

CONTINUOUS DUTY SYSTEM STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service Continuous Duty System to maintain Gold Duty Rota

1.0 Continuous Duty Operational Responsibilities

1.1 Brigade and Area Managers (B&AMs) are conditioned to a Continuous Duty System (CDS), which is taken to mean that each B&AM will provide strategic operational cover 24 hours per day, each day of the year, in line with this policy and operating procedure. In order for this system to be sustainable and ensure a reasonable degree of work life balance, each of the B&AMs will be designated as 1st, to 4th call (G1, G2, G3 & G4), on a day to day rotational basis using an eight week cycle, referred to as the Gold Rota.

1.2 This CDS provides for a resilient operational response capability, at the strategic level (Gold command), to cater for large, complex and/or protracted incidents lasting over several days or longer. This is achieved on the basis that each Brigade Manager and Area Manager is assigned a call designation on the Gold rota, in typically twelve hour intervals (or such other interval as determined by the 1st Call Officer given the nature of the incident) as follows:

- **G1** - to be in attendance within 1 hour from time of mobilisation (See para 1.3).
- **G2** - to be in attendance within 12 hours from time of mobilisation or other interval determined by 1st Call Officer
- **G3** - to be in attendance within 24 hours from time of mobilisation or other interval as determined by 1st or 2nd Call Officer
- **G4** –to be in attendance within 48 hours from time of mobilisation.

The Area Manager who is not on the Gold rota for continuous duty, will be designated a call position on the Silver rota, therefore maintaining their continuous duty status.

1.3 “In attendance within” is taken to mean the time from the Gold officer being mobilised to arrival at any one of four designated locations. Designated locations is taken to mean the NYFRS Major Incident Room (Northallerton Control), NYFRS Training Centre (Alternative MIR facility), The Multi Agency Gold Command Suite (North Yorkshire Police HQ, Alverton Court, Northallerton), or the alternative Multi Agency Gold Command Suite (Fulford Road, Police Station). For incidents requiring attendance of a B&AM at the scene of operations, the G1 Officer should, if necessary, utilise the early-notification process to move to a location such that the incident is within one hour travel time should further escalation occur. In any event, the early-notification process only provides for a maximum additional travel time of 30 minutes.

1.4 B&AMs must remain contactable, via the allocated mobile phone, at all times, including when on leave. It is the Gold Officer’s responsibility to check their mobile phone at sufficiently frequent intervals to be able to meet their duty rota obligations.

1.5 The CFO/CE and DCFO must never be out of the UK at the same time

1.6 Annual leave can be taken as G2, G3 or G4 subject to maintaining availability to meet the response standards in paragraph 1.2 above. B&AM’s will plan leave requirements in a manner that fulfils the Gold rota on call requirements. Activities that may impact on availability such as travel outside of the UK should be restricted to G3 (restricted to Europe)

or G4 officers only (with the exception contained in paragraph 1.5). In the event of a 'serious incident' officers may be recalled from annual leave.

- 1.7 In the unlikely event that the Gold rota cannot be immediately sustained due to incapacity, the Area Manager on Silver rota will be used to support the Gold rota requirements.

Gold Officer Operational Duty System Standard Operating Procedure

2.0 Preparation and Maintenance of Gold Rota

- 2.1 The Gold rota is an electronic spreadsheet maintained by the PAs. PAs are responsible for checking that appropriate Gold cover is in place and for advance notification to Control of cover and subsequent changes. Gold officers have read-only access to the Gold rota.
- 2.2 Gold officers may agree to swap or change rota designations, through mutual agreement between those affected, in order to facilitate leave or other plans. A request to amend the rota should then be made by e-mail to the PAs. This amendment will be logged as provisional until all Gold rota members confirm, by e-mail to the PAs, that they are in agreement with the amendment. The PAs will then confirm that the amendment has been agreed and the revised Gold is confirmed. In the unlikely event of a failure to gain mutual agreement over the rota change, or where the exigencies of the Service warrant, the CFO reserves the right to approve or reject a request to change the rota.
- 2.3 In order to keep the frequency of requests for rota changes, mid-year, to a low level, Gold officers will meet no later than each autumn to jointly consider preferences for leave in the following year which may not accord with the scheduled opportunities on the Gold rota. This meeting will take place before the Silver rota is prepared to enable the Area Managers who cover both rotas to arrange their leave. The aim will be to agree an amended rota designation that enables each officer to take at least one period of leave each year at a time of their preference. No period of leave will extend beyond 21 consecutive days.

This meeting will also consider and agree the rota cover for the Christmas and New Year period to ensure an equal distribution of cover over this holiday period, irrespective of the rota pattern.

3.0 Mobilising and Control

- 3.1 The mobilising of Gold Officers will be in accordance with the criteria set out in 1.2 above. The indicative attendance times for the 2nd and 3rd call officers will be within 3 hours but, dependent on circumstances, they can use their discretion up to the response time limits identified. A tiered early notification process is embedded within the mobilising process to make Officers aware at an early stage of any large/escalating incident that may ultimately warrant their attendance. The early notification is prompted 2 mobilisation levels below the mandatory attendance requirement for the officers in question. Upon receipt of early notification, the officer should consider reducing the response time by relocating closer to the expected mobilising destination if the incident is of a nature that may escalate to the point where a response will be mandatory.
- 3.2 During spate conditions or a prolonged incident the Gold rota may be varied by the G1 officer to suit the circumstances, having regard to Health and Safety / Working Time requirements.

3.3 The responsibility levels allocated to the B&AMs provide fallback arrangements in the event that the G1 Officer cannot be immediately contacted and as such the Control Shift Manager / Duty Officer can redirect support requirements to the G2 officer in such circumstances.

4.0 Gold Officer Responsibilities

4.1 G1 Officer:

- To be responsible for operational FRS incidents of a Gold or significant Silver nature which occur within the Service area.
- To take responsibility for non operational matters of a corporate nature that require an immediate response/action (e.g. initiating the Business Continuity Management Plan). This will be on the basis that the responsible manager is unavailable and/or issue has arisen out of normal office hours
- To provide strategic level operational support, guidance and advice to relevant staff and partner agencies in both of the above circumstances as required.

4.2 G2, G3 & G4 Officers:

- To assume responsibilities of the officer being relieved, or who becomes unavailable for whatever reason.
- To provide strategic level operational support, guidance and advice to relevant staff, partners and other agencies as required.

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