



# **Operational Training Strategy**

### Version Control of Document

Date of Amendments	Reason for Amendments
19 <sup>th</sup> June 2012	Feedback from AM OPA
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## **1. THE STRATEGY**

This Strategy outlines Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's approach to ensuring that its operational staff are trained and competent in order to fulfil the various operational demands placed upon them. It demonstrates the commitment of the Service to delivering operational training.

It is important to understand how we define 'Competence', which in this strategy, means<sup>1</sup> the ability to undertake responsibilities and to perform operational activities to a recognised standard on a regular basis. Competence is a combination of practical and thinking skills, experience and knowledge which is used to undertake work activities in accordance with agreed standards, rules and procedures.

The strategy does not sit in isolation, and when the Service plans and prepares annually to meet its operational training demands it considers and analyses a wide range of internal and external influences and drivers and ensures that these are all fed into the decision making process when the annual operational training planning cycle commences.

The strategy's aim is to ensure that the Service has in place Incident Command and operational training programmes being delivered by competent Instructors. These programmes are then reviewed in order to confirm their continued effectiveness, quality and relevance.

All of this operational training delivery will be assessed in accordance with the Service's Assessment Strategy in order to confirm the desired learning and skills outcomes which will all be validated through the Service's cluster exercise programme.

## **2. The Underlying Principles to the Strategy**

The strategy commits the Service to adopting and implementing best practice principles<sup>1</sup> for the provision of ensuring a competent workforce; these principles have also been cited and reinforced as best practice<sup>2</sup> for the Fire and Rescue Service in 2011. This strategy and its underlying training policies are aimed at assuring and further developing competent performance in work. Their aim is to ensure that individuals are clear about the performance that is expected of them, that they have received appropriate training, development and assessment and that they maintain or improve their competence over time.

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<sup>1</sup> Developing and maintaining staff competence; published by HSE in 2002. Second edition published by Office of Rail Regulation 2007.

<sup>2</sup> A review of current processes for operational training and development in the Fire and Rescue Service: Greenstreet Berman 2011

**Principle 1: Identify activities and assess risks:** the strategy identifies the core training activities required to be undertaken in order to address operational risks. (See fire appliance model, page 9)

**Principle 2: Select Standards:** National Occupational Standards<sup>3</sup> and local standards<sup>4</sup> are identified, selected and are used to assess competence. (See workplace assessment pillar)

**Principle 3: Establish the requirements for training, development and assessment:** Operational information from debriefs, results of workplace assessments, incident reviews and evidence from internal and external auditing will be used to establish training requirements. (See reviews of training, exercises and incidents)

**Principle 4: Assure Instructor competence:** The standard of competence for Instructors will be maintained and assessed. (See individual training policies)

**Principle 5: Train, develop and assess staff:** Staff will be trained, developed and their competence assessed using methods which are appropriate and relevant. (See training plan and assessment strategy)

**Principle 7: Control activities which need to be undertaken:** Control processes will be in place which ensures that staff only undertake work for which they are competent. (See workplace assessment)

**Principle 8: Monitor and re-assess staff performance:** The performance of staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure competence is being maintained. (See workplace assessment)

**Principle 9: Update the competence of individuals:** Ongoing refresher training will be provided to update competence. (See training plan and training policies)

**Principle 10: Keep records:** Adequate records of training, development and assessments will be kept and maintained. (See HRPro)

**Principle 11: Review and feedback:** training, feedback, development and assessment of competence will be reviewed and lessons learned put into actions for continuous improvement. (See assessment strategy and workplace assessment)

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<sup>3</sup> NOS will be identified and selected from FF, CM, WM, SM, GM and AM role maps and from relevant FRS NOS as held by the Skills for Justice Sector Skills Council.

<sup>4</sup> Local standards will be those assessments undertaken by the OTG and CTG.

### **3. Operational Training Delivery**

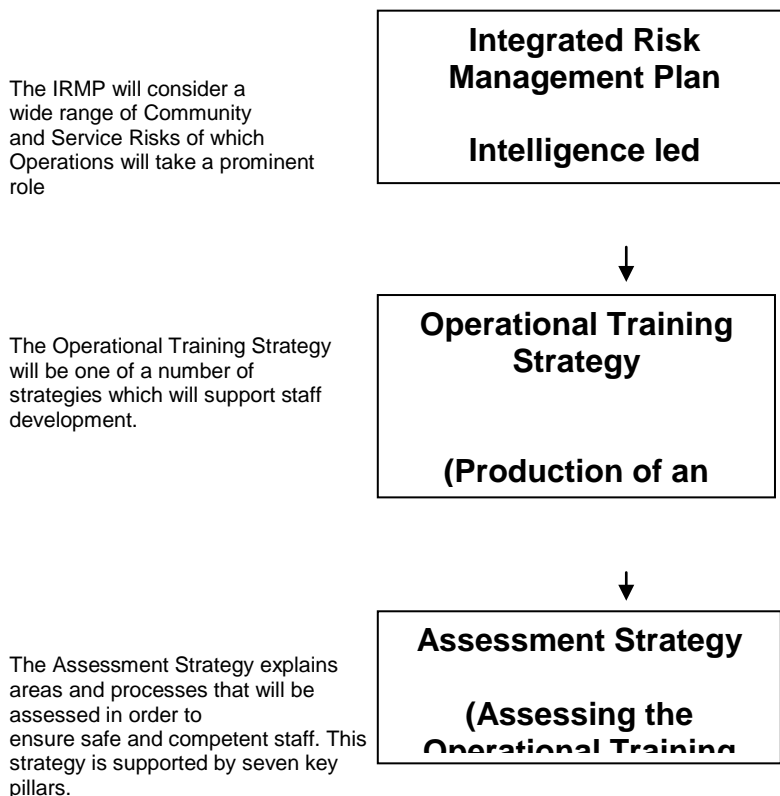
Operational training delivery is aimed at three levels of individual need; these are:

- Those staff who are just commencing their career as Firefighters (Trainee phase)
- Those staff who are in the early part of their careers either as Firefighters or as Managers but are not yet competent in this role (Development phase)
- Those staff who have evidenced their abilities and are now deemed to be competent in role. (Competent phase)

For each phase there are distinct needs and the Service will ensure that these needs are met. To this end this operational training strategy has a 'strategic fit' into the Service's Assessment Strategy and learning outcomes delivered will be assessed in order to ensure its relevance, its effectiveness and that it makes staff competent to undertake their role.

### **4. The Strategic Delivery Model**

Each year the Service undertakes a holistic review of the risks that it has to address and ensures that its delivery plans, policies and procedures are fit for purpose. From this review it produces its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and this strategic plan is then supported by departmental plans. Any IRMP operational training outcomes will be incorporated in the annual operational training plan. See Figure 1 below, the Delivery Model.



**Figure 1. The Delivery Model**

## **5. Initial, Refresher and Specialist Operational Training**

Every operational member of staff in their career must be competent to ride as a member of a firefighting team in a front line fire appliance. Once at an operational incident this fire appliance and its team are there to provide and support eight core operational skill areas and these are to competently:

1. Command and Control the incident
2. Drive and manoeuvre all appliances
3. Operate near to or in water and to deliver water to extinguish fires
4. Wear Breathing Apparatus
5. Deal with Hazardous Materials
6. Use extrication equipment
7. Work at height
8. Deliver life saving techniques

**Figure 2 below demonstrates pictorially the initial and refresher operational training for all of its Firefighters and Commanders.**

In order to meet these eight areas newly appointed operational Firefighters will be trained developed and assessed in the following:

- Command and Control training for Firefighters
- Pumps and Primers
- Breathing Apparatus and compartment fire training
- Working at Height initial training
- Road Traffic Collision extrication training
- Hazardous Materials initial training
- Water Safety initial training
- Positive Pressure Ventilation initial training
- Basic Trauma And Casualty Care Training (BTACC)

If they are identified as having the aptitude to become a driver they may also be trained as a:

- Large Goods Vehicle Driver (LGV)
- Emergency Response Driver
- Aerial Appliance Driver/Operator
- Fork Lift Truck Operator

There will be core initial training for Managers in:

- Incident Command
- Officer Blue Light Driver Training (Emergency Response)

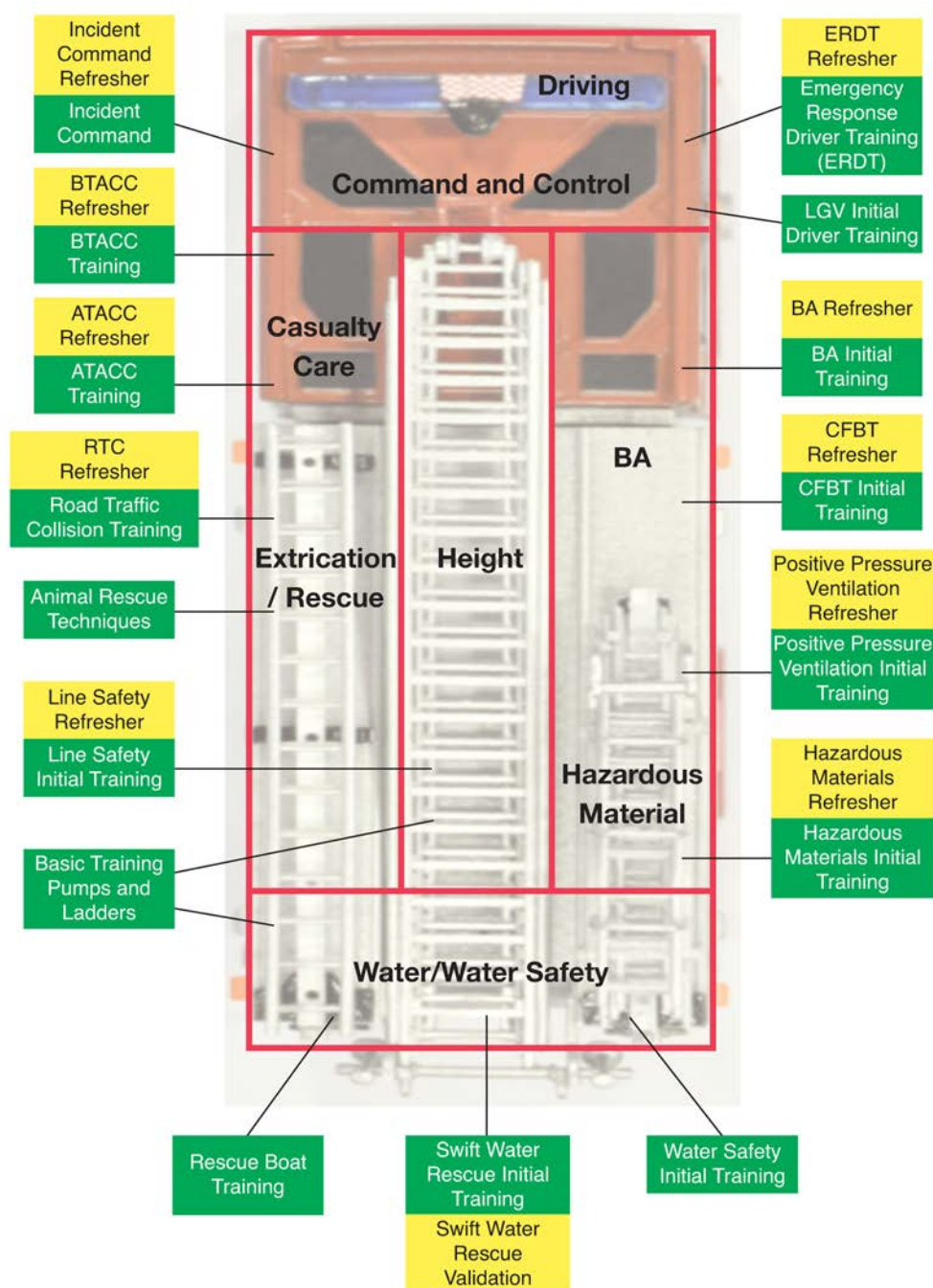
**There will be Refresher Training (Maintenance of competence) in:**

- Incident Command
- Breathing Apparatus
- Compartment Fires
- Road Traffic Collision
- Height Safety
- Hazardous Material
- Basic Trauma And Casualty Care
- Swift Water Rescue
- Water Safety
- Wading
- Emergency Response Driving
- Officer Blue Light Driving (Emergency Response)

Initial and refresher operational training will be delivered through centrally run or centrally planned programmes and locally run training and development courses which will be centrally supported. Those run centrally will be delivered by the Operational Training



Group and the Command Training Group. Any external training requirements, for example, such as an Instructor qualification from the Fire Service College, will be planned for accordingly by the Operational Training Manager.



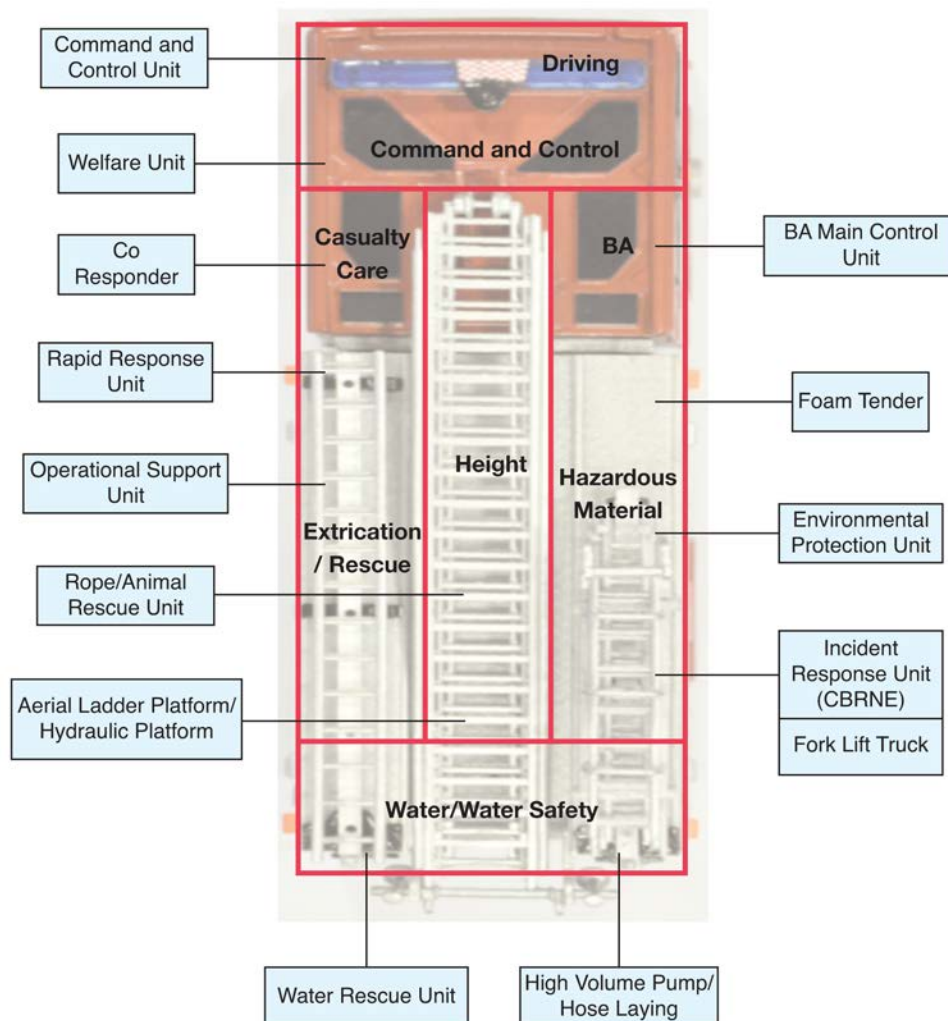
**Figure 2 The initial and refresher operational training for Firefighters and Commanders.**

As operational staff progress in their careers they may also undertake initial training of a more specialist nature:

- Aerial Appliance driver/operator

- LGV Extrication
- Swift Water Rescue
- Wading Safely in Water
- Rescue Boat Handling Skills
- Animal Rescue Techniques
- Anaesthesia Trauma And Critical Care (ATACC)

Additional specialist appliances which are strategically located by the Service in order to provide enhanced specialist support. See figure 3 below.



**Figure 3. Specialist Appliance Support to front line Fire Appliances. Specialist Training Requirements for selected Firefighters and Commanders.**

### **Continuation Operational Training at Stations**

Ongoing 'day to day' operational training planning, delivery and review is the responsibility of Station and Watch Managers. This will

be in accordance with the Station Management Framework and the Service's Training Forecast.

## **6. Responsibility for delivery and content**

The Head of Operational Policy and Assurance has ultimate responsibility for planning, delivering and reviewing operational training.

The Operational Training Manager will produce an information paper which will contain the proposed following year's operational training plan for the Service; this will be communicated in November of each year. This paper will contain an outline of what operational training and development courses will be run based upon Service risk and Service need.

The training plan will aim at addressing operational skills. It will be flexible in order to react to internal and external influences such as information about local and national incident trends, any key Health and Safety news and updates, any changes in relevant National Occupational Standards, Fire Service Circulars and Technical Bulletins.

Whilst Operational Service Managers are using this 'forward looking' training information to assist them in their staff development planning, the Operational Training Manager will produce the year's training programme and align competent Instructional Staff to each operational training course. These staff will ensure that Learning and development plans and outcomes within each operational training course are aligned to Service needs.

## **7. Underpinning the Operational Training Strategy**

This strategy will be underpinned with a number of training policies and each one will provide information about how the Service will ensure that operational staff will be developed and the standards that the Service will strive to achieve; see Figure 4 below. These, where relevant, will provide links to National Occupational Standards, technical bulletins, guidance documents and key reports in order to ensure that staff acquire, apply and maintain the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to fulfil their roles competently and safely. The policies will also detail how skills will be updated and the timescales that this will be expected to take place.



**Figure 4. Underpinning Training Policies to the Operational Training Strategy**

The Head of Operational Policy and Assurance will be responsible for the content and review of these policies.

## **8. Reviewing and Auditing of Operational Training (Quality Assurance)**

The success of this operational training strategy will be measured through reviewing the:

- Numbers of all operational staff attending training.
- Numbers of all operational staff reaching the benchmark for that training.
- Numbers of operational Firefighters in their trainee phase passing their certificate to ride assessment.
- Numbers of operational Firefighters in their development phase passing their four quarterly assessments.
- Numbers of operational Firefighters in their development phase passing their FF3, FF4 and FF5 end of unit assessment.
- Numbers of operational Commanders in development passing their WM7 and EFSM2 end of unit assessment.

An annual report will be produced by the Head of OP&A and submitted to the Senior Management Team.

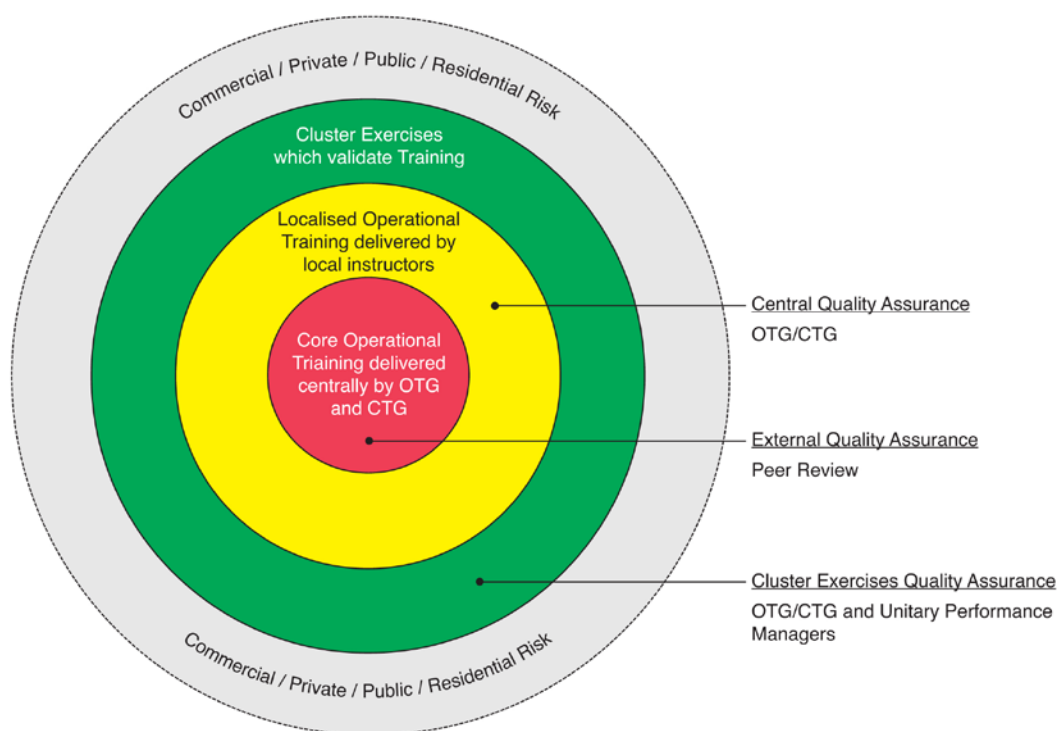
Operational Specialist training courses at stations will be delivered by station based competent instructors. The Operational Training Manager will put in place processes to quality assure this locally delivered training and development.

Standard Verifiers from Awarding Bodies such as Edexcel and Skills for Justice will quality assure those accredited awards offered to staff through the Accredited Centre Process.

The above will provide evidence that operational staff have received training and development which supports their ability to perform their operational duties competently.

Where staff are assessed, during training and in the workplace, and found to have development needs then an individual development plan will be prepared and agreed.

The **Quality Assurance Operational Wheel of Competence**, see figure 5 below, pictorially shows how this will operate



**Figure 5. Quality Assurance Operational Wheel of Competence**

Central core operational training will be reviewed and quality assured through a detailed analysis of the year's central training programmes. Local based training will be quality assured by the Operational Training Group and the Command Training Group and by undertaking Operational Assurance inspections of stations.

The Service's Operational Learning Platform will be used to share all operational learning.

Local and central training will be validated through the planning, delivery and review of station cluster exercises. The results of these will be fed-back into the operational training cycle.