

Operation and Training Memorandum No. 4

Ministry of Home Security,  
Whitehall,  
London, S.W. 1.

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Operational Control at Air Raid Incidents.

1. General

1. This memorandum deals with the direction and control of the Police, Fire and Air Raid Precautions Services at air raid incidents.

A clear understanding of the machinery of control is essential. It must always be remembered that any delay in handling the units of any Service or releasing them when they are no longer needed may cripple the operations of the Service at some other point.

The members of each of the Services mentioned will work under the direction of the officers of their own Service. It is a duty of officers of each Service to understand the functions of the others and to ensure effective co-operation.

The principal functions of the several Services in connection with air raid incidents are summarised below. Those of the Police and Fire Services are applications of their normal functions to emergency conditions.

2. The circumstances in which an air raid incident may develop will vary very widely, but the following main stages can be distinguished:

- (a) the call for help:
- (b) the first attendance:
- (c) building up the help: and, in most cases,
- (d) establishment of an Incident Post.

As a rule the need for help will first become apparent to the police, the fire brigade or an air raid warden, and one of these Services will generally be first on the scene.

3. On the first attendance, the three essentials are:

- (a) quick reconnaissance:
- (b) correct reporting:
- (c) prompt action pending the arrival of reinforcements.

These duties should be carried out immediately by the representative of the Service first on the spot.

4. The building up of the forces needed on the scene will be for the Services concerned, the despatch of the A.R.P. Services being directed from the Control or Report Centre.

II. The Police Service

5. The police are responsible for taking charge of the general situation at and near the scene of any air raid incident, as regards saving life, protecting property, controlling the movements of persons and vehicles on the roads, preventing panic or other uncontrolled movements and maintaining morale. Their duties accordingly include the following, so far as occasion may arise:-

- (a) Controlling the movements of, and the position taken up by, all vehicles, with the object of securing, so far as practicable, ready means of access and egress according to the requirements of the respective services.



- (b) Controlling the movements of spectators, would-be helpers, persons escaping from damaged or burning buildings etc. and checking any panic movement.
- (c) Taking part in rescue and first aid work, in advance, if necessary, of the fire brigade, rescue or casualty services.
- (d) Calling for help, through the wardens' service or any other appropriate means.
- (e) In case of contamination, or suspected contamination, by gas, preventing the approach of unauthorised persons, or persons not properly protected, especially on the down-wind side; seeing that windows of any occupied building in the danger area are kept closed and that occupants keep indoors.
- (f) Preventing approach to unexploded bombs or shells, except by persons authorised to deal with them.
- (g) Preventing approach to or entry of damaged and dangerous buildings, without good reason.
- (h) Seeing that any dead are covered from the public gaze and that steps are taken to remove the bodies as soon as possible.
- (i) Generally extending help and encouragement to persons who are injured, rendered homeless or panic stricken.

### III. The Fire Service

6. The Fire Service is responsible for fire fighting and will also co-operate with the A.R.P. Services, so far as the primary duty of fire fighting will permit.

The senior officer of the Fire Service present at a fire is, by law, responsible for the control of all operations for extinguishing the fire. The regular or Auxiliary Fire Service Officer in charge of the first unit to arrive must accordingly take charge of the fire fighting operations, unless and until relieved by a senior officer. His first duties will be -

- (a) to ascertain the general fire situation, especially as to the exact situation of the fire and the risk of its spreading;
- (b) to decide on his plan of action and what assistance will be required;
- (c) to get all available fire units to work, so far as necessary and to send for assistance, if required;
- (d) to record (if possible with a sketch map) any necessary particulars.

7. So far as necessary for fire fighting, Fire Service units have priority of movement, but must not unnecessarily block roads or hamper the movements of other vehicles. Hose ramps must be employed wherever necessary to facilitate the movement of vehicles over lines of charged hose.

8. After an air raid, while there is still risk of outbreaks of fire, fire patrols or other fire parties on the roads and not actually engaged in fire fighting will maintain their patrol or other fire duties and not engage in other operations without specific directions from or on behalf of the Chief Officer of the Fire Brigade. They should, however, at once report any occurrence where assistance from another service seems to be required.



9. If Fire Service reinforcements are required, it will be the responsibility of the senior Fire Service Officer present to call for them.

#### IV. The A. R. P. Services

10. The duties of wardens are, in the main, supplementary to those of the police, and the police are entitled to look to the wardens to assist them. The first warden on the scene of any incident will report it immediately, and will then render any assistance he can pending the arrival of the police and other services. Thereafter the wardens present at the incident will act under the general directions of the police.

11. Whenever any A.R.P. units or sub-units are despatched to an incident, the Depot Superintendent responsible will designate an individual by name to be in charge of the party sent to the incident.

If the incident develops it will be for the A.R.P. Controller to ensure that heads of A.R.P. Services designate from each Service an officer of appropriate seniority, according to the size of the incident, to be in charge of all the units of that Service at the incident, as laid down below.

In those areas where a system of Incident Officers for A.R.P. Services has been established and such officer is present, he will take charge of those Services subject, if an Incident Post is established, to the instructions in Section V below.

12. The Leader of every A.R.P. Service will make a reconnaissance with special relation to the work of his own Service. He will see that all vehicles of his Service are parked in accordance with the directions of the police. He is responsible for the manner in which the work of the parties is carried out, and he will decide on and ask for any reinforcements that may be required.

#### V. Incident Posts

13. At incidents where a number of units of several Services are engaged, a specific organisation is required for controlling the movements and operation of the various Services. For this purpose the senior police officer present will establish an Incident Post at which he and the senior or designated officer of each of the other Services present (or a representative who knows his plans and movements) will always be found. He will co-ordinate the operations at the incident in collaboration with the heads of the other Services as set out below. He will also be responsible for seeing that the establishment of the Incident Post is reported to the A.R.P. Report or Control Centre and to the appropriate police station, according to local arrangements.

14. On the establishment of an Incident Post, the senior police officer present will be responsible for -

- (a) ascertaining the general situation and the main requirements, especially as to the extent of the damage and casualties, and the measures in hand or proposed by the officers in charge of the various services present:
- (b) determining any question of priority of movement or operations, bearing in mind the general principles stated in Section VI below:
- (c) ensuring that reports on the situation are sent from time to time, and when the incident has been cleared up, to the Report or Control Centre and the appropriate police station, according to local arrangements.

Subject to this, the officers in charge of the several services will remain responsible for the operations of their services.



15. When an Incident Post has been established, the officer in charge of the Fire Service or any A.R.P. Service present will be responsible for -

- (a) establishing close contact with the senior police officer at the Incident Post by taking up his position there or sending a representative who knows his plans and movements.
- (b) keeping the senior police officer informed as to the general situation as it affects his Service, and his plans, especially when any assistance is called for on any units at or near the scene can be sent away, and in any case when the incident has been cleared up, so far as his Service is concerned.

16. The officer in charge of any reinforcing unit approaching the scene of operations will go forward on foot to the Incident Post and report to the representative of his Service and obtain his instructions. The unit will only move forward (a) if so ordered or (b) if no specific instructions can be obtained and there is clear need for additional men, appliances or other equipment.

17. The Incident Post will be prominently marked, and where several units of any Service are at an incident, the position taken up by the senior officer or Leader will also be marked.\*

#### VI. Control of Movement and Parking of Vehicles

18. The movements and positions taken up by vehicles will conform to the following general rules:

- (a) At any fire, fire brigade units normally have priority, and they must be assured of free access to hydrants and other water supplies and to necessary fire fighting positions.
- (b) Rescue party vehicles normally have next priority.
- (c) Any vehicles not immediately needed on the scene should be parked some distance away, if possible up-wind, at 1 length intervals, and space allowed for possible reinforcements.

#### VII. Control of Units from other Areas.

19. Any units from other areas called in to reinforce a local service will proceed in the charge of an officer designated by name by the despatching authority. On arrival in the area, reinforcing units will come under the control of the officer in charge of the local Service and will conform with these instructions equally with the local units. In particular, the officer in charge of any reinforcing unit approaching the incident must go forward on foot to the position taken up by the officer in charge of his Service to obtain instructions before moving forward.

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\*Instructions regarding the standardised distinguishing marks to be adopted will form the subject of a further communication.

Issued to Regional Commissioners for distribution at their discretion.