

NEWS



Promoting learning and development across the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services



Incident Commander Ian Nicholson (above left) carries out a dynamic risk assessment before deploying resources. Above right: Two firefighters in breathing apparatus carry out a 'snatch rescue' of a casualty from a vehicle.

Bronze command training underway

The first one-week delivery of the new Scottish Bronze Command Programme took place in May.

Eleven fire service supervisory managers took part in the new training programme, and 136 more are expected to take up this development opportunity in the current financial year.

The College's proposal to deliver a Scottish Bronze Command Programme was agreed in December 2009. The programme forms the final link in the chain of command competence, and follows the successful delivery of bespoke incident command development at Silver and Gold levels.

The Bronze programme brings together learning previously provided through an 'Incident Command Foundation Programme' at

the Fire Service College in England and the 'Managing Incidents' element of the Supervisory Manager Programme, which is delivered in Scotland.

Crew and Watch managers, regardless of duty system, will now be developed and assessed to a quality assured level of competence.

The delivery model is structured in two ways:

- one week practical course with pre-course learning (two e-learning modules); or
- one week technical and one week practical delivery.

Either model can be utilised by services, depending on individual students' needs. The advantages of the Bronze Programme include:

- reduced costs and reduced travel through delivery at the SFSC;
- a wide scope of incident command areas;
- comprehensive initial HAZMAT development;
- accessibility to both wholetime and RDS students;
- levelled on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications

Framework, which forms the basis of a progression route to Silver and Gold levels;

- all students, on all command programmes, are formally assessed.

The opportunity to develop the bronze programme came partly from the reduced numbers of trainee firefighters coming into the service, as Director of Fire Service Training, Bob Virtue, explains.

"Compiling the college prospectus for 2010/11, we realised that a proposed drop-off in recruitment by the

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New training facility

A comprehensive refurbishment programme has brought the Scottish Fire Services College up-to-date



The 1950s training tower (above right) was demolished and replaced with a new steel structure (above).



Monday 29 March marked an historic day at the Scottish Fire Services College as one of the original buildings, a brick-built training tower erected in 1953, was demolished and replaced with a new modern steel framed tower.

The original tower allowed the firefighter of the day to practise and perfect his use of 'hook ladders', which consisted of a single wooden ladder with metal protrusion at the top with a serrated edge. This allowed the firefighter to ascend buildings a floor at a time with no fixings other than the hook (this was in the days before risk assessments and safe systems of work were required).

Tactical building

At the same time, a comprehensive upgrade of the Breathing Apparatus and Tactical Building was coming to an end after a difficult winter and some trying times for the main contractor Morris and Spottiswood.

The transport of labour and materials to the site were disrupted during the

harshest conditions seen in the area for over 30 years. The completed facility is a considerable improvement in terms of visual impact, but the real benefit is the new and improved functionality of the building itself.

The building now consists of a multi-level training tower, two-storey search and rescue compartments and a Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) heat simulation room. The room is an 80m² open area with a controllable fire unit. This can be used to provide both heat and humidity to allow realistic conditions for practical fire fighting training.

The search and rescue compartments can also be subjected to heat and humidity, and there is the option of injecting smoke into the building to further enhance the reality of the scenarios.

Head of Programme Delivery, Garry Burnett, says: "The original facilities were tired and out of date. This refurbishment enhances the realistic training provision at the College, with a wide range of

Firefighter Development Programme review

Scottish fire and rescue services and the College are joining both forces and resources this year to undertake a major review of the online Firefighter Development Programme.

In their current format, the 47 powerpoints and e-learning packages which made up the online Firefighter Development Programme have been at the core of Scottish services' risk-critical development and maintenance programmes for station based staff since 2005.

The work to update and upgrade the packages has already started, with work continuing throughout the year. Keep an eye on our newsletter for more information and updates.

More info: Linda.Hunter@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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options that can be utilised to develop the skills and competence of students in a safe but testing environment.”

The refurbishment project also took in an area of the main building, Henderson House. An outdated bar and lounge were removed and a more

flexible meeting and lounge area created in its place.

The College’s Breathing Apparatus and Tactical Building was upgraded (above right) to provide a multi-level training tower, search and rescue compartments, and a liquefied petroleum gas heat simulation room (right).

Left: A flexible meeting and lounge area replaces the old Thistle Lounge inside the main building.



New audience for the Leadership and Management Pathway

Public and voluntary sector leaders undertake the Chartered Director programme at the Scottish Fire Services College.

The Scottish Fire Services Leadership and Management Pathway has achieved a high profile in recent years. Endorsed by the Chief Fire Officers Association Scotland, funded through the Scottish Fire Services College and recognised as leading practice across the UK, the Pathway has recently notched up a new audience.

Earlier this year, the College co-ordinated delivery of the Institute of Directors’ (IOD) Chartered Director Programme to sixteen top leaders from across the public and voluntary sectors. Topping off the Pathway, the IoD Programme gives principal officers an intensive insight

into strategic change, people management, finance, corporate law; and working with Boards in private and public bodies.

Chief Fire Officer Stephen Hunter, a recent participant, outlined his view on the programme’s value.

“As well as equipping leaders with the skills necessary to lead the modern fire and rescue service, this widely recognised and respected business management programme gives those leaders and the wider service the credibility it

requires in the environments in which it now operates.”

By attracting a wide range of participants, the College secured a unique

learning opportunity for participants from the fire and rescue services.

“Participating in the IoD is a rewarding experience,” explained Chief Fire Officer Jimmy Campbell.

“The course gave me an insight into how the private sector manages change. It was particularly useful to meet others from the public sector, to explore these insights in the context of the common challenges we face as public sector leaders.”

That was a view shared by co-participant Kenneth Hogg, Scottish Government’s Director of Safer Communities.

“The varied background of the participants added a lot of value to the learning. It enabled us to test the applicability of concepts and methodologies in a range of public and voluntary sector environments and to learn from that...approaches taken in one organisation were often useful in others.”

Building on feedback, our plans for 2011 include a new cohort, extended to include private sector leaders.

More info: Linda.Hunter@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Change of focus at the College

A change in delivery focus, a change in delivery content and a change of emphasis in central support: all require a change in structure at the College, as Director of Fire Service Training, Bob Virtue, explains.

The Scottish Fire Services College is adapting to meet the rapidly changing needs of fire and rescue services across Scotland.

Bob Virtue, Director of Fire Service Training explains: "With a review of the Personal Development Record System about to be undertaken, and a need to place greater emphasis on the accuracy and availability of the 47 online Firefighter Development Programme packages, we have moved to beef up the technical and managerial skills at the College, to support and sustain the centrally funded 'e' initiatives.

"New objectives have also come from the

Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG), in particular on the subject of quality-assuring all training delivery across Scotland. As Chair of the group, the Minister for Community Safety, Fergus Ewing, supports MAG members in a drive to achieve recognised standards of delivery and quality assurance.

"This all happens at a time when the public sector as a whole is facing very real financial challenges.

"A restructure is now being rolled out at the College to support the services as they prepare to meet the challenges ahead.

"We have created two new posts of Quality Assurance Support Officer

and 'E' Systems Project Officer.

"I have also written to Chief Fire Officers and learning and development managers to advise them that, when Garry Burnett leaves his secondment to the post of Head of Programme Delivery, he will be replaced by Steven Torrie, recently Chief Fire Officer of Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service.

"Steven has vast experience of the Scottish fire service, and we moved quickly to secure his services when he announced his retirement from Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service. He will be in the combined role of Head of Programme



Steven Torrie will take on the new role of Head of Programme Delivery and Development from 28 June.

Delivery and Development in the revised structure, with Linda Hunter taking up a new position of Head of Systems Support and Quality Assurance."

An organisational structure will be placed on the College website and staff will be in contact with their colleagues in the eight services about the changes.

SFSC News

SFSC News is published twice a year by the Scottish Fire Services College. The next issue will be published in Winter 2010.

It aims to keep those working in Scotland's eight fire and rescue services, and the wider resilience community, informed of the college's activities.

If you have comments or ideas for future issues, please contact the college at the address below:

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New firefighter control development packages set to go online

Earlier this year, the Scottish Fire Services College teamed up with representatives from Scotland's Control teams to explore how the College could support the work of the Scottish Firefighter Control Learning and Development Group.

The first key output of the partnership will be the publication of a new and

improved set of Firefighter Control Development packages, available to the workforce through the College's e-learning platform.

The cross-service working group responsible for the development of the content has recently reported that significant progress has been made on the packages and,

through their successful collaboration with the College, they plan to get the first phase of the new packages online by summer.

For more information on the work of the Firefighter Control Learning and Development Group, contact the project team at: ipdsscottishcontrols@strathclydefire.org

Bronze command training underway (continued from front page)

eight services in Scotland would offer the opportunity to diversify into other areas of training delivery. In fact, no one could have predicted that trainee numbers would drop from 80 last year to just nine on the present

Foundation Programme. Current recruitment projections from the eight Scottish fire and rescue services continue to show low numbers for a considerable period of time. "Other opportunities to

deliver a range of training have been seized, and on return to business in the first week after the summer break, the college will accommodate 115 students, on a variety of development programmes."