

Freedom of Information request reference number: 8541.1

Date of response: 27/03/2024

Request:

Can you tell me if a station is called out to a house fire, what is today's normal attendance, plus how many fire fighters are there on each appliance?

Plus does a senior officer attend in a separate car, and if so why, considering the experience of the officers in charge of attending appliances?

Response:

Our London-wide average attendance time targets for first and second fire engine to attend any incident, including a house fire, is six and eight minutes respectively.

If attended by a pump ladder and a pump, which is consistent with the initial pre-determined attendance to a fire at a single private dwelling, there will be a total of nine firefighters (five on the pump ladder and four on a pump).

A senior officer may also be required to attend an incident due to the need for a greater level of control at a developing incident, or due to the need for specialist skills/knowledge. In cases where up to four pumping appliances attend an incident, then the most senior officer riding an attending appliance (either a Sub Officer, or Station Officer) will act as incident commander. As more appliances are mobilised to deal with an incident, then a more senior officer will be mobilised to be incident commander. For example, a Station Commander would be mobilised to take charge of an incident attended by five or six pumping appliances. As the number of appliances attending increases, then a more senior officer (Group Commander, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, or the Commissioner), will be mobilised. The thresholds for different ranks of senior officer to take charge at an incident are set out in appendix 4 of the Brigade's mobilising policy (policy 412).

These more senior officers will attend in a separate car as they provide on-duty cover on a rota basis and are not usually station-based and, therefore, are mobilised from a different location to the attending fire appliances (e.g. an area office, Brigade headquarters, a home location). It would not be practical for them to ride with the crew of an attending pumping appliance.

The LFB 'Mobilising policy' (policy number 412) provides information on the management of operational response of appliances, equipment, officers and external agencies to specific incident types and events. An example of the LFB mobilising policy is published online via the Grenfell Tower Inquiry website. This can be accessed via the following link:

<https://assets.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/LFB00001531.pdf>.

You will see that some information has been redacted from this policy. This includes appendix 4 which details the arrangements for mobilising senior officers to incidents depending on the size and scale of the incident (i.e. the numbers of pumping appliances mobilised to deal with the incident).

The information that is redacted in policy 412 is exempt from disclosure under the FOIA via [Section 24 – National Security](#). Although we believe this exemption applies, the Brigade is required, under the

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), to consider the public interest. This requires us to consider whether the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Whilst we acknowledge there is a public interest in knowing that the London Fire Brigade has adequate procedures in place to deal with any emergency incident involving public safety, the disclosure of these details would, or would be likely to, provide anyone wanting to carry out acts of terrorism with a detailed plan of our pre-planned emergency response and in turn damage the Brigade's ability to respond efficiently and effectively, and placing public safety at risk.

It is for this reason we conclude that the public interest in withholding the information, outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For more information about this process please see the guidance we publish about making a request on our website: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/transparency/request-information-from-us/>