



## Briefing for the Amesbury; Devizes; Pewsey and Tidworth Community Area Boards - July 2015

### Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service: Message from Station Manager Jason Underwood – Amesbury; Devizes, Ludgershall & Pewsey Community of fire stations

The aim of this article; which is one in a series, is to provide a benchmark of information to allow you to understand the changes which are occurring in the local fire service.

For various reasons Wiltshire FRS managers do not see your area the same way you (or our partners) might. I hope this first article helps explain this,



**The fire service map of Wiltshire looks like this.**

Six communities, comprising 4 stations, each 'community' run by a Station Manager. This recently changed from 9 communities to release more managers to work on the Dorset & Wiltshire FRS's combination.

**Our boundaries do not match Community Area Boards or other divisions.**

For example what I think of as Amesbury; Devizes, Ludgershall or Pewsey fire 'station ground' is very different from the Community Area Board's in my area of command.

Our areas are defined by historically which fire station would arrive first. This is now out of date but still helps us decide which station or community is responsible for the work which needs doing.

### What we do

You may have noticed that Fire Service staff turn up at all sorts of meetings and events.

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### Prevention, Protection, Response

We aim to work with you and our partners to prevent fires and other emergencies from happening; help people protect themselves if they do happen, and to respond quickly with rescues and fire fighting when all else has failed.

### People, Property, Environment

Saving lives is our core aim but we also work to protect property and the environment.

It is no wonder we seem to turn up everywhere.

This series of articles is mostly about the people who work at stations (because that is what I do) but we have other staff, such as Mike Franklin and Graham Weller (Partnership & Community

Engagement managers) who do nothing but promote prevention; protection, partnership working and community engagement. They are much more reliable when attending pre-planned events and meetings because they don't have to drop everything to attend emergencies! Due to the working commitments I have and my duty patterns it is unlikely that I will be attending Community Area Boards unless there is a specific need to do so.



### How do the stations do that?

To provide the best service possible within our financial limits we have several ways of staffing our stations.

We have about 500 fire fighting staff trained to attend incidents with about 200 on duty at any one time.

When not attending incidents or training they support Prevention and Protection work.

- Some stations are staffed 24hrs a day 7 days a week. They can maintain more specialist skills, respond quickly day or night and can carry out prevention and protection work whenever it is needed.
- Some stations are staffed during the day 7 days a week. They can maintain more specialist skills, respond quickly during the day and carry out prevention and protection work during the day.
- Some stations include staff who work during office hours Monday to Friday. Work by these staff concentrates on Prevention and Protection work
- All except one station in Wiltshire relies for some or its entire staff on people with other jobs who respond from home or work. This 'On Call' system is very cost effective but means that they are slower to respond and not available to carry out as much prevention and protection work. It is also increasingly difficult to find people to do this type of emergency response.

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In the 'community of fire stations' covering my area there are two stations with On Call staff and two stations with a crew available on station during the 5 day working week (with On Call staffing the rest of the time).

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### **Raising awareness of carbon monoxide poisoning**

Carbon monoxide (CO) is colourless, odourless and tasteless, but it is also extremely dangerous. Without a CO detector, you have no way of knowing that you're being poisoned until the damage is already being done. Carbon monoxide kills some 15 people every year, so it is vital that every possible care is taken."

CO detectors can be bought in most supermarkets and DIY stores. They're not expensive and they save lives. If you're thinking of staying in holiday accommodation over the summer, it is certainly recommended to take a detector with you, and they should always be used when camping or caravanning.

Carbon monoxide is produced by the incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels. Most cases of CO poisoning are caused by gas appliances and flues that have not been properly installed or maintained, or are poorly ventilated.

There are signs that you can look for that indicate incomplete combustion is occurring and may result in the production of CO:

- Yellow or orange rather than blue flames (except in fuel effect fires or flueless appliances)
- Soot or yellow/brown staining around or on appliances
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out
- Increased condensation inside windows

Early symptoms of CO poisoning can be confused with food poisoning, viral infections, flu or simple tiredness; however, warning signs include:

- Headaches or dizziness
- Breathlessness
- Nausea
- Loss of consciousness
- Tiredness
- Pains in the chest or stomach
- Erratic behaviour
- Visual problems

Anyone who experiences any of these symptoms and believe they may have been exposed to carbon monoxide, they should seek urgent medical advice from a GP or an A&E department.

Further information about staying safe in your home can be found at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/safetyinthehome](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/safetyinthehome)

Michael FRANKLIN

Partnerships & Community Engagement Manager

July 2015

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