

The Fire Brigades Union

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HEALTH
SAFETY &
WELFARE

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Health, Safety and Welfare
Minimum Workplace
Facilities, Best Practice



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It outlines the standards we must seek to achieve for all members.

The purpose of this Best Practice document is to supply Officials with the detailed requirements and expectations of FBU members in relation to the provision of adequate and dignified facilities within the Fire and Rescue Service.

The content of this document was developed for the Fire Brigades Union, based on the experiences of our members whilst at work, by the National Womens Committee in consultation with Regional Health and Safety Coordinators. It outlines the standards we must seek to achieve for all members.

Specific information regarding minimum welfare facilities for personnel, in particular sanitary conveniences, washing, showering, changing and resting, is contained in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. The workplace health safety and welfare Approved Code of Practice supplies further advice and guidance regarding workplace provisions and has special legal status.

Regulation 20, 21 and 24 of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations states that facilities shall not be suitable unless they include separate facilities for men and women for reasons of propriety.

This document includes our workplace facility requirements regarding the following key areas:

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1. Permanent Workplace

a) Toilet Facilities

All toilets must be situated within designated separate rooms for men and women

- Any toilets situated within or off a communal area (Not a corridor) are not appropriate and are not acceptable
- All toilets and the rooms containing them must be kept in a clean and orderly fashion
- All rooms containing toilets must be adequately ventilated and lit
- A machine providing hygienic sanitary provision with the choice of tampons and towels must be provided within each Womens toilet facility
- A sanitary disposal bin must be provided within each Womens toilet facility
- FRS' must contract the collection and cleaning of sanitary receptacles
- Bags and wipes for disposing sanitary wear must be provided within each Womens toilet facility
- All toilets must be fully enclosed with floor to ceiling walls and doors with a lock on the inside
- All windows must be obscured by frosted glass and blinds or curtains

b) Washing Facilities

All shower/washing facilities must be situated within designated separate rooms for men and women. Individual shower cubicles with floor to ceiling partitions and doors for privacy must be located within each designated room. The shower facility should include a wet and dry area to ensure that the wash area is in the vicinity of a changing room. Doors to be capable of being secured from the inside and the facilities in each such room are intended to be used by only one person at a time.

Wet area must include:

- A supply of hot and cold running water
- Shower with a non slip tray and fully enclosed cubicle, not shower curtains.
- Non slip flooring
- Shelf to place personal toiletries on
- Shower gel dispenser with gel in it
- Sufficient lighting and ventilation
- All windows will be obscured by frosted glass and blinds or curtains
- Doors to be capable of being secured from the inside and the facilities in each such room are intended to be used by only one person at a time

These facilities and the rooms containing them must be kept in a clean and orderly fashion.



Dry area to include:

- Sink, with a mirror and a shaving point provided for both genders
- Soap dispenser
- Hand dryer
- Non slip flooring
- Hooks for clothing, towel, underwear and wash bag
- Bench or pull down seat
- Hairdryer
- Windows must be obscured glass and include blinds
- Signage – clearly labeled women or men
- Bin for refuse
- Personal locker
- All windows will be obscured by frosted glass, blinds or windows
- Doors to be capable of being secured from the inside and the facilities in each such room are intended to be used by only one person at a time

These facilities and the rooms containing them must be kept in a clean and orderly fashion.



c) Rest Facilities

All rest facilities must be situated within designated separate rooms for men and women. Rest Facilities to include:

- Hypo-allergenic, easy to clean beds
- Individual private rest areas
- Any partitioning used must be solid in construction – i.e. not curtains and must be floor to ceiling
- Individual lighting to include reading lamps
- Personal locker
- Hooks will be provided
- Private space for study – desk and chair

d) Lockers/personal storage areas

All lockers/personal storage areas must be situated within designated separate rooms for men and women.

Lockers can either be situated within washing/changing facilities or within rest facilities

It is not acceptable to situate lockers within communal areas

Maintenance requirements for permanent workplaces are as follows:

1. All sanitary conveniences and the rooms containing them shall be kept in a clean and orderly condition
2. All sanitary provision and disposal will be maintained regularly by the contracted provider
3. All toilets will be monitored as part of the daily station health and safety inspection
4. Any defects identified, including hygiene, must be rectified by the maintenance department or the contract provider immediately



2. Temporary Workplace

Temporary work sites must comply with regulations 20 to 25 of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations.

a) At Incidents and Training Exercises away from Permanent Workplaces

The provision of sanitary and washing facilities at all training exercises will be established. Where these facilities are not already in place a dignity vehicle should be in attendance at the training exercise or agreed alternative arrangements made.

At confirmed incidents of 4 pumps or more dignity vehicles should be mobilised as part of a pre-determined attendance.

In addition to the circumstances described above dignity vehicles will automatically be mobilised by emergency fire control to any protracted incident of 2 hours or more.

An OIC can request at any point the mobilisation of the dignity vehicle.

The dignity vehicle should provide and contain:

- Separate and designated toilets for men and women
- Clear signage for men and women
- Sealed sanitary products to include both types of sanitary wear in the Womens facility and a disposal system in operation. Sanitary products to be free
- Wipes and disposal bags
- Hand washing facilities – hand sanitizer must be provided in the absence of running water and soap
- Hooks that are strong enough to hold up wet fire gear
- Room enough to disrobe – Disabled mobile toilet is the right size
- Lighting and adequate ventilation in each unit

It is vital that prior to any training exercise carried out externally that an assessment is carried out in terms of distances of travel required to ensure that sanitary facilities are located nearby and that no staff are disadvantaged by gender.

b) Secondary Control Rooms

The provision within a secondary control room should be identical to that provided within the primary control room and must comply with the workplace regulations.

c) Fire and Rescue Service Training Venues

As detailed above under Permanent Workplace.

It is vital that prior to any training exercise carried out within a Fire and Rescue Service Training venue that an assessment is carried out in terms of distances of travel required to ensure that sanitary facilities are located nearby and that no staff are disadvantaged by gender.

d) General

Appliances

A welfare/dignity pack will be provided which should consist of sealed sanitary wear, wipes and disposal bags

Personal kit issue

All women firefighters and women firefighters (control) should be provided with a personal kit issue bag for own personal sanitary wear, wipes and disposal bags

All individuals will be responsible for their own personal kit

Maintenance Requirements for Temporary Workplaces are as follows:

1. All mobile toilet/washing facilities must be kept in a clean and orderly condition and maintained by a contracted provider and not by employees of the Fire and Rescue Service.
2. All sanitary provision and disposal should be maintained regularly by the contracted provider.
3. Any defects identified, including hygiene, should be rectified by the maintenance department or contracted provider immediately.

3. Pregnancy and Nursing

A private rest area designed for pregnant women and nursing mothers must be developed in every workplace.

The area must be quiet, clean, and lockable from the inside, have a sink with hot and cold running water and should include a draining area. The cold water supply is to be drinking water and marked as such.

The area should be conveniently situated in relation to sanitary facilities and provide:

- A multi purpose chair that would include the facility for pregnant and nursing mothers to lie down
- A large paper towel dispenser
- Isolated bells that can be turned on and off
- Dimmer lighting
- A lockable refrigerator
- Baby changing facilities
- Wipes and disposal bags for Nappies
- Engaged sign when locked
- Drinking utensils
- Blinds on windows

The room will hold a priority use for pregnancy and nursing mothers. At all other times the room could be used for quiet/prayer time.



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