



SAFETY AND ASSURANCE

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Original Author/Role	Karen Lockhart – Head of Health and Safety
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Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Change	Who	When
1.0	First version issued as Health and Safety Policy	Karen Lockhart, Head of Health, and Safety	05/06/2013
1.0	First version issued as Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	08/10/2014
2.0	Reviewed and updated	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	11/12/2015
3.0	Reviewed and updated	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	08/06/2018
4.0	Reviewed and updated	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	03/04/2019
5.0	Reviewed and updated, issued as Health and Safety Policy	Jim Holden, Senior HS Adviser	09/07/2021
6.0	Reviewed and updated, to include consultation feedback	Mark Penman, Senior HS Adviser	09/02/2023
7.0	Reviewed and updated	Annie Wakeham, HS Adviser; Derrick Watson, Senior HS Adviser	07/02/2024
8.0	Annual review	Jonathan Boal, HS Adviser	09/01/2025

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The SFRS recognises that our staff are central to the delivery of our service. We are committed to sensible and proportionate health and safety management that recognises the need to balance operational risk against firefighter and public safety.

This policy is inclusive of and supports the content outlined within the [Safety and Assurance Strategy 2022-2026](#), through the following five themes:

1. Safety Culture

We Will: Implement a safety culture framework, providing visible leadership with defined role specific requirements to support the [safety value](#) of the SFRS.

We Aim to: Enhance a positive safety culture, challenge unsafe behaviours, be open to safety discussions and confident in reporting of health and safety events.

2. Safety Training

We Will: Implement a safety training framework, providing staff with training modules to be completed.

We Aim to: To increase safety awareness and understanding, ensuring our staff are competent within their roles.

3. Safety Communication and Engagement

We Will: Communicate with staff, at all levels, and their representatives, ensuring open engagement co-operation and feedback.

We Aim to: Enhance our communication arrangements to include consultation and engagement with feedback to stakeholders.

4. Risk Management


We Will: Continue to identify risks and ensure sensible and proportionate arrangements to manage health and safety. Ensure staff at specific risk are not disadvantaged.

We Aim to: Develop and train staff to be competent in their role, identify risks and implement control measures, creating a safe working environment.

5. Continual Improvement

We Will: Develop support reviews and monitor the effectiveness of health and safety arrangements to maintain continual improvement and performance.

We Aim to: Enhance our arrangements through organisation learning and assurance processes, recognising safe behaviour and maintaining improvement through our HSIP.

Signature (Chief Officer): 

Date: 7 January 2025

Signature (Chair of Board): 

Date: 7 January 2025

2. INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is committed to the continual improvement and compliance with its legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974, and other supporting regulations, to ensure the safety of our staff and others who may be affected by our activities in the communities we serve.

3. SCOPE

To achieve this, SFRS has implemented a health and safety management system supported with frameworks and topic specific management arrangements, improvement plans and assurance processes to ensure legal compliance. Performance is monitored and reviewed by senior management through established governance processes ensuring continual improvement of our safety culture.

This Health and Safety Policy and all associated arrangements are applicable to all SFRS employees, young people and volunteers, regardless of gender.

4. STAFF AND FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

The SFRS recognises that all our staff are central to the delivery of our service and that operational incidents present the highest risk environment. Whilst there is a degree of foreseeable risk, it is acknowledged that each incident will have its own specific hazards and associated risks due to unique and unforeseeable environmental factors. To manage this risk to firefighters, the SFRS endorses and promotes the [Health, Safety and Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment](#) and the safe person principles contained within. This is supported through robust arrangements for operational risk assessment.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

To ensure our commitment to health and safety is achieved, maintained and continually improved Health and Safety responsibilities are defined within this Policy and are expanded upon with the [Safety and Assurance Management Arrangement](#)

[Framework](#) and the [Safety and Assurance Engagement and Governance Management Arrangement](#) or within other topic specific health and safety management arrangements, where required.

5.1 The Board

The Board are responsible for overseeing the strategic direction and effective management of health and safety within the SFRS. This will result in the promotion of a positive safety culture that ensures effective management and continual improvement of health and safety whilst fulfilling our Safety Value.

The Board shall ensure that health and safety is given the necessary due attention when making board decisions, scrutinise health and safety performance, provide support, guidance and hold the Chief Officer to account on health and safety matters.

5.2 Chief Officer

The Chief Officer is legally responsible for the discharging of SFRS duties under the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and ensuring competent health and safety advice is provided to the Service by suitably trained professionals. The Chief Officer can delegate responsibilities, as required, whilst remaining accountable for the actions and decisions taken.

The Chief Officer will determine and resource the strategic direction of health and safety throughout the Service, detail the SFRS organisational structure through which this Health and Safety Policy and all associated arrangements are implemented. Promote a positive safety culture by ensuring our Safety Value is embedded into everyone's thinking and actions.

5.3 Deputy Chief Officer(s)

In the absence of the Chief Officer, the Deputy Chief Officers become responsible for discharging SFRS legal health and safety duties.

5.4 Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)

All SLT Directors and Assistant Chief Officers (ACOs) are responsible for the development of a positive safety culture within the SFRS and ensuring that our Safety Value is integrated into all SFRS business processes and key decision making.

SLT members shall ensure the availability of resources to meet the requirements of this Health and Safety Policy, all associated arrangements; and visibly demonstrate commitment to effective health and safety through the promotion, implementation and monitoring of management arrangements, improvement plans, and the effectiveness of any controls implemented.

SLT members will scrutinise management information and recognise any areas of good practice, improvement and oversee continual improvement by leading by example, undertake staff engagement, inspections, and assurance reviews. This determines the effective application of the health and safety management system and legislative compliance.

5.5 Training Safety and Assurance Board (TSAB)

The TSAB serves as the primary forum through which the SFRS Safety Value is promoted and measured, assisting the Chief Officer in the discharge of their health and safety responsibilities, determining the strategic direction of health and safety matters, operational readiness, effectiveness, monitoring health and safety performance and seeking endorsement from and advising the SLT on current or emerging risk, best practice and identifying areas for improvement.

5.6 Director of Training, Safety and Assurance

The Director of Training, Safety and Assurance is the Service's Safety Champion, has a delegated duty to act on behalf of the Chief Officer in relation to health and safety matters and is the nominated chair of TSAB.

The Safety Champion is responsible for promoting and monitoring the continual improvement of the Health and Safety Policy and all associated arrangements to ensure the effective management of health and safety, ensuring that the Board and SLT are advised of aspects of health and safety performance, and promoting a positive safety culture in accordance with our Safety Value.

5.7 Director of People

The Director of People has a delegated duty to provide effective health surveillance as identified through risk assessment for all relevant staff.

5.8 Head of Safety and Assurance

The Head of Safety and Assurance Function is deemed to be the SFRS 'competent person' and is the service lead for Health and Safety and Operational Assurance.

5.9 Strategic Managers (Heads of Function, Area Commanders and Department Managers, etc.) and Middle Managers (Group Commanders, Station Commanders, etc.)

Strategic Managers and Middle Managers are responsible for promoting, resourcing, implementing and monitoring the Health and Safety Policy and all associated arrangements to ensure the effective management of health and safety within their area of responsibility.

To achieve this, they will appoint Safety and Assurance Co-ordinators (SAC), Safety and Assurance Liaison Officers (SALO) and Deputy SALOs who will ensure health and safety is integrated into all management processes, decisions and monitor performance and compliance ensuring continual improvement, and promote a positive safety culture, through inspection, discussion, consultation, and engagement with staff in accordance with our Safety Value.

5.10 Premises Responsible Persons

Premises Responsible Persons (PRP) have responsibility for the implementation of Health and Safety Policy and all associated arrangements within SFRS premises. PRPs are also responsible for the sharing of the outcomes of these arrangements with separate groups, co-occupants, contractors, and visitors occupying the same premises.

5.11 Safety and Assurance Function

The Safety and Assurance Function's principal aim is to develop, implement and maintain a health and safety management system, based on the plan, do, check and act model set out in the Health and Safety Executive's guidance: Managing for Health and Safety (HSG65). This management system will develop and implement Safety and Assurance Frameworks, Management Arrangements and supporting documentation to ensure legal compliance, best practice and promote a positive health and safety culture for all SFRS staff.

The Function will continue to develop our assurance processes from implementation, review, and organisational learning to assure effectiveness and help develop an annual Health and Safety Improvement Plan, as we transition towards ISO 45001 in accordance with the [Safety and Assurance Strategy](#).

5.12 Safety and Assurance Co-ordinators (SAC)

SACs have delegated authority from the Strategic Manager for overseeing the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy and associated arrangements and completion of Health and Safety Improvement Plans (HSIP) and health and safety actions from the National Safety and Assurance Board.

5.13 Safety and Assurance Liaison Officers

SALOs are nominated Department Manager / Group Commander level with specific health and safety duties and are responsible for facilitating the implementation of this

Health and Safety Policy and all associated arrangements, event investigations and HSIPs, and promoting a positive safety culture within their area of responsibility.

5.14 Employees

All SFRS staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. By complying with management arrangements, reporting safety events, raising concerns to and engaging with management which will contribute towards our positive safety culture in accordance with our Safety Value.

5.15 Trade Unions

The SFRS is committed to working in partnership with employees and will engage, collaborate, and consult with Trade Union Representatives. Communication of health and safety matters will be through established governance and engagement arrangements.

The SFRS will provide facilities and assistance to Safety Representatives to enable them to perform their functions in accordance with the [Health and Safety Representatives Management Arrangement](#).

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

To ensure the health and safety of our staff, visitors and contractors, the SFRS has established this Health and Safety Policy and associated arrangements to mitigate risk within the activities we undertake within our workplaces and the committees we serve.

To ensure the effectiveness of these arrangements, the SFRS have implemented a plan, do, act and check approach, based upon Managing for Health and Safety HSG65 guidance.

This SFRS Health and Safety Policy is supported by frameworks, management arrangements, generic and technical risk assessments, emergency arrangements and associated documents created to establish a robust health and safety management system designed to ensure minimum legal compliance.

With the aim of achieving a positive safety culture, legal compliance and best practice, the Safety and Assurance Function will consult with Directorates and Service Delivery Areas to produce bespoke annual HSIPs. These will be developed from identified risk-based priorities, changes in legislation, best practice, assurance reviews and lessons learned, setting realistic, measurable, and achievable key objectives in consultation with Trade Unions. Implementation of HSIPS will be monitored and progress recorded through a formalised meeting structures defined in the [Safety and Assurance Engagement and Governance Management Arrangement](#).

To maintain continual improvement, identify good practice, assess our safety culture, and evaluate SFRS compliance with statutory duties, a series of self-compliance standards, surveys, support reviews, assurance and performance reports have been implemented. Assurance and audit processes are in development as we transition towards ISO 45001 in accordance with the [Safety and Assurance Strategy](#).

The Health and Safety Department will continually communicate, consult and encourage participation with our staff, risk owners and interested parties. We will monitor and analyse changes in legislation, legal precedence and best practice in both health and safety and sector specific guidance to maintain currency of our arrangements. We will participate in audits conducted by external bodies, such as the His Majesty's Fire Safety Inspectorate (HMFSI) and/or regulators such as the Health and Safety Executive.

The Operational Assurance Department will continue to conduct debriefs, undertake audits of identified incidents and emerging trends that have potential impact on operational activity and capture any internal and external operational learning.

7. REVIEW

The SFRS is fully committed to continual improvement of health and safety performance. This Policy will be subject to review annually or as a result of:

- Changes to existing or introduction of new legislation or technology;
- Changes to organisation of the SFRS;
- Significant learning following implementation of SFRS health and safety arrangements or outcomes of major accident investigations;
- At the request of the HSE; and
- As a result of emerging research or guidance relating to SFRS health and safety matters.

All records of revisions to the Policy and Arrangements will be retained for future reference and subject to audit as required.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact the [Health and Safety Department](#) for further information.

9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / REFERENCES

[Equality Human Rights Impact Assessment – Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Health and Safety Policy Statement](#)

[Health and Safety Representatives Management Arrangement](#)

[Our Values](#)

[Safety and Assurance Engagement and Governance Management Arrangement](#)

[Safety and Assurance Strategy 2022-2026](#)

[DCLG, Fire and Rescue Authorities: Health, Safety and Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment, 2013](#)

[HSE, Managing for Health and Safety \(HSG65\), 2013](#)

[Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)

[Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)