



THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

The professional voice of the
UK fire and rescue service

CFOA N^o 5 DISTRICT

**Protocol for Inter Fire & Rescue Service
Health & Safety Audits**

PROTOCOL FOR INTER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDITS

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1. Introduction

This document details a number of audit principles, criteria and practices which should be applied whenever the safety management system of a Fire and Rescue Service is audited by a team of auditors drawn from neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services.

Its use will enable auditors to plan, carry out and document audits in a uniform manner, and present their results in a style best suited to benchmarking with like organisations.

2. Audit Definition

Audit may be defined as 'a systematic and independent examination undertaken to determine whether activities and related results comply with the Fire and Rescue Service's planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are suitable to achieve defined objectives, standards and requirements'.

3. Why Audit?

The principal reasons why Fire and Rescue Services should be the subject of regular audits include:

- To check compliance with legislative requirements.
- To check compliance with relevant guidance, e.g. HS(G)65; to check compliance with the Fire and Rescue Service's own procedures.
- To assess the safety culture using specified performance indicators.
- In certain circumstances, to identify training needs.
- To provide for internal and inter-Fire and Rescue Service comparisons.
- To chart changes in health and safety performance.
- To assist in providing evidence for a possible defence in the event of civil litigation and/or enforcing authority action.

4. Audit Objectives

To be successful an audit must:

- Determine the extent of conformity or non-conformity of the safety management system.
- Provide an opportunity for the Fire and Rescue Service to improve & develop its safety management system.
- Provide management with information on the Fire and Rescue Service's performance against its defined objectives, standards and requirements.

5. Requirements of an Audit System

To be effective, an audit must:

- Be planned and systematic.
- Have full support from the management of the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service.
- Have clearly defined objectives, which have been agreed with the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service.
- An audit team will consist of four auditors; the lead auditor and one other must be competent in the RoSPA QSA system.
- Carry sufficient authority within the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service.
- Produce clear results, which are easily communicated to the management of the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service.
- Result in action plans being drawn up by the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service.
- Fire and Rescue Services in the South East region will audit using the RoSPA QSA system

6. Appointment and Responsibilities of the Lead Auditor

A Lead Auditor should be appointed to oversee and co-ordinate the audit process, and to assume ultimate responsibility for the audit. The Lead Auditor should be an experienced and competent safety practitioner/manager and will have successfully completed a RoSPA QSA Course (or equivalent) and should have taken part in CFOA Inter Service Audit previously. The auditor will have authority to make final decisions regarding the conduct of the audit and the way in which its findings are reported.

The Lead Auditor has additional responsibilities, which include:

- Agreeing with the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service the scope and extent of the audit
- The selection of other audit team members
- Preparation of the audit plan.
- Representing the audit team when addressing or responding to the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service.
- Submission of the final audit report.
- Arranging a follow-up inspection and report.
- Co-ordinate arrangements for any submissions to RoSPA for accreditation (refer to Appendix 5 & 6).

7 Responsibilities of the 'Client' Fire and Rescue Service

- To agree with the Lead Auditor the scope and extent of the audit.
- To provide in advance documents or other relevant information requested by the Lead Auditor at least 21 days prior to the audit (see Appendix 4).
- To brief in advance all relevant employees about the audit, its timetable, objectives and scope. It must not fall to auditors to explain and/or justify the audit to interviewees.
- To identify and notify the Lead Auditor of suitable accommodation, with costs, for the audit team (reimbursement will be claimed through the audit team's respective Fire & Rescue Services).
- To provide adequate facilities, including office accommodation, for the audit to be effectively conducted.
- To provide refreshments, including lunch, for the audit team.
- To provide a competent person to accompany the auditors as required and to act as a facilitator for the duration of the audit.
- To provide access to any documents, records or other evidential material requested by the auditors.
- To co-operate fully with the auditors to permit the audit objectives to be achieved.
- To determine and initiate corrective actions based on the audit report, and to publish an action plan.

8. Responsibilities of Auditors

All auditors are responsible for:

- Complying with the requirements of the audit system.
- Ensuring that those requirements are communicated to the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service and clarified where necessary.
- Planning and carrying out the audit effectively and efficiently.
- Documenting the audit observations.
- Reporting the audit results.
- Retaining and safeguarding documents relating to the audit.
- Ensuring such documents remain confidential.

- Treating privileged information with discretion.
- Co-operating with and supporting the Lead Auditor.

Auditors should remain free from bias and influences, which could affect objectivity. Fire and Rescue Service management and personnel should respect and support the independence and integrity of the auditors.

9. The Audit Plan

The audit plan should be prepared by the Lead Auditor and should be presented to the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service's management at the audit opening meeting, (certain elements of the plan will have been agreed in advance).

The plan should be designed to be flexible in order to permit changes in emphasis based on information gathered during the audit. The audit plan should include:

- The objectives, scope and extent of the audit.
- Identification of individuals having significant direct responsibilities relating to the objectives and scope of the audit.
- Identification of reference documents, (orders, manuals, procedures, etc.), to be referred to.
- Identification and qualifications of audit team members.
- Identification of Fire and Rescue Service divisions/directorates, sections, workplaces, etc., to be audited.
- The proposed audit program as contained in appendix 3.
- The anticipated schedule of meetings to be held with the client Fire and Rescue Service.
- The proposed distribution of the audit report and the expected date of issue.

10. Confidentiality

The auditor's general responsibilities in respect of confidentiality are detailed above.

Upon completion of a draft final report, the Lead Auditor will circulate copies to the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service and individual members of the audit team. The draft report will be regarded as a strictly confidential document. Auditors may only discuss its content with senior management of the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service and other members of the audit team, **unless authorised by the client Fire and Rescue Service.**

Circulation of the final version of the report will be at the discretion of the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service, but will include all members of the audit team. Auditors will respect any wishes of the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service regarding confidentiality of the final report.

11. Auditor's Activities

During the course of the audit, auditors should:

- Remain within the scope of the audit.
- Exercise objectivity.
- Collect and analyse sufficient relevant evidence to enable conclusions to be drawn regarding the systems being audited.
- Remain aware that certain evidence gathered may dictate that more extensive auditing-is required.
- Report apparent legal non-compliance and safety critical non-conformities to the client Fire and Rescue Service immediately.
- Report any issues, which impact upon the ability of the auditors to effectively perform their audit role, to the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service.

12. Opening Meeting

All audits should commence with an opening meeting between the audit team and the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service. Minutes of the meeting should be produced and the following items included on the agenda:

- A review of the objectives, scope and extent of the audit.
- A brief summary of the RoSPA QSA system.
- Detail of the agreed lines of communication between the audit team and the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service.
- Confirmation that the documents and records required by the audit team are available.
- Confirmation of the date and time of the closing meeting and any interim meetings to be held if appropriate.
- Confirmation of the audit plan.

13. Gathering Evidence

The audit system to be employed will indicate to the auditors the areas from which evidence is to be gathered. Evidence should be collected through examination of documents, interviews with personnel at various levels of the Fire and Rescue Service and observation of activities and conditions in the areas being audited. Wherever possible, evidence extracted from documents should be verified by interviews and physical checks and vice versa.

All significant observations and findings of the audit should be noted whether or not they suggest non-conformity.

In the course of the audit, the Lead Auditor may make changes to the audit plan, should this prove necessary, to ensure the achievement of the audit objectives. This should, where significant, be communicated to the client Fire and Rescue Service.

If it appears to the audit team that it may not be possible to achieve the pre-determined and agreed objectives of the audit, the Lead Auditor should report the reasons to the client' Fire and Rescue Service without delay.

After all areas of the audit have been completed, the audit team should review all observations made, to determine which are to be reported as non-conformities. The audit team members must communicate these to the Lead Auditor in a clear, concise manner and support them with evidence. Non-conformities should be identified in relation to the specific requirements of the standard(s) against which the audit has been conducted.

14. Closing Meeting

At the conclusion of the audit the audit team should meet with the client Fire and Rescue Service. Minutes of the meeting should be and should commence with a brief review of the main items covered in the opening meeting.

The Lead Auditor should present a summary of the main findings of the audit, then detail the observations noted in each of the areas covered by the audit system. Legal non-compliance's and other non-conformities should be reported unambiguously. However, the Lead Auditor must take into account the perceived significance to the client Fire and Rescue Service of the audit observations.

The RoSPA QSA Health and Safety performance rating should be explained & communicated to the client Fire and Rescue Service at the closing meeting.

Areas identified for improvement by the audit team should be highlighted, as well as areas of best practice. The audit team may make positive recommendations for improvement to the client Fire and Rescue Service's systems and procedures. Production of an action plan may be discussed, but will remain the responsibility of the client Fire and Rescue Service.

The client Fire and Rescue Service must be given the opportunity to clarify points raised by the audit team.

The client Fire and Rescue Service may make representation to the Lead Auditor regarding the conduct and findings of the audit.

15. Final Audit Report

The final audit report should be prepared under the direction of the Lead Auditor, who will be responsible for its accuracy and completeness.

The report should reflect both the tone and content of the audit and should be dated and signed by the Lead Auditor.

When highlighting non-conformities, and if making recommendations, the auditor should divide these into three distinct action categories, i.e.

- **High Priority**
- **Medium Priority**
- **Low Priority**

The report should be formatted to the CFOA South East Region RoSPA QSA report template.

Circulation of the final report is dealt with in 10 above, the Lead Auditor should aim to have the report completed within six weeks of the closing meeting.

16. Corrective Action Follow-Up

The client Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for identifying and implementing appropriate corrective actions necessary to address the issues raised in the audit. The audit team are only responsible for identifying the non-conformities.

A copy of the client Fire and Rescue Service's action plan will be forwarded to the Lead Auditor as soon as it is available in its final form.

The Lead Auditor will arrange to revisit the client Fire and Rescue Service within a period of twelve months after the audit to verify that the corrective actions identified in the action plan have been initiated. The Lead Auditor may be accompanied by one or more members of the audit team if deemed necessary.

The Lead Auditor will prepare a follow-up report, which will be subject to the same degree of confidentiality as the final audit report.

Appendix 1

Audit Sequence

- The 'client' Fire and Rescue Service will be nominated and the provisional scope and extent of the audit will be determined. The aim will be to carry out two audits per year resulting in the each constituent Fire and Rescue Service being audited over a 5 year cycle in the following sequence:

Year	Fire & Rescue Service	Audit team
2010/11	Surrey	Hampshire (Lead) Buckinghamshire <u>East Sussex</u> Kent
2006/07	Royal Berkshire	East Sussex (Lead) Isle of Wight West Sussex Surrey
	<u>Kent</u>	Oxfordshire (Lead) Hampshire Buckinghamshire Royal Berkshire
2007/08	<u>East Sussex</u>	<u>Kent (Lead)</u> Isle of Wight West Sussex Surrey
	Hampshire	<u>Buckinghamshire (Lead)</u> East Sussex Oxfordshire Royal Berkshire
2008/09	Oxfordshire	Surrey (Lead) Hampshire Kent West Sussex
	Buckinghamshire	Isle of Wight (Lead) Oxfordshire Royal Berkshire East Sussex
2009/10	West Sussex	Royal Berkshire (Lead) Oxfordshire Isle of Wight Buckinghamshire
	Isle of Wight	West Sussex (Lead) Kent Hampshire Surrey

- A Lead Auditor and Audit Team will be appointed in accordance with the above table. Where, in extenuating circumstances, a Fire and Rescue Service is unable to commit to an audit it will be the responsibility of that Service to make arrangements for a substitute Service.

- An Audit Plan will be prepared, (see 9. above).
- Documentation required in advance will be identified.
- As much of the documentary audit as possible will be completed in advance of the auditors' stay in the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service.
- The audit commences with an opening meeting, (see 12. above).
- The audit is conducted in accordance with 7 to 11 and 13 above.
- The main findings of the audit are presented at a closing meeting, (see 14. above).
- The Lead Auditor will prepare the final report, (see 15. and 10. above).
- The 'client' Fire and Rescue Service will produce an action plan.
- The Lead Auditor will re-visit the 'client' Fire and Rescue Service within a period of twelve months after the audit to verify the implementation of corrective actions.
- The Lead Auditor will circulate a follow-up report.

Appendix 2

General Recommendations

- The use of the RoSPA QSA system district-wide will facilitate benchmarking
- When selecting audit team members, the Lead Auditor should have regard to any special skills, knowledge and/or experience of individuals. It may be appropriate to allocate specialist areas of audit responsibility to such individuals;
- The Lead Auditor must stress that the audit is only a representative sampling exercise. A disclaimer must be included in opening and closing meetings and the final report to the effect that the auditors cannot guarantee identification of all breaches of statutory duties placed on the client Fire and Rescue Service. Absence of comment on any particular feature must not be taken to indicate compliance with any statutory obligations.
- When reporting back to the client Fire and Rescue Service, avoid blunt statements except in areas of legal non-compliance. Use of phrases such as 'It appears that ' and 'The audit could find not evidence of ' will assist acceptance of observations.
- Fire and Rescue Services are advised that there is a resource cost attached to the audit process and it will be necessary for the audit team and the client Fire and Rescue Service to agree any apportionment of these costs.

Appendix 3

Proposed Audit Programme

**CFOA No 5 District
PROGRAMME / TIMETABLE FOR [Service Name] AUDIT
[Date]**

DATE	TIME	SUBJECT AREA OF AUDIT	Auditee	Auditor
DAY 1				
	09.00 – 09.30	Opening meeting with CFO/ Policy Team members and Accredited Reps.		Audit Team
	09.30 – 10.30	Representative Bodies		
	09.30 – 11.30	Health & Safety Department - Policy		
	11.30 – 13.00	Health & Safety Department – Organisational Arrangements		Audit Team
	13.00	Lunch - HQ		
	14.00 – 15.00	Health & Safety Department – Organisational Arrangements		Audit Team
	15.00 – 16.30	Health & Safety Department – Documentation Control		Audit Team
DAY 2				
	09.00	Team meet at HQ		Audit Team
	09.30 – 10.30	Research Department		
	09.30 – 13.00	Health & Safety Department - Documentation checks		
	11.15 - 1300	Service Control Visit		

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	13.00	Lunch - HQ		
	14.00 – 15.00	Performance & Audit Review		
	14.00 – 15.00	Risk Management		
	15.15 – 16.30	Operational Policy		
	15.15 – 16.30	Property & Contractor Management		
	19.00 – 20.30	[Station Name] Fire Station Visit		
	19.00 – 20.30	[Station Name] Fire Station Visit		
DAY 3				
	09.00	Team meet at HQ		Audit Team
	09.30 – 10.30	Monitoring/Accidents		
	11.00 – 13.00	[Station Name] Fire Station Visit		
	11.00 – 13.00	[Station Name] Fire Station Visit		
	13.00	Lunch - HQ		
	14.00 – 15.00	Occupational Health		
	14.00 – 15.00	Personnel Department		
	15.00 – 16.30	Workshops		
	15.00 – 16.30	Training Centre		
DAY 4				
	09.00	Team meet at HQ		Audit team
	09.30 – 13.00	Document Checks and Consolidation		Audit Team
	13.00	Lunch - HQ		
	14.00 - 1630	Preparation for Closing Meeting		Audit Team

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DAY 5				
	09.00	Team meet at HQ		Audit Team
	10.00 - 1100	Closing Meeting with CFO/ Policy Team members and Accredited Reps.	CFO/Policy Team	

DAY 6				
	09.00 - 1700	Write report		Lead Auditor

DAY 7				
	09.00 - 1700	Write report		Lead Auditor

Appendix 4

List of Documentation Required prior to Audit

The following documentation (electronic format preferred) is required to be forwarded to the Lead Auditor at least 21 days prior to start of audit:

Complete copy of the Health & Safety Manual to include:

- Health & Safety Policy Statement
- Health & Safety Policies
- Health and Safety Procedures
- Health & Safety Reference documents.

Safety Committee Minutes (2 meetings)

Sample of risk assessments

Samples of proactive monitoring

Samples of reactive monitoring

Sample Job Descriptions

Management Report demonstrating measuring of performance.

Previous audit report

Appendix 5

Accreditation and Portfolio of Evidence

Auditors who wish to use an Inter-service audit to achieve RoSPA accreditation can submit a portfolio of evidence for moderation. This will normally be where one or more members of an audit team have recently completed a RoSPA QSA Course and are submitting a portfolio as part of the cost of that course.

Individual Services may also choose to maintain or renew this accreditation, in accordance with RoSPA requirements, at the cost of the individual Service. However, this is not a requirement of this protocol.

There are two forms of submissions:

- Individual Submission – where only one member of an audit team submits a portfolio of evidence to achieve either Lead or Team Auditor status.
- Joint Submission – where two or more members of an audit team are submitting portfolios to achieve a combination of Lead or Team auditor status.

Where it is intended to make a joint submission the Lead Auditor and team members should review the requirements for the Portfolio's of Evidence prior to the audit to ensure that the performance criteria will be met.

Where a joint submission is made to RoSPA it is the responsibility of the Lead Auditor to ensure that RoSPA is aware and endeavour to forward all portfolios of evidence in one package.

Portfolio of Evidence

In order to demonstrate competence auditors are required to provide RoSPA with a portfolio of evidence. The summary below would be the requirement for 'Lead or Team Auditor' status for an individual application. Additional notes have been provided for 'Team Auditors' as part of a joint submission:

Unit 1 – Plan the Audit

1.1 Audit Scope

Provide a personal report explaining how the audit scope was determined and addressing all of the performance criteria.

Evidence

Copies of communications e.g. letters, memos etc.
List of available documentation.

1.2 Audit Programme

Ensure all of the performance criteria for this element are addressed.

Evidence

Copies of communications e.g. letters, memos etc.
Copy of programme.

Team Auditor – Joint Submission Evidence

The Team Auditor will be expected to maintain and submit a daily diary (Appendix 6) detailing their involvement in all aspects of the audit process. A separate personal report is required detailing involvement in respect of determining the scope of the audit and development of the audit programme. Suitable evidence would be minutes of meetings attended, including any pre-audit meetings in connection with the audit arrangements, demonstrating an active involvement in the meeting.

Unit 2 – Execute the Audit

2.1 Conduct Opening Meeting

Provide a personal report addressing all of the performance criteria, and any background comments on matters not covered in the minutes.

Evidence

Copy of agenda.
Minutes of Opening Meeting.

Team Auditor – Joint Submission Evidence

A separate personal report is required detailing the Team Auditor's involvement in respect of the opening meeting. Suitable evidence would be minutes of the demonstrating an active involvement in the meeting.

2.2 Collect and Evaluate Evidence

Audit Workbook

- Should include sufficient comments to enable an auditor to retrace the audit path.
- Full justification for N/A answers
- List all documents audited.

Sample Documents e.g.

- General Health & Safety Policy Statement.
- Sample procedure.
- Plus a sample of the client's written evidence of implementation i.e. internal minutes, reports, etc.

N.B. Audit results for initial moderation must be submitted in a hard copy of the QSA workbook.

Team Auditor – Joint Submission Evidence

The Team Auditor will be expected to provide a separate copy of the sections of the workbook for which they have had involvement. Additionally, they will be required to provide a sample of documents for the relevant sections e.g. policies, procedures, reports or minutes.

2.3 Conduct Closing Meeting

Provide a personal report addressing all of the performance criteria, and any background comments on matters not covered in the minutes.

Evidence

Copy of agenda.
Minutes of Closing Meeting.

Team Auditor – Joint Submission Evidence

A separate personal report is required detailing the Team Auditor's involvement in respect of the opening meeting. Suitable evidence would be minutes of the demonstrating an active involvement in the meeting.

2.4 Audit Report

Team Auditor – Joint Submission Evidence

The Lead Auditor will be responsible for submitting the full report. Team Auditors do not need to submit additional copies.

The above documentation should be accompanied by the following details:

- Auditor's Name, Date of Auditor's Course and whether 'Lead' or 'Team' status.
- Address, telephone number, and fax number of organisation.
- Audit scope and location, and date audit commenced and completed.
- Name of Chief Fire Officer (or nominee).
- Date of next planned audit if arranged.
- Address for return of moderation documentation.

Appendix 6

Daily Diary

Service Audited:

Dates of Audit:

Auditor:

Day:

Time	Task	CA	Remark