

Crewing Systems within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Wholetime (WT)

Fire engines crewed by wholetime crews are available day or night within 90 seconds of the 999 call coming into a station notifying the crew that a fire engine is needed. These staff are full-time employed personnel who work an average of 42 hours per week on a fire station in shifts. There are 4 fire stations which use wholetime crews: Hereford, Kidderminster, Redditch and Worcester.

These crews are grouped into Watches (or shifts) called Blue, Green, Red and White.

Retained Duty System, RDS (On-Call)

Fire engines crewed by on-call crews are available within 6 minutes of the alert being sent to the crew. RDS provide cover from their homes or place of work, within 5 minutes of the station. Each station has a pool of usually between 12 and 22 on-call firefighters living or working locally, who provide varying levels of contracted On-Call cover. Aside from emergency calls and essential work, these staff are usually only on station working for approximately 3 hours per week and on some weekends, usually for training. These workers are defined as part-time staff due to their limited time at work, however many of these staff offer up to and in excess of 120 hours On-Call cover per week.

Day-Crewing Plus (DCP)

The wholetime fire engine at Bromsgrove will be crewed using the Day-Crewing Plus system from April 2014. Fire engines crewed using the Day-Crewing Plus system are available within 90 seconds of the alert coming into a station. However, unlike wholetime crewing, Day-Crewing Plus utilises a self rostering system which means the local managers ensure that there are sufficient firefighters available to crew the fire engine from the staff allocated to that station, there is no fixed pattern of shifts. The crew itself works during the 12 hour day period and then remain on station and are available from the station, but not deemed to be working and may undertake personal and leisure activities during this 12 hour period.

Day-Crewed (DC)

Crews working the Day-Crewed system are on station from 8 am to 6 pm, 7 days a week. During this time they provide the same on-station 90 second response as both Wholetime and Day-Crewing Plus. After 6pm the crew transfer to an On-Call (RDS) system and respond within 5 minutes of the fire station. To achieve this most staff provide a home base near their station, for which they receive an additional allowance in their salary.

This system uses two watches who are available for four 24 hour days on duty, and then have four days leave. This system operates at Malvern, Evesham and Droitwich and USAR.

Specials Vehicles / Special Appliances

Any vehicle not deemed to be a typical large fire engine is referred to as a special appliance. The Fire Service often utilises special equipment or vehicles that it would not be practical or possible to combine with a normal fire engine. Special vehicles are distributed at strategic locations across the Service area, usually on existing fire stations. These include Aerial Appliances, off road vehicles and boats used to deliver the wide range of services Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) provides. These vehicles are not crewed permanently and regarded as "switch" crewed which means the priority is given to the specific vehicle required.

Flexible Duty Systems (Officers Station Commander and above) (FDS)

The Service maintain a squad of 28 FDS officers in four shifts of seven providing 24 hour 365 day cover with seven officers available for immediate call at any time. These officers are all full-time operational employed managers within the Service and have demanding day jobs as well as an additional On-Call commitment from home. Officers will respond day or night immediately and cover a wide geographic area, including deploying to neighbouring Fire Services and nationally when required.

These officers operationally perform an essential command & control and managerial function 24 hours 7 days a week. As the title FDS suggests, they also offer a “flexible” element to this role and essentially operate a self rostering shift system.

These officers have all entered the Fire Service at Firefighter level and progressed through to officer level, most through wholtime employment, but several also through the RDS On-Call career path.

Urban Search and Rescue Function (USAR)

On the same site at Droitwich the Service provides a complement of 14 wholtime Urban Search and Rescue Technicians. They work the same shift system as the Droitwich day-crewed firefighters, with the significant difference that their On-call (night time) cover is to respond within 30 minutes rather than 5 minutes.

USAR Technicians have the ability and skills to be able to support and stabilise large objects (buildings or vehicles); gain entry through confined spaces or via rope access (up or down); to work on and in water; and break into or cut materials (concrete or steel) to effect rescues or make safe an unstable structure. These USAR trained staff understand they may be deployed anywhere nationally for up to, and in excess of seven days, and will usually work under arduous and poor conditions for extended periods of time with limited support.

















As well as the national and regional role for major disasters, the USAR capability is utilised within HWFRS to support normal operations including Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) involving large vehicles, or fires and RTCs where vehicles or buildings have become unstable. USAR also provide internal resilience for Rope Rescue and Water Rescue functions as these skill also form part of the skillset held by USAR trained Technicians.

UK National Resilience

The Government's aim is to reduce risk from emergencies so that people can go about their business freely and to make sure the United Kingdom is equipped to deal with major emergencies, like natural disasters or terror attacks. Since 2001, the Department for Communities and Local Government has made considerable investment through its Fire and Resilience Programme to increase resilience and enhance the capabilities of the UK Fire and Rescue Service to improve emergency preparedness. Whilst all the assets and vehicles were originally purchased and owned by the Government through the National Resilience programme, ownership of these assets was subsequently transferred to individual Fire Authorities

The National Resilience Programme consists of a number of distinct capabilities, including units for dealing with Chemical, Biological, Radiological contamination; Detection Identification and Monitoring (DIM) of Hazardous substances; Urban Search and Rescue (USAR); Water and High Volume Pumping (HVP); and Command and Control, Enhanced Logistics Support (ELS) for large incidents.

HWFRS - current arrangement of Fire Engines at Fire Stations

Fire Stations with 3 fire engines		Fire Stations with 2 fire engines		Fire Stations with 1 fire engine	
Hereford	  	Bromsgrove	 	Bewdley	
Redditch	  	Bromyard	 	Broadway	
Worcester	  	Droitwich Spa	 	Eardisley	
		Evesham	 	Ewyas Harold	
		Kidderminster	 	Fownhope	
		Ledbury	 	Kingsland	
		Leominster	 	Kington	
		Malvern	 	Leintwardine	
		Ross-on-Wye	 	Pebworth	
		Tenbury Wells	 	Pershore	
				Peterchurch	
				Stourport	
				Upton	
				Whitchurch	

Key

Wholetime 

Day Crewing Plus 

Day Crewing 

On-Call (Retained) 