



# R B F & R S

## news release

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### **ABUSE OF FIREFIGHTERS 'NOT ACCEPTABLE'**

Whilst incidents involving harassment of firefighters are rare in Berkshire, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is clear that any such abuse is wholly unacceptable.

RBFRS spokeswoman Nicole Targett said: "In 2007, two incidents were reported, both involving verbal abuse and one where objects were thrown. One of the incidents involved a motorist who felt aggrieved at having to wait whilst fire crews were dealing with a road traffic collision. He got out of his car, removed the safety barrier around the incident and attempted to drive his car through.

"When firefighters approached him and tried to explain that, for his own safety and to allow them to work, he should remain behind the barrier, he became very abusive, shouting and using foul language and making threats. This type of behaviour is extraordinary and totally unacceptable.

"Luckily, it is unusual in Berkshire. Members of the public are extremely supportive of our work and understand that firefighters are often dealing with life-threatening situations. A firefighter's prime concern in dealing with an incident is the safety of anyone trapped or injured, the safety of members of the public and the safety of their colleagues."

"We obviously take very seriously any attempts to impede or harass our staff whilst carrying out their duties. We monitor this type of incident very carefully and if there is any indication of criminal activity, would support police involvement."

In common with other fire and rescues services, RBFRS is required by the Department for Communities and Local Government to report any incidents where firefighters encounter any abuse or harassment whilst at incidents.

**ENDS.**