

Circular number	65/2009	Date issued	29 October 2009
This circular is	For information	No response required	
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular notifies Fire and Rescue Services of the launch of the Retained Duty System Employers' Information Toolkit		

Retained Duty System Employers' Information Toolkit

Issued by:

John Dackombe

Fire and Rescue Service Development Division

Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
London Fire Commissioner
The Chief Fire Officer**

Please forward to:

**Heads of Human Resources
Heads of Recruitment
Retained Managers
Retained Liaison Officers
FRS Communications Manager**

Summary

The Retained Duty System (RDS) Employers' Information Toolkit has been produced by Communities and Local Government following extensive research involving employers in areas served by RDS fire stations. The Toolkit is designed to support Fire and Rescue Services in engaging with local employers to raise awareness about the duty system and encourage their support to release staff to become RDS Firefighters.

For further information, contact:

**John Dackombe or Mona Shah
Fire & Rescue Development Division
Communities & Local Government
3rd Floor, Zone D1, Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU**

Direct line **0303 44 42945 (John Dackombe)
0303 44 42950 (Mona Shah)**

Fax

E-mail john.dackombe@communities.qsi.gov.uk
mona.shah@communities.qsi.gov.uk

Website

www.communities.gov.uk

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 One of the key conclusions of the 2005 Retained Review Report was the absence of strategic engagement by Fire and Rescue Services with local business to promote a better understanding of the vital role of the Retained Duty System (RDS) in protecting communities and encouraging their support by releasing employees for RDS duties.
- 1.2 In 2006 Communities and Local Government commissioned and published the findings of a study profiling the primary employment status of RDS firefighters. The report provided data on the primary occupations and business sectors that tended to support the RDS. A follow-up study in 2007 (of over 1,000 businesses situated around RDS fire stations) examined the nature of the relationship between Fire and Rescue Services and the business community. The research reports can be found at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/primaryemployment>
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/rdssurvey.pdf>
- 1.3 Follow-up research involving focus groups of local employers with, in the main, no experience of employing an RDS firefighter, provided additional insight on:
- What appealed to them about the RDS
 - The perceived barriers to releasing staff, and
 - How a positive relationship between the employer and their Fire and Rescue Service might be maintained
- 1.4 In the light of the research findings Communities and Local Government commissioned work to develop an Employers' Information Toolkit, with the aim of supporting Fire and Rescue Services in their engagement with local employers, to help raise awareness about the duty system and how it works, and to encourage their support to release staff to become RDS Firefighters.

2.0 The Toolkit

- 2.1 The primary objectives of the Toolkit are to:
- Support Fire and Rescue Services in establishing effective links with local businesses
 - Generate awareness about the RDS across the business community
 - Encourage employers to support the RDS and release staff
 - Explain benefits of the RDS to business and dispel any myths, and
 - Support work at national stakeholder level to address recruitment and retention issues within the Fire and Rescue Service
- 2.2 The Toolkit consists of a range of generic materials about the RDS, as follows:
- A CD-Rom
 - Fact Sheets
 - Case Studies (RDS Firefighters and their Employers)
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - Guidance on how to use the Toolkit and tips on good practice
 - A CD containing a radio advertisement (Only one copy each of these will be sent to each FRS via the *Chief Fire Officers*)

2.3 The Toolkit is designed to be flexible, to enable Fire and Rescue Services to choose the tools and methods that will work best for them. It includes adaptable templates to allow RDS Station Managers to supplement the employer information packs they put together, with local information such as data on call-outs received, the time commitment involved, and the types of local emergencies dealt with. Fire and Rescue Services can use the supplied templates to produce their own case studies using local RDS firefighters and their employers, if they so choose. The templates also allow flexibility to include Fire and Rescue Service logos, contact details etc. By combining the items in the Toolkit, each Service can make up its own employer information pack, tailored to the local business community. The Guidance document provides advice and tips on how to make the best use of the Toolkit, although it is a matter for each Fire and Rescue Service to decide how it wishes to produce and distribute the product locally.

3.0 Radio Advertisement

3.1 The Toolkit pack also includes a CD with a pre-recorded 30 second radio advertisement. This is an additional tool to aid local communication strategies aimed at the business community. The advert has been licensed by Communities and Local Government until 2011 so Fire and Rescue Services can use it as much or as little as they like within that time. Fire and Rescue Services will only need to book and pay for broadcast time with their local radio station.

4.0 Copies of the Toolkit

4.1 Communities and Local Government will send copies of the Toolkit to each Fire and Rescue Service headquarters in the week commencing 2nd November, for cascading to all RDS Station Managers, RDS Liaison Officers and Heads of HR. Please note that the pack addressed to the Chief Fire Officer will include, as mentioned previously, one copy of the CD containing the radio advertisement.

4.2 A PDF of the Toolkit is available on the Communities and Local Government website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/oncallfirefighters>

CLG will not be producing further hard copies of the Toolkit once the current limited stock is depleted.

5.0 Enquiries

5.1 Toolkit: If you have any queries about the toolkit please contact either Mona Shah on 0303 44 42950 or John Dackombe on 0303 44 42945.

5.2 Radio Advertisement: Further information about the radio advert can be obtained from Communities and Local Government Marketing Team on 0303 444 1166

John Dackombe

Fire and Rescue Service Development Division