

Chief Fire Officers (Scotland)

10 March 2011

Dear Chief Officer

## **DEAR CHIEF OFFICER (SCOTLAND) LETTER 6/2011**

### **FAILURE OF CABLE FIXING IN FIRES**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Department of Communities and Local Government issued an Immediate Bulletin No. 4 on 8 March 2011 on the potential hazard posed by the failure of cable fixings in a fire which may expose firefighters to significant risk during firefighting operations. This DCOL(S) brings the matter to the attention of all Chief Fire Officers in Scotland.
2. This hazard may also affect the means of escape for occupants especially in the common corridors of residential flats during the early stage of a fire.

#### **Background**

3. Cables such as those used for power, telecommunications and security devices are often retrospectively fitted to buildings. This is particularly commonplace in shared areas such as the stairwells and corridors of residential flats.
4. These cables are often installed in surface-mounted plastic trunking. A number of fire investigations has identified that this type of trunking can become deformed at the relatively low temperatures associated with fire gasses flowing into common corridors during the early stages of a fire, leaving cables unsecured.
5. The unsecured cables may drop from the trunking and hang down creating a potential hazard to any persons using the means of escape and with the risk of entrapment and electrocution for occupants and firefighters.

## Advice

6. Fire and Rescue Services are advised to bring this hazard to the attention of all operational and fire safety staff and include it in operational risk management arrangements. This should also include, where possible, identification of such hazards when crews carry out operational pre-planning 9(2)(d) visits.
7. The risks associated with this hazard will be incorporated into the Generic Risk Assessment for Buildings, and in future operational guidance on Fires in the Built Environment which is currently in development and is planned to be published by CLG later this year.
8. I would ask that you bring this to the attention of relevant staff within your service.

Yours sincerely



**STEVEN TORRIE**

Head of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit