

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (Fire and Rescue Authority)

General Service Standards – Fire Safety

What you can expect from the Fire and Rescue Authority

This document explains what you can expect of the Regulatory function of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA). Whether you run a business, are an employee or a member of the public, we are committed to providing you with an efficient, courteous and helpful service and this document tells you how we will achieve these aims and what standards we will meet.

The Regulatory function of the Fire and Rescue Authority:

We work to protect people in case of fire and prevent and respond to fires and other emergencies. We regulate to protect people in case of fire. We focus on higher risks and have a strategy and priorities in place to help us do this.

The FRA delivers services to the community in a number of ways including:

- Prevention activity (helping people to be safe on the roads and at home),
- Protection work (helping people to be safe at work and at leisure), and
- Response (helping people in all kinds of emergency situation)

While we do all we can to keep people safe and to provide a rescue and emergency service we only regulate (or enforce) fire safety law as a part of our Protection work.

We involve ourselves where the risk to life, business, property and the environment is highest¹, and we make a fundamental contribution to the maintenance and improvement of public health, quality of life and wellbeing through our activity.

We are committed to being transparent in our activities and we publish our [performance data](#) annually.

How we work:

We want to help those we regulate to provide safety, especially when they

¹ We may take enforcement action only when there is a risk to life in case of fire. Our influence under other risk circumstances relies on advice given and is based on our experience of dealing with emergencies.

want to do so. We act proportionally to the risk that we see, so that minor matters are dealt with informally whereas serious matters are dealt with more formally. We comply with the [Regulators Code](#).

We carry out all our activities in a way that supports those we regulate to provide safety to people in case of fire and to grow as a business. Information and guidance is made available to help those we regulate. Where we can (in terms of time, effort and impact it would take to understand your business), we will tailor advice to your particular needs. We use a risk-based and/or intelligence-led approach to target our resources, including how we monitor and check safety with statutory requirements.

We deal proportionately with breaches of the law as set out in our enforcement policy, which includes the taking of firm enforcement action when necessary. Our service will be delivered in accordance with the requirements of the [Regulators Code](#).

We are ethical in the way we work and officers will treat people with courtesy, consideration, openness and honesty. We respect privacy. In the provision of our services this means we will:

- be independent, fair and consistent
- take full account of what people say to us
- establish the facts and communicate accurately, promptly and in plain language
- explain fully the reasons for decisions, and
- treat people with respect and not discriminate on any improper ground.

Working with businesses and others we regulate:

We want to talk and engage with business. Our officers will adhere to established standards and will work with other authorities where it will benefit business.

We would like to work with you to help your business to be successful. It is important to us that you / your business feel able to come to us for advice when you need it. You will find us ready to help you with working through issues relating to fire safety.

In all your dealings with us you can expect (and will receive) an efficient and professional service. Our team of officers will:

- be courteous and polite;
- identify themselves by name and provide you with their contact details;
- try to understand how your business operates and the pressures you

- face;
- provide details of how you can raise any concerns you may have;
- agree time scales, expectations and preferred methods of communications with you; and
- ensure that we are available to discuss progress against issues raised.

We recognise that your business will receive advice and inspections from other organisations. We will do our best to work alongside them and to ensure that you receive the best information, advice and service that we can provide.

Helping you get it right:

We will welcome you contacting us about any fire safety matter that concerns you. We look to help before we look to enforce the law. Our advice will be the best we can provide, based on the information you give us.

We would like to work with you to help your business to be successful. It is important to us that you / your business feel able to come to us for advice when you need it. You will find us ready to help you with working through issues relating to fire safety. If you contact us to discuss a fire safety issue, we will only take enforcement action if the safety of people in your premises is in danger. We make information and guidance on meeting your statutory requirements available to you. Please see our website for more information.

Where you need advice to help you meet your legal obligations we will:

- provide reliable advice that supports safety;
- provide advice that is appropriate to your circumstances (so far as time will reasonably allow)
- suggest the most straight forward (best value) solution for you;
- provide clear advice that can be easily understood and implemented by you;
- distinguish legal obligations from good practice advice;
- send written confirmation of our advice; and
- acknowledge good safety practices that you have in place.

We are open to discuss the [Primary Authority scheme](#) with businesses and groups to which that scheme is open.

Inspections and other safety visits:

We visit businesses proactively and reactively. Compliance is about providing safety in case of fire. Reactive work comes to us from complaints made to us about the safety of premises. Proactive work is based on information and intelligence we have about premises and which contribute to a risk-based or intelligence-led list of premises for us to visit. We always base our visits on

an assessment of risk. When working proactively we will give you notice that we intend to visit your premises.

Depending on the nature of our visit, officers will (prior to or at the time of our visit):

- explain the reason and purpose of the visit;
- carry their identification (and authorisation) cards and produce them for you on request;
- exercise discretion in front of your customers and staff;
- consider how you approach fire safety in your premises and take this into account in future interactions with you;
- provide advice to support you in meeting your statutory obligations, if required;
- provide a written record of the visit (in most cases, especially if you request it);

We do not charge you for undertaking any of our visits.

Responding to non-compliance:

When we find people at risk in case of fire we will act proportionately, taking into account the likelihood of fire and the consequences of fire if it breaks out. If we make requirements of you, we will explain what we want you to do and will provide contact details.

Non-compliance means that we believe a person is (or people are) at risk in case of fire. In such cases we will respond proportionately, taking account the likelihood and severity of that risk, in line with our enforcement policy.

When we require you to take action to remedy unsafe conditions we will:

- explain the nature of the risk;
- discuss what is required of you to achieve safety (taking into account your circumstances, if you have explained them to us);
- explain any advice, actions required or decisions that we have taken;
- agree timescales for making improvements that are reasonable to you and us;
- provide you with details in writing of how to appeal against our regulatory decisions (and how to complain about our conduct);
- explain what happens next, especially if you do not make improvements;
- provide you with our contact details; and
- keep in touch with you (where required) until you have provided safety.

Requests for our service:

When we receive requests for assistance, we will provide as much help as we can and will let you know what to expect at each step along the way.

We respond to requests for assistance that we receive, including requests for advice, appeals and complaints. We will:

- Acknowledge your request within 24 hours during normal office hours. However if you have an immediate emergency call 999;
- Tell you when you can expect to receive a substantive response;
- Seek to fully understand the nature of your request;
- Explain what we may or may not be able to do, so that you know what to expect;
- Keep you informed of our progress throughout our involvement;
- Provide clear advice where appropriate; and
- Inform you of the outcome of our involvement as appropriate.

The time that we intend to take to respond to your requests for assistance is risk rated, with a maximum response time of 10 working days.

How to contact us:

You can find our contact details here. All contacts will be treated in confidence (unless you tell us otherwise).

You can contact us by:

Telephone:
0330 222 3333

Email:
firesafety@westsussex.gov.uk

Website:
<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/west-sussex-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-safety-advice-for-businesses/>

Twitter:
@WSFRSFireSafety

Post:
Fire Safety
Horsham Fire Station
Hurst Road
Horsham
West Sussex

RH12 2DN

In all cases we will seek to work with you in the most appropriate way to meet your individual needs. Information is available in different formats, for [accessibility](#).

We will treat your contact with us in confidence unless you have expressly informed us that we can share your details in relation to the matter you have raised with us. We respond to anonymous complaints and enquiries when we judge it appropriate to do so. Personal data will be dealt with in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#).

Working with others:

Where we can, we work with other authorities to make our work more efficient and to save each of us collecting the same information from businesses. It also enables us to signpost information that might be helpful.

We work closely with other regulators and council services including (among others):

- licensing authorities,
- building control bodies
- housing authorities.
- environmental health,
- trading standards,
- food standards,
- the health and safety executive, and
- housing authorities

Working with our partners means that we can signpost to you to advice and guidance that you might need or that might benefit your business and means that we can better target our resources to where they will be most beneficial or make / keep people safe. These activities ensure our resources are targeted appropriately and in light of local needs and national priorities. Our aim is to provide a streamlined service and to maintain safe and healthy communities

Our team:

Our officers are competent for the tasks they deal with.

We have a dedicated team of competent officers to deliver our services and have arrangements in place to ensure their ongoing professionalism and competence. Officers will seek to work with those they regulate in the most appropriate way to meet individual needs.

Having your say:

We want you to be confident to talk to us, whether you want help or challenge something we have asked you to do. You will find us willing to talk about all these matters. Whether it is good or bad, we want to hear from you.

If for any reason you wish to challenge a regulatory decision, appeal against a notice or complain about officer conduct, the method of how to do so is in our Challenges, Appeals and Complaints procedure. We are always willing to discuss with you why we have acted in a particular way or made particular requirements of you.

We value your input. To help us ensure that our service is meeting your needs we would like to hear from you whether your experience of us has been good or whether we need to improve. Hearing from you ensures that any changes we make to our services are made in the right way. From time to time we operate customer satisfaction surveys and while we encourage your participation in these, we would welcome your feedback to us at any time. You can provide feedback in the following ways:

Telephone:
033 022 23333

Email:
firesafety@westsussex.gov.uk

Website:
<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/west-sussex-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-safety-advice-for-businesses/>

Twitter:
@WSFRSFireSafety

Post:
Fire Safety Horsham
Fire Station Hurst
Road
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 2DN

Any feedback we receive will be acknowledged, considered and responded to and where necessary, acted upon.

Developing our service to you:

We love to consult with the people we regulate; they make sure we 'get it right'. If you would like to join them, we want to hear from you.

Dated: 13/01/21

Name: Richard Bradley

Job title: Group Manager Fire Safety

Review date: 12/01/23