Circular number: 39/2008  
Date issued: 4 August 2008

This circular is: For information  
No response required

This circular is: Relevant to the National Framework

Status: To inform the FRS of the new agreement for dealing with hydrant data.

FiReControl Project and Water (Hydrants)

Issued by:  
Dermot Paddon  
FRD FiReControl Project Head of Business & Delivery

Addressed to:  
Please forward to:  
The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Chief Executive of the County Council  
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority  
The Chief Fire Officer

Summary

This circular advises about an agreement between Communities and Local Government and the water companies in England to provide hydrant information to fire and rescue services. A New Ways of Working document will be issued in the near future to provide further clarification of actions required.

For further information, contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graham Price</td>
<td>Direct line: 020 7944 5724</td>
<td><a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FiReControl Project</td>
<td>Fax: 020 7944 5599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities and Local Government</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:graham.price@communities.gsi.gov.uk">graham.price@communities.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashdown House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123 Victoria Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London SW1E 6DE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Provision of Hydrant Information

1.0 The Provision of Hydrant Information

1.1 The purpose of this circular is to advise how the FiReControl project intends to meet the requirements for hydrants contained in Convergence Outcome 52 Water Supplies. This circular does not deal with alternative water supplies.

1.2 The method for meeting the Convergence Outcome is to provide a framework for creating an accurate national database for hydrants that can be used on Mobile Data Terminals and within the Regional Control Centres.

1.3 The move to the regional control service means that in future crews may need information about hydrants outside of their normal area of response. It is important therefore that hydrant data is accurate, relevant and in a standard format.

1.4 The new framework for exchange of hydrant data is contained in a legal agreement that will be signed by Communities and Local Government and the 21 individual water companies. The agreement was sent to Water UK on 23 July 2008 and has now been forwarded by Water UK to the individual water companies for signing.

2.0 The Agreement

2.1 The main purpose of the agreement is to formalise the exchange of information about hydrant location, the size of the main the hydrant is fitted to and the extent of any Area Metered Zone where applicable. It also establishes a clear process for exchange of data between a FRS and a water company to improve the accuracy of the data. The agreement is attached at Annex A.

2.2 The 23 water companies have all agreed to provide, wherever possible within twenty working days, the most up to date information they have about the location, size of main and any Area Metered Zone for each hydrant that they are aware of within their area of responsibility. The data will be in an Access database and comply with an agreed format.

3.0 Implementing the Agreement

3.1 The creation of the national hydrant database does not in anyway adversely affect any current arrangements that an individual FRS may have with the water companies within their area of responsibility. The new agreement allows for sharing and use of the hydrant data by any FRS in England.

3.2 An FRS does not have to accept or use the hydrant data that will be provided by the water companies through CLG if the FRS is confident that their own hydrant database is as good as or better than that supplied. The FRS are asked to feed back to the water companies any information they have that improves the accuracy of the water company data. The method and format of the feedback data is specified within the agreement.

3.3 Where a water company receives updated information about a hydrant from an FRS, the water company have agreed to amend their database accordingly.
3.4 If an FRS has additional hydrants within their own database that are not included on the database supplied by CLG, or the FRS subsequently identifies any additional hydrants, the FRS should inform the water company of the location of the hydrant and the size of main if known. The water company are then obliged to investigate the hydrant and inform the FRS of either the acceptance of the hydrant on to the database or the rejection of the hydrant and the reason why. The format of the data exchange is specified in the agreement.

4.0 Monitoring the Agreement

4.1 The Agreement is of national importance as it will improve information available to operational crews, especially when responding outside of their normal area. Communities and Local Government need to ensure that there is steady progress in improving the accuracy and availability of hydrant data and that the agreement is functioning as intended. To achieve this, a database will be created on ‘Unicorn’.

4.2 Unicorn is a private web based facility for sharing information between the FiReControl project and fire and rescue services. Every FRS has nominated personnel who can access Unicorn.

4.3 Communities and Local Government will populate the database on Unicorn with data from each water company. Each FRS is asked to update the hydrant information on Unicorn when changes have been made.

Dermot Paddon

FRD FiReControl Project