



R B F & R S

news release

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REDUCTION IN ATTENDANCE AT UNWANTED FIRE CALLS

A pilot scheme to reduce the number of unwanted fire alarm calls in Berkshire has seen a reduction of 30% in the number of such incidents attended.

With 92% - more than 3,000 - of all automatic fire alarm activations (AFAs) at commercial premises being found to be due to faulty equipment or procedures, committing fire engines and crews to attend these calls was costing Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) more than £150,000 a year.

Gene Ashe, RBFRS Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, introduced a pilot scheme in June, aimed at reducing the volume of such calls.

He explained: "The pilot has achieved good results so far, in fact we are now attending a third fewer calls to AFAs than previously. Our emergency control room staff filter calls to ensure that there is a requirement to attend and that there is not a system fault of some kind that has generated a false alarm. Fire engines will attend as usual if there is a fire or suspected fire but this means that when we are told that there is no fire, a fire engine is not required to attend.

"The benefits of a reduction such as this are more than financial. It means that our fire crews are not diverted away from genuine emergencies or from their community safety and training activities. The scheme will continue and we hope to see even greater reductions in the level of such calls.

"We contacted key businesses prior to the introduction of the pilot and will now contact business premises which have not seen a substantial reduction in the activation of unwanted fire calls.

"I would remind all business owners of their responsibility to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire) Order 2005. Further information on this and other links can be found on the RBFRS website at www.rbfrs.co.uk"

ENDS.

Notes for Editors:

Area Manager Gene Ashe will be available for interview on Thursday (15 October) if required. Please contact Nicole Targett (0118 932 2283) or Ellie Gray (0118 932 2214) if you wish to interview AM Ashe.

The RBFRS policy is based on the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) national policy regarding unwanted fire signals, which came into effect on 1 September this year.

The policy is designed to reduce the number of unwanted alarm activations in Berkshire and affects the owners and occupiers of all non-domestic and business premises.

For further information regarding the Call Filtering policy and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) policy for the Reduction of False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals please visit our website www.rbfrs.co.uk.