



Transport Officers Group – Eastern Region

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Transport and Workshops Peer Review

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
Workshops & Brigade Headquarters
Stocklake, Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire, HP20 1BD

Visit and meeting - 5th December 2019



Transport Officers Group – Eastern Region

Observations and notes from a meeting held between Jez Finden and Brian Middleton on 5th December 2019 at Buckinghamshire FRS, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1BD.

Listed below the various subjects discussed with comparisons made with other Eastern Region and National Fire Authorities where known for best practice. From the time spent reviewing it should be noted that the stand out area for concern is the ability to attract and retain quality trained technicians.

Listed Details of Overview

- Fleet information
- Workshops
- Workshop Staff – Technicians
- Training
- Recruitment
- Succession Planning
- Service Schedules – Planned & Reactive Maintenance
- Service Schedules - 13 weekly inspections
- Workshop loading
- Mobile Response Unit – Defect Response, in and out of hours
- Defect reporting
- Vehicle CCTV
- Vehicle Telematics
- Fleet Software
- Driver Licence Checking
- Oil sampling
- Tyre maintenance
- Spares supplies & stockholding
- Spare vehicles
- Transport Policies
- Managing Occupational Road Risk (MORR)
- Working Time Directive
- Transport Replacement Programmes
- Vehicle Life Policy
- Assets and Equipment Audits
- Equipment Maintenance – any equipment not part of a vehicle
- Appliance & Equipment Policy Groups
- Disposals - secure policy?
- Fuel - bunker & card
- Grey Fleet
- Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) Fleet
- Blue Light & radio installs



Transport Officers Group – Eastern Region

1. Fleet Information

- ✚ Fleet Manager - Jez Finden
- ✚ Fleet composition – 40 Red fleet (appliances/specials) & 80 white fleet (general purpose/cars)

Observation - Fleet size & management commensurate with Fire Authority requirements

2. Workshops

- ✚ Location - Stocklake, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1BD.
- ✚ No bays except MOT bay for classes 4,5 & 7 Vehicles up to 5 tonnes max
- ✚ Good layout with adequate doors to access ensuring no 'blocked' vehicles
- ✚ 2 sets of mobile column lifts to provide maximum flexibility
- ✚ No roller brake test- facility for LGV's – two local sites used
- ✚ Workshop hours – Mon-Thurs 08:00 to 17:00 & Fri 08:00 to 16:00
- ✚ Defects – out of hours, cover by duty technician (taken in turns by all technicians to provide 24/7 cover) – standby allowance and overtime in accordance with local payments

Observation - Workshop layout generally good, however should have an LGV brake roller tester installed to ensure compliance with industry guidelines and best practice. IRTEC Workshop accreditation recommended

3. Workshop Staff – Technicians

- ✚ Workshop Manager x 1
- ✚ Workshop Supervisor x 1
- ✚ Workshop Technicians x 3 + TruckEast Technician x 1
- ✚ Workshop Apprentice x 1 (nearly qualified)

Observation - Staffing level not meeting workshop requirements with some work being sent out. **Recommendation** - review workshop loading hours to assess technician workload and staffing levels required

4. Training

- ✚ All technicians attend appropriate training both general and manufacturer based
- ✚ All Technicians – IRTEC accredited

Observation - Good standard of training for all technicians

5. Recruitment

- ✚ Unable to recruit trained technician's due industry shortage and comparatively low wages for the industry
- ✚ Market Supplement increased from £3 to £5k in order to attract technicians and retain existing staff
- ✚ Trained technicians will be lured away for high earning opportunities and progression

Observation - Recommendation – review the employment package for technicians and include any supplement into annual salary and pension arrangements and stress work-life balance (not always available in other industries)

6. Succession Planning

- ✚ Unable to plan for succession due to a quite flat staff structure and retirement dates indeterminable



Transport Officers Group – Eastern Region

Observation - Consider succession planning as part of the Business Continuity Plan and add to the Risk Register to highlight potential vulnerabilities due to reliance on key personnel

7. Service Schedules – Planned & Reactive Maintenance

- ✚ Red Fleet serviced 4 times annually (every 13 weeks) – 1 annual service visit to BFRS workshops, 3 safety inspections completed on station where vehicle located using brake decelerometer for the brake check
- ✚ White Fleet usually in accordance with manufacturer recommendations particularly leased vehicles through Lex Autolease contracted arrangements
- ✚ Reactive – dealt with as and when in an appropriate manner – note some fleets demonstrate 60% to 40% bias with defects accounting for more technician interventions.

Observation – Consider workshop loading planning – use previous data and industry recognised standard times – Autodata for light vehicles and Scania/Volvo standard times. Establish industry times for other equipment e.g. pumps, lockers, gantries

8. Service Schedules - 13 weekly Inspections

- ✚ Red Fleet safety inspected at station locations 3 times annually
- ✚ Brake check using brake decelerometer
- ✚ Inspected without recourse to full underbody access, which with the amount of bodywork lockers obscuring chassis components could result in a safety item such as (Brakes/Steering/Suspension/Chassis/Wiring) being missed
- ✚ Transport industry standards now dictate all safety inspection should be undertaken in appropriate facilities using suitable equipment – this is fully endorsed by the Senior Traffic Commissioner, Freight Transport Association and NFCC Transport Officer Group
- ✚ DVSA Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness Commercial goods and passenger carrying vehicles

Facilities should include:

- undercover accommodation for the largest vehicle in the fleet. This is required to ensure that safety checks can be conducted satisfactorily in all weathers (depending on fleet size the building may need room for more than one vehicle at a time)
- tools and equipment appropriate to the size and nature of the fleet
- an adequate under-vehicle inspection facility
- adequate lighting
- access to brake test equipment (e.g. a roller brake tester, decelerometer)
- access to headlamp test equipment
- access to emissions testing equipment
- access to steam or pressure under-vehicle washing facilities
- a safe working environment

If an operator fails to maintain vehicles in a safe and roadworthy condition with the facilities provided, the Traffic Commissioner may take regulatory action.

For guidance on the DVSA approved equipment relating annual test:

www.gov.uk/become-an-mot-station/approved-testing-equipment

Observation - Recommendation – Complete all vehicle safety inspections in a workshop environment, this will not only ensure compliance with industry recommendations but



Transport Officers Group – Eastern Region

provide accurate status of any condition and very likely lead to fewer 'unexpected' component failures

9. Workshop Loading

- ✚ Annual service plan for all fleet vehicles
- ✚ No evidence of workshop loading and planning utilisation
- ✚ Standard times not used and no incentive scheme in place
 - Example - Industry service times AS Ladders:
 - 13.5m - 8 hours
 - 10.5m - 7 hours
 - 7m - 5 hours
 - Roof ladder - 0.5 hours
 - Triple Extension - 0.5 hours

Observation – Review workshop loading and measure against staff and facility capacities

10. Mobile Response Unit – Defect Response, in and out of hours

- ✚ On receipt reviewed by Workshop Manager and prioritised to 1) immediate, 2) when next at station or 3) when vehicle has a scheduled maintenance intervention

Observation - Industry recognised good practice

11. Defect reporting

- ✚ All vehicle defects report using web portal to Tranman, this ensures any defect reported is recorded and effectively date/time stamped
- ✚ Tranman also records all manufacturers or other recalls and any outstanding defects

Observation - Industry recognised good practice

12. Vehicle CCTV

- ✚ Fitted to newer (Red Fleet) appliances for the protection of the driver and crew
- ✚ Light vehicles fitted with either Thinkware F800Pro or Thinkware Q800Pro which provide an 8-hour record capability before overwritten – Transport recover footage as required in accordance with BFRS policies

Observation – Industry recognised good practice

13. Vehicle Telematics

Supplied by Quartix - www.quartix.com/en-gb/

Installed in all vehicle except appliances and cars allocated to FDO's

- ✚ Track the live position of vehicles
- ✚ Review historical tracking data
- ✚ Receive detailed driving style reports
- ✚ Check driver league table positions
- ✚ Get alerts for unauthorised moves

Operational appliances located via mobilising system linked with Fire Control

Quartix units installed in fleet vehicles by BFRS technicians

Observation – Industry recognised good practice



Transport Officers Group – Eastern Region

14. Fleet Software

- ✚ Tranman release version 7.8 currently used (not the latest) note only version Release 9 supported from June 2020. Tranman encouraging users to upgrade before then
- ✚ BFRS planning to move to Release 9 to enable use of touchscreen and tablets
- ✚ Tranman software user group now established by NFCC to determine user friendly changes to benefit all FRS's

Observation - Good recognised practice using established industry leading software, which should be updated to ensure best practice and take advantage of latest technologies (often time saving)

15. Driver Licence Checking

- ✚ DAVIS - www.edavis.co.uk/ used to monitor all staff including non-drivers to ensure full compliance

Observation – Industry recognised good practice

16. Oil sampling

- ✚ Not currently undertaken, but drain periods set at 24-month intervals without any problems

Observation – Consider sampling to consider extending drain periods further

17. Tyre maintenance

- ✚ Appliances fitted with either Michelin Wheel Safe or TyrePal, both provide TPMS
- ✚ Spare wheels stocked fitted with tyres, which are changed by workshop technicians as the need arises
- ✚ Tyres also supplied and fitted by Tructyre and ATS
- ✚ Tyres changed at 3-4mm to ensure best use of a cover while maintaining good tyre performance

Observation – Good use of own resources. Monitor tyre stock to ensure age compliance met

18. Spares supplies & stockholding

- ✚ Only service items held, which is all that is required with regular spares deliveries available from most suppliers with required components arriving timely to suit a vehicles downtime
- ✚ Impressed stock systems not used

Observation – Good practice, ensures minimal capital exposure, storage requirements and confusion with suppliers over impressed stock.

19. Spare vehicles

- ✚ 3-4 spare appliances – planning to stow 3 to enable easier changeover which would permit operational appliances flexibility to visit workshops for 13 weekly inspections
- ✚ Pool cars available through a booking system and used to avoid staff being required to use their own vehicles

Observation – Good practise, balance of fleet/demand monitored and reviewed



Transport Officers Group – Eastern Region

20. Transport Policies

- ✚ Comprehensive policies in place covering all aspects of transport use

Observation – Industry recognised good practice

21. Managing Occupational Road Risk (MORR)

- ✚ Policies in place to cover most aspects but no definitive MORR policy – see sample - Hertfordshire version

Observation – Consider introducing MORR policy to cover all aspects of transport usage within BFRS

22. Working Time Directive

- ✚ Applied with no On-Call firefighters employed from the Transport industry

Observation – Industry recognised good practice, not followed by all FRS's

23. Transport Replacement Programmes

- ✚ Red Fleet purchased in accordance with vehicle life policy and subject to Fleet Strategy 2018-2021 Mid Term Review
- ✚ Collaboration with Royal Berkshire FRS and Oxfordshire FRS ensuring best practice with appliance renewals
- ✚ See example Hertfordshire 20-year vehicle replacement plan

Observation – Suggest preparing and maintaining 20 year rolling vehicle replacement plan to determine capital requirements and ensure no unachievable values

24. Vehicle Life Policy

- ✚ Appliances: 15 to 20 years
- ✚ Cars: 2 to 5 years to suit operational needs (leased)
- ✚ Others: 3 to 4 years

Observation – Typical industry replacement cycles, which delays introducing later technologies and produces higher carbon levels by keeping 'dirtier' vehicles

25. Assets and Equipment Audits

- ✚ Life policy dependent upon equipment and remaining suitable and serviceable
- ✚ Routine audits completed by Buckinghamshire County Council

Observation – Industry recognised good practice

26. Equipment Maintenance – any equipment not part of a vehicle

- ✚ Ladders, LWPP, PPV and RTC equipment all maintained by BFRS technicians
- ✚ Hose not tested, apart from leakage observation by crews
- ✚ Asset management – Redkite Systems using bar codes and scanners with the ability to allocate equipment to/from vehicle etc. maintain service and test records
- ✚ No interface between Tranman and Redkite Systems

Observation – Review hose testing measures and investigate interfacing Redkite & Tranman software to provide improved reporting capabilities

27. Appliance & Equipment Policy Groups

- ✚ Finance & Assets meeting attended, includes Property and estates

Observation - Industry recognised good practice



Transport Officers Group – Eastern Region

28. Vehicle Disposals – secure policy?

- ✚ Vehicles either sold through EFA Trading Ltd – Essex County FRS commercial company ensuring best value and severing all title with BFRS, other vehicles returned to their leasing company at end of lease
- ✚ See EFA Trading Ltd secure disposal policy

Observation – Industry recognised good practice

29. Fuel – bunker & card

- ✚ 9 out of 20 stations have bulk fuel facility incorporating Merridale Fuel Management dispensing recording ensuring correct allocation of fuel to respective vehicles
- ✚ Fuel purchased from Certas through CCS procurement framework
- ✚ Fuel cards available in all other instances

Observation – Industry recognised good practice

30. Grey Fleet

- ✚ DAVIS www.edavis.co.uk/ used to monitor all staff using own cars ensuring compliant business use, includes checking business insurance in place

Observation – Industry recognised good practice

31. Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) Fleet

- ✚ FDO policy in place ensuring appropriate vehicle supplied to meet the operational need
- ✚ Cars leased for periods to suit FDO appointment where known – avoids early termination costs and correctly apportions any return damage charges
- ✚ Uncertainty over HMRC P11D requirements leading to some hesitancy in ordering replacement vehicles
- ✚ Short notice appointments of temporary staff can create difficulties in providing an appropriate vehicle

Observation – Industry recognised good practice, however will be subject to changes in HMRC policy due 2020/2 financial year and industry requirements to use marked vehicles only for blue light response

32. Blue Light & radio installs

- ✚ Completed mainly in-house using workshop staff, alternative supplier EVO <http://www.evold.com/>
- ✚ Developed detachable brackets to ensure no drill policy applied and 360° blue light covert blue light display achieved
- ✚ Typical FDO type car installation £2.5k

Observation – Industry recognised good practice

Report prepared by –

Brian Middleton | Eng, MSOE, MIRTE, MIMI

Fleet Manager – Transport Services

Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service, 9 Merchant Drive, Mead Lane, Hertford, SG13 7BH