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**FIRE BRIGADES UNION****Brigade Secretary : Dave Williams**

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3a Moorfields Willaston Nantwich CW5 6QY

Paul Hancock  
Deputy Chief Officer  
Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service  
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Dear Paul,

**TRV Deployment.**

In response to the planned deployment of TRVs on to RDS stations and the replacement programme of Structural Fire Appliances with TRVs, we wish to make the following comments and observations:-

We have serious concerns for the health & safety of our members. We are frustrated and extremely concerned that we have been by-passed from any detailed consultation on this deployment programme. Therefore, we do not believe you have fulfilled your obligation to fully consult with the relevant Rep body under the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996.

We have not been made aware of the mobilisation policy for these vehicles regarding crewing arrangements and type of incidents they will be used at. We understood these were additional vehicles to maintain the availability of structural appliances, however now we believe less structural appliances will be available with the introduction of TRVs and contrary to the IRMP.

The TRVs have been evaluated for small fires although we have not received any documentary evidence. We had also agreed to fully evaluate the capability of this vehicle in a training environment for other incidents. However the only evaluation carried out, was the use of the CAFS hose reel on car fires and the closing of a single carriageway road.

We have been informed that these vehicles comply with the European Standard EN 1846-2-2001 for firefighting and rescue service vehicles and we requested copies of the vehicle specification tests that have been independently carried out and associated documents including certificates. We are yet to receive a copy of the 'axle weight' test and we wish to re-iterate it is our belief that the 'brake' and 'tilt' tests were carried out on un-laden vehicles and prior to some modifications. The original purpose of these vehicles has changed and the weight and stability will be affected with additional equipment, personnel and modifications i.e. ladder gantries. To comply with the standard the vehicles should be tested fully laden.

Has a manual handling assessment being carried out under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHR) and if so can you provide ourselves with the risk assessments?

Management believe that BA can be worn with these vehicles by a single wearer at incidents and quote that "TB 1/97 Command Procedures (CMP) allows for personnel to wear BA with reduced control procedures being in place when it would be inappropriate to implement full TB 1/97 control procedures". We request copies of your procedures for the use and control of BA with a single wearer. Crews need to be clear exactly what circumstances full control procedures would be inappropriate and exactly what procedure should be followed as an alternative. We therefore require copies of the safe system of work to be adopted.

We disagree with your interpretation of TB 1/97 as amended, as it does state "Very exceptionally" where full control procedures would be inappropriate as the purpose of attending fires (small or other) will not be an exception in the case of these vehicles.

We also note that the HMSFI concurred, with our belief that the amendment to TB 1/97 was written with a minimum of 4 personnel in mind at a meeting with the Service on 13th December 2004. We therefore repeat our previous request, that we jointly seek independent advice to resolve this fundamental difference.

Much has been made of the advantage of the CAFS capability on the TRV; however we note that the CAFS is no longer available on a hose reel as this has been removed. We are disappointed in this modification and the loss of this facility. This also emphasises our concern of crewing levels of less than 4 riders, as using CAFS through convention hose lines will require 2 firefighters to staff the branch and hose. We repeat our request for copies of the CAFS training note and operational procedures and confirmation of the jet reaction of the Branches.

We also question; if any evaluation has been carried out of how long the CAFS will last on using conventional hose and the effect of pumping the foam against a head.

Other general concerns:-

- Has the handing capability of the vehicle been evaluated since the modifications and in the light of the additional weight from extra equipment and varied crewing levels?
- It has been communicated to ourselves that the pressure available through the hose reel does not achieve the required level to enable effective gas cooling.
- What are the differences in the equipment carried compared to structural appliances? i.e. only one hose reel, no roof ladder, no 13.5m ladder, less water, no 70mm hose and only 2 BA sets.

- Will these vehicles ever be used without the back up of a structural appliance?
- With regard to the limited equipment carried on these appliances is it proposed the TRVs will be mobilised special incidents i.e. cloudburst incidents, flooding, motorways.
- CF&RS have no standard operating procedures for crews of 3 riders.

We do not believe that these vehicles should be mobilised to incidents until we are satisfied that our concerns have been addressed. Should you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact a Brigade Official.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Williams.

C.c.  
P. Walsh – Area Manager ER  
P. Mobbs – Employee Relations