

DEFEND CONTROL JOBS
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Retained Duty System (RDS) BCM
Thursday 02 February 2012 Eastleigh stn 32

Agenda

1. Welcome address
2. Members Present
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of last meeting
5. Chair report
6. Membership Sec. Report
7. Grievances
8. RDS Contracts
9. RDS Fitness Levels
10. Co Responding
11. Pensions
12. Welfare
13. CRB Checks
14. Staff Bank
15. Annual Leave
16. Any other business/Health and Safety/Branch Reports
17. Next meeting date & venue

1. **Chair Welcome Address** Chair **BS** discussed the pinpoint issues that arose in the Hampshire BCM yesterday in Winchester. Some of the items discussed will be gone through in greater detail later in this meeting.
2. **In Attendance** Bryan Stanislas (RDS Chair), Paul Trew (FBU Sec), Bryce Allcorn 02, James Mills 09, Jack Bancroft 09, Adrian Johnson 45, Martin Merrit (HFBU Membership Sec)
3. **Apologies** Rob Whiteman, Liz Bennet, Jeff Baker, Chas McGill, Adam Glasspool, Trev Baker.
4. **Minutes of Last Meeting** These were unavailable but **BS** will ensure we get them asap.
5. **Chairs Report** BS has not been available for most of the month of January due to other commitments however there have been some developments regarding outstanding issues that will be delivered within this meeting. Communication still seems to be an issue between members and the union officials regarding the flow of information in both directions when it comes to RDS members. 2012 will see an issue of PAGER magazine

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produced for each month and this will be available from the HFBU website and will be emailed to all stations.

- 6. Membership Sec's Report** Membership forms are still arriving with areas not completed correctly. All RDS members **MUST** state upon the form that they are an RDS member otherwise they will be charged the full membership rate which is significantly more. All members should be encouraged to complete the Accident and Injury Fund section which will ensure a substantial payment is made to the member in the event of a work related accident or injury. Those who have previously or those who wish to complete the section for Death In Service should ensure that the beneficiaries are current and those family/partners are the ones you wish to receive the benefit. It has become apparent from other Brigades that this updating of beneficiaries after separation or divorce has led to concerning legal battles as to who is entitled to money.
- 7. Grievances** Members **MUST** be made aware that there is a specific process to a grievance procedure which has to be followed by the aggrieved outlined in HFRS SO/1/2/1. This SO the HFBU believes is not correct within the outlines set out by the Grey Book and this is currently being looked into by HFBU officials.

If a member believes that they are aggrieved they should contact their local union rep and inform them that they believe they have been aggrieved as well as their own line manager to discuss with them what the issues are. Members should ask for this discussion to be logged as the informal stage of the grievance procedure. If the grievance concerns the line manager then the member should contact the station/link manager and request the same. The aggrieved should already have a clear view of an outcome that they wish to receive and this should be conveyed within this informal meeting. It is vital at this stage that the aggrieved member logs the time and date on a record of events, this is good practice and not required under the grievance procedure.

If there is no development after the informal stage having been undertaken then the next stage is to raise a formal grievance. The member should contact a HFBU rep and inform them they wish to elevate their grievance to a formal stage and the member should then write a letter to their line manager outlining why the member believes that they are aggrieved and what outcomes that they wish to achieve as well as informing them this is raised under the formal stage of the grievance procedure.

Members should if possible at all times copy in their agreed and chosen union official when communicating with the service by email and in particular cases where the member may be under pressure or perceived duress all communication with the service should be done by the HFBU Rep where possible so as to remove the member from a stressful situation. It is imperative that the member ensures that only facts are conveyed to the HFBU Rep and the member must not embellish any statements made to the HFBU Rep. Should it be the case that a member has not given all the facts known or has embellished a

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statement to a HFBU Rep upon which the rep have acted it may be the case that further issues are caused which require investigation and this may damage a members grievance process beyond representation. It is extremely important that only HFBU Reps who are comfortable in leading a grievance undertake action on behalf of a member and that the HFBU Rep as far as reasonably practicable ensures that all facts are true and relevant before contact the employer.

Again records of discussion should be kept by the HFBU representative in all cases of contact be it between the member and the employer or rep. All contacts between the employer HR department and the HFBU should be completed in a timely manner and emails etc should be acknowledged at all times. It is imperative that the HFBU is seen to follow protocols in a timely manner and without delays. If a HFBU rep is no longer able to undertake a grievance on behalf of a member they should seek alternative representation for that member and brief the new HFBU representative accordingly. If unsure contact a HFBU Official. All discipline issues MUST be conveyed to HFBU Divisional Reps.

8. **RDS Contracts** The FBU Regional Reps met with HFRS under stage 2 negotiations regarding the services wishes to impose new contracts to RDS employees. Both parties failed to agree a way forward within the stage 2 process and the negotiation process has now terminated after failing to agree. It is understood that the service will be attempting the implement the new contracts to employees which have a 100% retainer fee, 75 % retainer fee and a new 50% retainer fee which is outside of the Grey Book. This matter has been now passed to the FBU Executive Council for action with the Technical Advisory Panel of the JTU. Should any member be issued with a new contract they are to contact their union rep immediately for guidance.
9. **RDS Fitness Levels** It is understood that the service has begun a review into the fitness levels of the RDS and are looking at ways to increase fitness levels. As many RDS members will already be aware there is no facility for fitness training while under the employment of the service as whole time employees currently receive. The retained HFBU section believes that this is unfair and is currently attempting to increase access to fitness equipment and remuneration for retained employees.
10. **Co Responding** All RDS members must be made aware that the FBU does not currently support Co Responding regardless of the scheme which has been implemented. All members who have Co Responding upon their stations should read the service order SO/7/2/3/3 regarding how co responding is to be implemented by HFRS. The HFBU believes that at no time must a fire appliance be removed from service in favour of co responding. Reports are coming in that this is the case and the HFBU will be contacting the service for a response. Should any member be aware that co responding cars are being favoured over appliances they should make contact with their local HFBU rep immediately.

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11. **Pensions** HFBU Paul Trew gave a talk regarding RDS HFBU Members and pension issues. The current pension dispute will affect RDS members who have the new/old firefighter's pension scheme. Those on the Scottish Widows scheme should seek financial advice immediately and decide whether to start the new FF scheme. Members will have an opportunity to 'buy back years' if they are in the old/new scheme to their employment start date up to and including the year 2000.
12. **Welfare Issues** It is very apparent that there are still significant issues surrounding welfare at incidents. Members/employees are attending protracted incidents with no access to service supplied toilets, adequate wash facilities that have hot water and soap to remove dirt and allocated rest areas. Additionally there are issues surrounding sustenance when attending protracted incidents and access to clean drinking water. The service has a 4 hour relief strategy which is failing to be implemented. Some crews are being left at incidents for over 8 hours without welfare.

Employees/members are encouraged to complete and return the HFBU Health Safety and Welfare reporting form which can be downloaded from the HFBU website.

13. **CRB Checks** HFRS are intent upon all employees having to undertake enhanced CRB Checks. The HFBU currently dispute this and Thompsons have been furnished with the required details to make an informed decision as to whether the employer can legally force all employees to have CRB Checks. Currently the coalition government are saying that they are going to relax some areas of required CRBs. The FBU are awaiting information.
14. **Staff Bank** December 2011 saw the implementation of the services controversial Staff Bank. The service states that the Staff Bank has been developed to combat the short falls in crewing. It is the understanding of the HFBU that the service has short falls in crewing as they are not recruiting frontline firefighters and not replacing those employees that leave. The service states that they wish to reduce the Grey Book staff levels by 40 by 2013 and by 60 by 2015. Currently the service has reduced numbers by approx 26 employees. Members must be made aware that those who expressed interest in the staff bank consisted of 9 RDS, 3 JO's and 3WDS. Members should be aware that this will not be a route into a WDS employment and that only initially will there be a financial gain to the individual. Payment will be made at a flat rate only and if required at short notice then 10% will be added. The Staff bank is pre arranged overtime! Those who sign up for the staff bank may be required to work at any location within Hampshire and therefore there are issues surrounding travel and time. Additionally there are issues surrounding the crewing of local RDS appliances and large skills gaps between WDS and RDS. The Staff Bank IS BLOCKING the employment of firefighters into whole time roles while endangering the public and the employees. Please ensure that all RDS members are aware that the Staff Bank is outside the Grey Book and to think carefully on these issues.

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15. **Annual Leave** The HFBU are currently in negotiations with HFRS regarding the issue of annual leave and its restrictions to RDS employees. More information will be available once concluded.
16. **AOB/H & S Branch Reports**
- **02 Rushmore** – BA Chamber has not had any rectification since incident last year where a BAI received a serious injury.
 - **Kingsclere** – No lighting outside of building when locking up station at night. Station admin staff has already received and injury which was logged and no action to ensure adequate light has been implemented by employer.
 - **All RDS Stations** – please check that basic health and safety/ welfare facilities are available at stations such as auto door closing upon toilet doors, WC doors do not open onto communal areas, adequate wash/shower facilities with dry area seating and privacy locks upon showers etc.
17. **Next meeting will be at 32 Eastleigh 7/3/2012 @ 19:30**

Meeting closed at 21:30

