

# How we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms - telling us what you think



**Easy read booklet**

# Who we are and what we do



We are **Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service**.

We provide fire safety services in Berkshire.



We want to run the best fire services we can.

We want to know what you think about changing the way we respond to **Automatic Fire Alarms**.



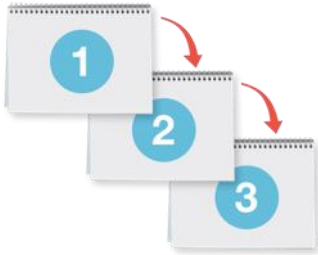
**Automatic Fire Alarms** send an alert to

- The building where the fire might be – the fire person there should check if there is a fire
- An Alarm Centre – they will get in touch with our Fire and Rescue Service.



Different places respond to **Automatic Fire Alarms** in different ways.

# More about what we do



We wrote a plan. The plan says the main 6 things we will do to be there for the public.

We will



- Give advice and educate people on how to stop fires and emergencies
- Respond to emergencies as fast as we can
- Give advice on how to keep buildings safe from fire
- Share what we know about safety and wellbeing
- Work with Government to keep people in Berkshire safe from fire.



We are a public body. This means we have to follow rules if we ask you to tell us what you think.

# Automatic Fire Alarms



An **Automatic Fire Alarm** is an alarm that is set off automatically. The sound of the alarm alerts the people in the building.



Someone should then respond to the alarm. The Automatic Fire Alarm might also notify an alarm centre.

The centre will contact the Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the building.



We are asking what you think about **Automatic Fire Alarms** in low risk buildings with people inside. For example, shops and office blocks.



We will always send a fire engine if the fire is in a high risk building like a hotel, student flats or other homes.

# Asking you what you think



We will

- ✓ Listen to what you tell us
- ✓ Take time to work out what the best option is.



**99% of automatic fire alarms are not caused by a fire.**



If an **Automatic Fire Alarm** goes off, We often send a fire engine even if it turns out there is no fire. We want to look at other ways we can respond.

# False alarms



When an alarm goes off by accident, we call this a **false alarm**.

A **false alarm** can happen from

- Cooking fumes – from burnt toast
- Steam and aerosol sprays
- Smoking or vaping inside
- Having the wrong kind of smoke detector or alarm fitted
- Building work that makes extra dust
- Doing a test on the alarm but not telling the alarm centre
- Dirty alarms that need to be cleaned
- Fixing the alarm in the wrong place – for example near heating or an open window.



# What happens when the alarm goes off



An **Automatic Fire Alarm** will go off if it picks up smoke or heat in a building.

Someone in the building should check there is a fire before telling the Fire and Rescue Service.



The Alarm Centre that gets the alert might ask the person in the building to tell them more about the fire before they call 999.

If there is no one in the building, the Alarm Centre will tell the Fire and Rescue Service the alarm has gone off.



Anyone who owns a building has to look at fire safety and how the alarms work. This is the law.

They should keep them in good order and check they are working well.



# Giving your feedback – Option A



We want your feedback if an **Automatic Fire Alarm** goes off in a low-risk building.

## Option A



When we get the alarm alert, we will ask the fire warden, to check if there is a fire and tell us.

If they say yes, we send a fire engine.

If they say no, we won't send a fire engine.



If we can't get hold of them, we will send a fire engine.

If we speak to them and they don't call back, we won't send a fire engine at that time because they haven't told us there is a fire.

**This is a change to what we do now.**



# Giving your feedback – Option B



We want your feedback if an **Automatic Fire Alarm** goes off in a low-risk building

## Option B

We will ask the person in charge of fire, like the fire warden to check and tell us if there is a fire.



If they say yes, we send a fire engine.

If they say no, we won't send a fire engine.

If we can't get hold of them, we will send a fire engine.

If we contact them and they can't tell us, we call again after 20 minutes.



If they still can't tell us, we will send a fire engine anyway even if there is no fire.

# When we will send a fire engine to a fire



We will always send a fire engine if

- ✓ We know there is a fire
- ✓ We think there is no one in the building to check if there is a fire
- ✓ People live in the building
- ✓ People are sleeping in the building
- ✓ The building has lots of floors like a tower block
- ✓ There is a high risk of fire from the past
- ✓ The fire officer thinks there is a risk of fire.

# Why we want to ask what you think



If we change the way we respond, it means we will be available to go to more emergencies.

It also means we have more time for

- Education and training on fire safety
- Staff training
- Fire engines to go to real emergencies.
- Visits to high risk building so firefighters know what to do in an emergency.



**We will always send a fire engine to a 999 emergency call.**

# Please make your choice and tell us why



Please tell us why you chose Option A or Option B – write your answer in the box

Is there anything else you want to tell us – write your answer in the box



# Telling us what you think



We will not make any decisions until you tell us what you think.

Please send your answers and thoughts between

**17 January to 28 March 2022**



You can send what you think to

[Our website](#)

You can write to us



**Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Newsham Court  
Pincents Kiln  
Calcot  
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Berkshire  
RG31 7SD**



By email

**[consultations@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:consultations@rbfrs.co.uk)**

By phone

**0118 938 4331**

# What happens next



Our consultation runs from

**January – March 2022**

The consultation closes on

**28 March 2022**



We will meet to talk and think about the results and what you tell us

**29 April 2022**



We will put our decision in place by

**Summer 2022**