5. On declaration of a Major Incident.
6. Incidents in large Oil/LPG/Gas bulk storage site.
7. Seveso Sites (ESB, Rhode and Isotron, Tullamore as of the 10/03/06)
8. Any incident where operational staff are removed to hospital.
9. Any occasion whereby the fire authority is heavily committed to a number of incidents, which seriously effects fire cover.
10. Any occurrence involving operational staff in a dispute with the Regional Control Centre regarding procedures or mobilisation
11. Any incident that extends beyond three (3) hours.
12. Incidents in which hazardous materials are involved.
13. Incidents resulting in injury or loss of life due to fire.
14. Incidents resulting in large-scale property damage.
15. Incidents at which arson is suspected.
16. Large-scale road/rail/air incidents.
17. Three or more appliances are been mobilised outside the fire authority area.

