

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN IRELAND

Fire Services Change Programme (FSCP)

This programme finished in 2007. No decision has yet been made as to what will replace this programme. This purpose of this programme was to develop projects in the following areas:

- *Community fire safety*, - This is working well, primary schools in the country are now visited each year. Firefighters, both fulltime and retained, are involved in delivering this programme. Domestic smoke alarms (~30,000) have been distributed to local communities
- *Develop national standards for fire cover*, Dublin City Council have received tenders for the procurement of a software system to record & analyse risk data and to develop risk profiles.
- *Health and safety for firefighters*, (See below) and,
- *Develop a competency based approach for recruitment and career progression*. Competencies have been developed for fulltime firefighters and for wearing Breathing Apparatus.

Further details available on www.environ.ie under Fire/Emergency Services and Change Programme.

Safety Statements

A new template for safety statements has been produced under the FSCP. This is very topical in Ireland as 2 fire fighters lost their life in a fire in Bray, Co Wicklow. The safety statements template documentation is available on the Department website

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/LocalGovernment/FireandEmergencyServices/> under the heading Fire Service Change Programme.

National Incident Command System

A new National Incident Command System is being implemented. All senior and junior fire officers have received initial 3 day training. All firefighters are receiving an initial one day training course. It is intended that all Fire Authorities will implement the system together. However Firefighter unions are not cooperating with the implementation even though the vast majority of personnel have been trained for some time. The national incident command system documentation is available on the Department website.

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/LocalGovernment/FireandEmergencyServices/> under the heading Fire Service Change Programme.

Major Emergency Management

A new framework was launched by the Government in September, 2006 and is a two year project. This involves local authorities, Health Services and police in drawing up new local and regional plans in accordance with the new framework. The changeover for the new emergency plans is 12.00 hours on 30th September, 2008. Training will take place to familiarize all relevant staff with the new plans and to prepare relevant personnel for the roles set out in the new plans.

Each fire Authority has appointed one additional senior fire officer to progress the work. The framework and guidance documentation is available on the Department website <http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/LocalGovernment/FireandEmergencyServices/> under the heading Major Emergency Planning.

Building Control Regulations

Fire Safety Certificates are required for all new buildings other than dwellings, agricultural buildings and some small buildings. This certificate is based on the design of the building. The regulations are being changed to regularise the situation where building works are commenced without approval which will make the system more complex. In conjunction with this a Disabled Access Certificate will be required for these buildings. No decision has yet been made whether this work will be processed by the Fire Authorities.