



Fire Officers' Association

Basic Principles - Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) provides for, and regulates the use of, a range of investigative powers, by a variety of public bodies.

The Act updates the law on in the interception of communications to take account of technological changes such as the internet.

Summary

The main purpose of the act is to ensure that the relevant investigatory powers are used in accordance with human rights. These powers are:

- The interception of communications
- The acquisition of communication data (e.g. billing data)
- Intrusive surveillance
- Covert surveillance
- Covert human intelligence sources (private agents)
- Access to encrypted data

For each of these powers the act ensures that the law clearly covers:

- The purposes for which they are being used
- Which authorities can use the powers
- Who should authorise the use of such power
- The use that can be made of the material gained
- Independent judicial oversight
- A means of redress for the individual.

To ensure a consistent approach a senior officer needs be appointed with responsibility for the oversight of all RIPA issues including:

- A central record of all authorisations
- Training and update of knowledge
- Administration
- Quality control
- Policy