



Home Office

Fire Resilience Directorate  
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**To: Suzanne McCarthy**  
**CC: ACO Paul Stewart**

**18 June 2020**

## **Emergency Response Driving**

Dear Suzanne,

At the most recent meeting of the Fire Standards Board, I welcomed the discussion around the future delivery plan and I look forward to seeing progress against these revised timelines. I am grateful for the work you have done with services on prioritisation of the most fundamental standards and shortening delivery timescales in order to ensure emphasis and grip. There was a clear need to prioritise those standards which deliver on the pressing challenge of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and the new inspection regime, in areas such as protection and leadership.

I undertook to write specifically with regard to the development of the Emergency Response Driving pilot standard (which was one of the pilot standards for your new processes) and to provide an update with the Department for Transport's (DfT) work on Section 19 of the Road Safety Act.

Section 19 of the Road Safety Act received Royal Assent in 2006 and will be commenced when supporting regulations have been approved. Section 19 will regulate the speed exemption, by ensuring that it may only be claimed in appropriate circumstances and where the driver has been appropriately trained. The complexity of the legislation has meant it has taken some time to draft accompanying regulations.

Fire and Rescue Services have been consulted throughout the development of the regulations, including at a NFCC National Driver Training conference last Autumn. Earlier

this year, in February, officials from the DfT held an update meeting for key stakeholders and representatives from services, including London, Bedfordshire and Sussex Fire and Rescue Services. I understand that questions and concerns regarding course duration were raised at this meeting, specifically with regard to on-call firefighters in rural areas. DfT outlined and maintained that the national minimum standard exists in principle to ensure public safety and that neither operational availability, or cost savings are an adequate justification for unnecessary public risk. Having engaged with DfT, I understand that concessions have been made for FRS training during the development of regulations, for example in allowing a 10-day course with a 2:1 pupil: instructor ratio for Category C vehicles - fire appliances - rather than the draft standard of 15 days at a ratio of 3:1.

As I explained at the Board, DfT are soon to publish a draft consultation and this will be sent out alongside the drafted regulations for review and comment. The consultation will go staff representative organisations, training bodies, alongside voluntary sectors and the public for comment. I would encourage the Fire Standards Board and/or NFCC to respond, and you may wish to draw on the pilot consultation you undertook on Emergency Response Driving standards more generally, last year.

As mentioned in the meeting, this pilot development process has served as a useful means to test our ways of working, including the consultation process. I hope that this experience has put us in the best place to proceed to develop and deliver our first standards at pace. I am copying this letter to Assistant Chief Officer Paul Stewart, NFCC lead for emergency driver training.



**Jonny Bugg**  
**Head of Fire Strategy and Reform Unit**  
**Home Office**