

Forward mobilising procedure

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Responsible work team: **Special Operations Group**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Forward mobilising (FM) is the temporary control of mobilising to a specific area to allow a greater degree of control.
- 1.2 A group commander will be nominated to perform the role of the mobilising officer.
- 1.3 This officer has sole responsibility to make a decision on whether to mobilise to an incident within the defined area being covered by the forward mobilising control point (FMCP).
- 1.4 The incident commander at any scene of operations retains responsibility to assess the resources required to adequately deal with the ongoing incident. If the incident commander is satisfied that specialist appliances will assist in the resolution of the incident and can be deployed safely a request should be made to the FMCP.
- 1.5 The mobilising officer should endeavour to facilitate the incident commander's request, however this may be amended in relation to available resources.
- 1.6 If strategic response arrangements are in place and the Brigade Coordination Centre (BCC) is functioning the mobilising officer will report directly to the BCC Manager for strategic direction.

2 Terminology

- 2.1 The list below makes reference to terminology within this policy.
 - Forward mobilising procedure – FMP
 - Forward mobilising control point – FMCP
 - Strategic response arrangements – SRA
 - Brigade coordination centre – BCC
 - BCC Manager – BCCM
 - Duty deputy assistant commissioner – Duty DAC
 - Duty assistant commissioner – AC1
 - Officer of the day – OOD
 - GC- Group commander
 - SC - Station commander
 - Metropolitan police special operations room (GT) – SOR
 - LFB SOR (GT) command officer – GT Officer
 - National inter-agency liaison officer – NILO
 - Officer of the watch – OOW

3 Considerations for implementing FMP

- 3.1 Forward mobilising procedure has two phases each with a specific function:
 - **Initial forward mobilising:** Any incident commander can request this initial phase to be implemented. Once implemented, the affected area should be passed to Control by the FMCP. All calls received within that affected area will then be queued and immediately passed to the FMCP.
 - **Forward mobilising:** Can only be implemented by the Duty Assistant Commissioner, Duty DAC, GT officer and (duty) NILO.
- 3.2 Forward mobilising procedure can be broadly divided into two distinct operating environments.
 - (a) Where risk information and close liaison/working with the Police is necessary to ensure firefighter safety is maintained. Examples of this are:

- Spontaneous disorder/civil disturbance
- Pre-planned public order events
- Terrorist incidents
- High Threat incidents

(b) Additionally there are certain incident types where stricter control of mobilising may be necessary. This might include the following (but not be limited to):

- Fires involving explosives
- Large incident involving hazardous substances
- Large scale flooding
- Major incident where there are several scenes of operation close too but distinctly separate
- The establishment of a vehicle security zone or cordon controls by the police
- Major collapse of a building involving USAR deployment

FM should be considered if numerous calls are being or are anticipated to be received and a greater degree of control is required to prioritise resource deployments and reduce attendances to duplicate calls.

3.3 Regardless of the unique hazards presented by each incident, all of the examples listed in paragraph 3.2 are likely to have some or all of the following features:

- An area where unrestricted mobilising proposes unnecessary risks or is impossible to undertake
- A clearly defined area exist where normal mobilising is unachievable or undesirable
- The nature of the incident requires strict control of the resources deployed
- A large number of smaller incidents within a defined area
- The incident is likely to be protracted and resource intensive

3.4 If incident commanders believe that any of the above criteria have been met, and that normal mobilising within a defined area would be unsuitable, they should send a priority message to control requesting **initial** forward mobilising to be implemented.

4 Implementing initial forward mobilising

4.1 Before the initial phase of forward mobilising procedure can be implemented, the area involved must be identified to enable Brigade Control to limit attendances (if appropriate). The area involved may be defined using either:

- Thoroughfares - up to six thoroughfares which form a loose boundary around the affected area, within which operations are expected to be contained
- Stations ground - suitable for large-scale incidents
- Three stations ground – depending on the circumstances it may be necessary to expand the FM area to a maximum of 3 stations grounds. Any further increase must be agreed by the duty AC

4.2 A priority message requesting "implement initial forward mobilising" with detail of the affected area and the reason why it is necessary.

4.3 Examples as follows:

'Request implementation of initial forward mobilising due to civil disturbance at xxxxxxx, crews withdrawn to xxxxxxxStreet.'

Followed by:-

'Initial forward mobilising procedure implemented for street(s)/road(s) due to civil disturbance.'

Or:

'Initial forward mobilising procedure implemented for thoroughfares X Road, Y Road, Z Road, etc., due to the establishment of a vehicle exclusion zone by the Police.'

A boundary of six thoroughfares may be used;

- 4.4 This initial message should then be followed with an informative message include the following:
- (a) A brief informative message of the operational situation to resolve
 - (b) Any deviation from normal firefighting tactics (e.g. one jet direct from hydrant)
 - (c) Brief description of the reason for implementing initial forward mobilising procedures
 - (d) Any hindrance to fire service operations
 - (e) Approximate area involved
 - (f) A request for Police to attend or inform Brigade Control if police are already in attendance as applicable

Actions at brigade control

- 4.5 On receipt of the message implementing initial FMP, Brigade Control will:
- Create an alerting area for the actual area that is affected.
 - Calls within the affected area will be referred to the OOW for further examination to assess if an attendance is appropriate and may seek guidance from the duty NILO or GT officer in SOR where appropriate. This will continue until the FMCP is able to accept calls. (Note that officer's may not be in position at SOR at an early stage of a spontaneous event).

Inform the following:

- Mobilise/inform a GT officer
- Duty NILO
- ORT
- MPS
- LAS
- OOD
- Duty DAC

5 Implementing full forward mobilising

Based on the information available and circumstances of the incident the following officers can request the implementation of forward mobilising:

- Duty NILO
- Duty AC
- Duty DAC

Based on intelligence it may be prudent to implement FMP with advance warning.

- 5.1 Where possible, the FMCP should be located at a fire station outside the affected area. The use of a fire station ensures good communication, rest facilities and provides a relatively secure location for appliances and crew.
- 5.2 Based on the location of the event Brigade Control will inform the officer requesting that FMP is to be implemented where the nearest suitable fire station is located.

5.3 Brigade Control will mobilise the following pre-determined attendance to the FMCP:

- One command unit.
- Six pumping appliances (to include three pump ladders).
- Four station commanders
- One group commander as mobilising officer
- Two FRU's
- One OSU (to supply bottled water and fuel pack)
- One aerial appliance
- Loggist

5.4 Where it is not possible to locate the FMCP at a fire station or an alternative venue is deemed to be more suitable, the duty DAC in consultation with the duty NILO and/or GT command officer should agree a suitable location.

The following points should be considered when selecting the site:

- Avoid dead ends
- Allow ample space for easy evacuation
- Allow ample turning space
- Where possible use a secure, well-lit area
- Ensure the site provides access to the affected area by more than one route and that it is capable of supporting the combined weight of the appliances.
- The choice of site for the marshalling area may form part of preplanning, or be based on local knowledge

5.5 Brigade Control will:

- Send a printer message to all stations advising that FMP is in operation stating the relevant ground
- Circulate a pager message to all officers
- Inform the FMCP if there are any mobilising restrictions already in place
- Inform all mobile appliances via Airwave with a general broadcast on each channel

Transfer of mobilising to the FMCP

5.6 Before the FMCP can take over the responsibility for mobilising within the affected area from Brigade Control, the following should be in place:

- The affected area of operations should have been clearly identified to Brigade Control, and FMCP and GT
- The command support elements and appliances are in attendance at the FMCP
- Details of all appliances currently deployed and the incidents being attended within the affected area should be passed to the FMCP
- The officers fulfilling the role of mobilising officer (see appendix 1) and marshalling officer have received a brief on the operational situation.
- When all the above conditions are met, a message should be transmitted to Brigade Control. *'The FMCP situated at..... is now fully operational. Implement full forward mobilising procedure. Calls can now be accepted for map references.....'*
- In view of multiple FMCPs, each FMCP will be allocated a name e.g. FMCP Edmonton, FMCP Shoreditch etc

5.7 On receipt of this message, Brigade Control will:

- Send a printer message to all stations and using FMCP has been implemented

- Inform all appliances within the affected area that the responsibility for mobilising has passed to the FMCP, its callsign and location
- Instruct all appliances within the affected area to change to a specified channel or *talk group*, and instruct them that they are now under control of the FMCP
- Provide the FMCP with a list of all appliances and officers within the affected area and those that are on route to the affected area or on route to or at the FMCP
- Pass all calls to incidents within the affected area to the FMCP for mobilising
- Inform GT
- Continue to mobilise appliances to attend the FMCP on request

5.8 Appliances commanders attending the FMCP will:

- Book their appliance status 3 on arrival at FMCP. No further status changes need to be sent until normal mobilising resumes
- Subject to the brief at the FMCP, appliances mobilised on the specified radio channel will transmit status change, assistance, and informative and running call messages as normal to FMCP on the nominated channel

5.9 An assistant mobilising officer (see Appendix 1) nominated by the mobilising officer will pass the details of any running calls to Brigade Control in order to obtain an incident number.

5.10 All other messages should be recorded and handed to the mobilising officer on return to the FMCP.

5.11 Hazardous materials and operational risk database information should be accessed through the MDT as usual.

5.12 If an assistance message is received from an attendance within the affected area, any additional resources will be dispatched from the FMCP. It is the responsibility of the forward mobilising officer to request additional resources to attend the FMCP to ensure subsequent calls can be resourced.

5.13 If the mobilising officer considers it necessary to request special/command vehicles or officers to attend, these should be requested via Brigade Control.

5.14 If urgent attendance of special appliances is required at the scene of operations, the forward mobilising officer should consider requesting that Brigade Control mobilise them directly to the scene of operations; BrigadeControl should inform the appliance commander that radios should be set to the FMCP channel and that they will be under the control of the FMCP. The forward mobilising officer must take into account, in their risk assessment, that crews mobilised in this way will not have had a full situational briefing.

5.15 All messages from incidents within the affected area should be passed to the FMCP where they should be recorded and retained.

5.16 The duties of the mobilising officer are detailed in appendix 1.

6 Normal mobilisation

Return to normal mobilising

6.1 The mobilising officer will decide when it is appropriate to return to normal mobilising. This will be based on:

- Consultation with the duty DAC, Police, Ambulance, Utilities, Local Authorities, if appropriate
- The safety of personnel

- An operational assessment of the benefits of returning to normal mobilising
- 6.2 Having made the decision that normal mobilising may be reinstated, a message will be transmitted to Brigade Control, stating the time that normal mobilising is to be resumed. The FMCP will need to liaise with Brigade Control about when this can be completed.
- 6.3 At the time agreed, Brigade Control will:
- Mobilise to incidents in the previously affected area in the normal manner
 - Circulate a message to all stations and will also transmit a general broadcast message advising all stations
 - Inform all officers
- 6.4 Although mobilising has been returned to normal, the FMCP will remain in operation until all appliances mobilised on the designated channel have returned to the FMCP.
- 6.5 All appliances will return to their parent airwave channel and book status 6 via MDT.
- 6.6 When the responsibility for mobilising has been returned to Brigade Control, the mobilising officer will inform Brigade Control that: "The FMCP located at..... is now closed."

7 Communications

- 7.1 For forward mobilising to operate effectively it is essential that clear lines of communications are established and maintained throughout the time that the FMCP is in operation. Lack of communication, overloading or short circuiting lines of communication can have a detrimental effect on command and control, resource management and crew safety.
- 7.2 To maintain effective lines of communication forward mobilising officers should consider:
- Use of additional airwave radio channels to be assigned to the FMCP to allow senior officers to communicate directly while appliance communicate with the FMCP.
 - Ensure that all assistance, informative, stop, and status change messages are sent via the FMCP. It is important to ensure that all crews operating in the forward mobilising area are briefed to this effect.
 - Appoint a communications officer to monitor and record radio traffic.
 - If the FMCP is located at a fire station, consider requesting that Brigade control send information relating to calls from within the forward mobilising area to the station teleprinter.
 - In the event that the amount of radio traffic becomes unmanageable, consider requesting further radio channels be assigned to the FMCP, appoint additional Communications Officers.
- 7.3 Brigade control will :
- Ensure that all appliances ordered to attend the FMCP are instructed to book status 3 on arrival.
 - Redirect any messages received from inside the forward mobilising area on to the FMCP.
- 7.4 All messages received at and sent from the FMCP must be recorded, in a similar format to that used at Brigade Control, and retained in case they are later required for review or inquiry.

8 Out of area deployment

- 8.1 There will be occasions where LFB resources are deployed out of area either as part of a mutual aid deployment or a regional or national deployment, Forward mobilising procedure may be a useful tool for managing the resources and processing calls within a defined area.
- 8.2 The number of calls and the complexity of the deployment, will dictate the size of the area to be considered when implementing FMP.

8.3 Any use of forward mobilising procedure will need to be discussed with the home FRS to ensure it can be supported by the wider operational structures.

9 Related policies

9.1 This should be read together with the following policies.

- Policy number 987 – Incident command - Organisation at incidents – NOG
- Policy number 263 – Major incident procedure
- Policy number 261 – Public order and civil disturbances
- Policy number 833 – GT-SOR, Palestra, ELT, CT-POR's
- Policy number 987 – Incident command - Organisation at incidents – NOG

Appendix 1 – Duties of the mobilising officer

The group commander in attendance at the forward mobilising control point will be designated mobilising officer.

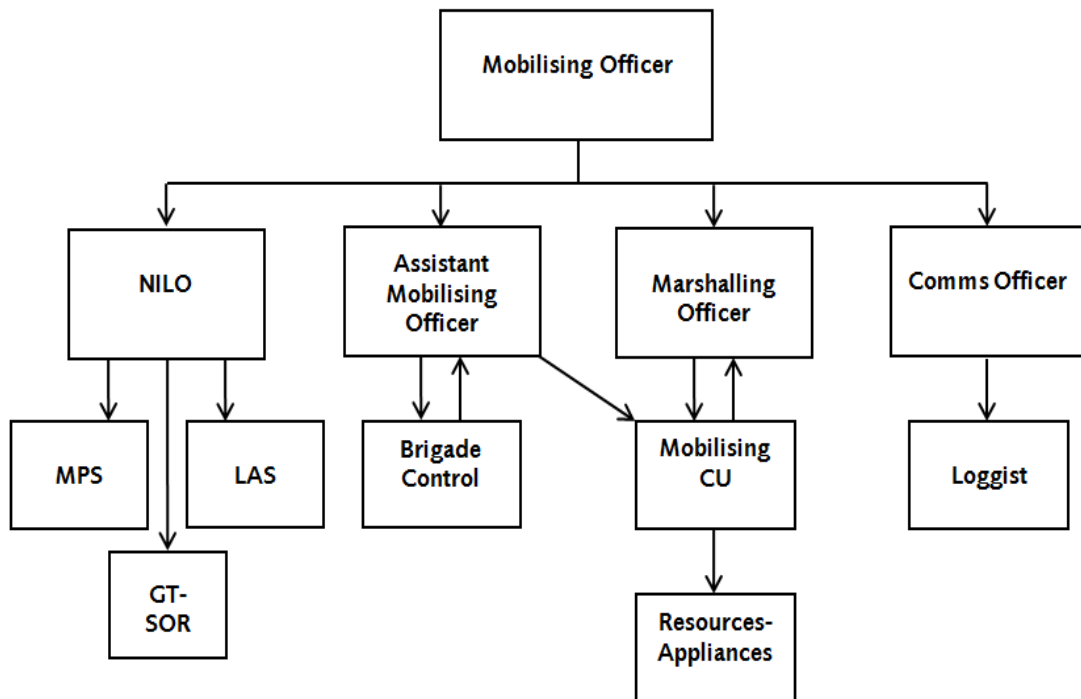
The mobilising officer has sole responsibility to make a decision on whether to mobilise to an incident within the defined area being covered by the forward mobilising control point. (FMCP)

On arrival they will:

- Ensure that the command support unit is correctly sited
- Nominate a marshalling officer
- Ensure that communications are established between all resources
- Maintain a strategic overview of the situation through information gathering and liaison with appropriate agencies
- Co-ordinate the response to the affected area
- Ensure all crews entering the affected area are fully briefed before deployment
- All crews are debriefed on return to FMCP
- Identify a suitable fall back location in case the FMCP is compromised and ensure that all officers and appliance commanders are aware of its location
- Nominate an assistant mobilising officer/s to:
 - Ensure that all calls received from Brigade Control are recorded in a mobilising register
 - Initially deploy a reduced attendance (one pumping appliance) to calls within the affected area
 - Deploy all other appliances and officers as necessary
 - Respond to assistance and running call messages and mobilise if appropriate, following consideration of the strategic overview
 - Request appliances, officers and special appliances from Brigade Control as necessary to attend the FMCP for briefing prior to attending incidents within the affected area
 - Monitor the designated radio channel
 - Record all messages received and sent from the FMCP
 - Constantly assess resource requirements and maintain a reserve of appliances at the forward mobilising control point appropriate to the circumstances
 - Monitor crew welfare and ensure all crews are fit for duty
 - Ensure that all appliances and equipment accounted for, serviceable, and adequately fuelled

Note: All messages and notes should be retained after the FMCP is closed down in case they are required for future investigations or review.

Appendix 2 - FCMP command arrangements



Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	18/01/2021	SDIA	06/01/2021	HSWIA		RA	14/01/2021
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Para 3.5, page 3	Minor amendments made throughout policy. Change to the list of those informed about implementing forward mobilising procedures. References to Duty Group Commander changed to Duty Deputy Assistant Commissioner. References to Brigade Police Liaison Officers changed to Inter Agency Liaison Officer .	05/11/2009
Paragraph 3.14	Deleted "brigade police liaison officer" from sentence	30/11/2009
Page 8	Equality Impact Assessment date added	07/12/2009
Throughout	Control officer replaced by control room officer due to a change in the name of the role	04/06/2010
Page 5 para 3.17	Reference to the Central Risk Register replaced by Operational Risk Database in line with current procedures.	11/05/2011
Page 1	Changed department and responsible work team.	12/07/2011
Throughout	This policy has major changes, you will need to re-read to familiarise yourself with the content.	24/07/2013
Page 2 Page 10	Control Supervisory Officer in bullet point list updated to Officer of the Watch. (Expand the list as necessary.) wording removed from the end of paragraph 3.1. EIA and RA dates added.	31/07/2013
Page 4 para 4.5 para6.3	Actions at Brigade Control – bullet point 'Calls within the affected area' – content updated and Actions at RMC – removed reference to MPS and LAS. Removed reference to 4 pumps.	23/08/2013
Page 11	Subject list and FOIA exemptions tables updated	18/11/2014
Page 8	New section added for 'Out of area depolyment'. Added as section 9.	16/04/2015
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current, no changes were necessary at this time.	02/11/2016
Throughout	Role to Rank changes made.	15/10/2019

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
	Owner title changed to reflect the abolition of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, now changed to the London Fire Commissioner.	
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current with minor changes made throughout. Please re-read to familiarise yourself with the content.	04/03/2021
Throughout	Cross references updated.	29/06/2022
Page 8, para 10.1	Cross reference link updated.	20/09/2022
Throughout	Updated terminology throughout with slight changes to grammar. Minor amendments to policy.	18/07/2023

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Incident management	Mobilising
Civil disturbances	Event planning
Events	Firefighting special risk areas
Firefighting special ground procedures	Incident command

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification