



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

FALSE ALARM & UNWANTED FIRE SIGNAL POLICY

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 As part of an overall strategy for the reduction of false alarms and unwanted fire alarm signals (UFS), Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) has developed this policy to identify best practice guidance to be adopted by NIFRS, fire alarm monitoring organisations (FAMOs), fire alarm installers, fire alarm maintainers and the end users of remotely monitored fire alarm systems.

1.2 The aims of this document are to:

- provide a uniform process for NIFRS personnel involved in managing the reduction of false alarms and UFS;
- reduce the number of UFS sent to NIFRS;
- engage with stakeholders and advise them of the actions which may be taken by themselves and NIFRS to develop best practice in the reduction of false alarms and UFS;
- support fire safety enforcement; and
- provide an appropriate response by NIFRS to calls arising from automatic fire alarm (AFA) actuations.

1.3 False alarms and UFS impact on the community through:

- disruption of business (production downtime and time wasted, loss of business);
- erosion of users' confidence in the value and reliability of AFAs;
- diversion of essential services from emergencies, potentially putting life and property at risk;
- costs to businesses of retained firefighters being released;
- unnecessary risks to NIFRS personnel and the community whilst responding to stations and to incidents (accidents);
- disruption to Community Development activities (education, smoke detectors, etc);
- disruption to training of operational personnel;
- impact on the environment of unnecessary appliance movements (noise and air pollution); and
- draining of public finances.

2 CONSULTATION

2.1 The key to the effective performance of AFA systems is the correct design, installation, commissioning, acceptance and maintenance of AFA systems. The design must take into account the fire strategy, fire risk assessment, practical use of the building by its occupants and the potential for false alarms to be generated at the earliest possible stage.

- 2.2 As a first step in managing potential AFA actuations and UFS, NIFRS Community Development Departments must fully utilise the consultation process at both new build/renovation stages of any project to ensure the appropriateness of the system installed is in line with the recommendations of the relevant part of BS 5839. This must include comments, where appropriate, on the provision of an AFA system that exceeds guidance specification and that may generate false alarms and hence UFS.
- 2.3 In line with BS 5839 Part 1, the system designer should include on the design certificate the measures incorporated within the design to limit false alarms.

3 CALL FILTERING ON-SITE

- 3.1 The ideal place to prevent false alarms being transmitted to NIFRS as UFS is on-site, with appropriate on-site filtering designed to gather the most accurate information available to ascertain the cause of the fire alarm actuation and hence ensure that the appropriate response is generated. An NIFRS response should not be generated from premises for a known false alarm or system fault.
- 3.2 To help prevent the transmission of false alarms to NIFRS, each premises must designate a single named member of the premises management to supervise all matters pertaining to the fire detection and fire alarm system (referred to hereafter as the “Responsible Person”). This person must ensure that they are aware of the responsibilities associated with the role as outlined in BS 5839 Part 1.
- 3.3 This person should be aware of all aspects of the fire alarm and fire alarm monitoring system relevant to their premises and is responsible for the fire alarm performance in the premises. This person should record appropriate details of every false alarm that occurs in line with BS 5839 Part 1.
- 3.4 Where is appropriate to consider on-site filtering, this should only be introduced when it has been risk assessed in line with the requirements of The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and relevant government guidance by a competent person.
- 3.5 On-site filtering is not appropriate for residential care premises. In residential care premises the Fire and Rescue Service should be summoned immediately when the fire alarm system operates.

4 FIRE ALARM MONITORING ORGANISATIONS (FAMOs)

- 4.1 NIFRS will provide a single point of contact for FAMOs to consult on UFS, NIFRS agreements and Code of Practice compliance issues. This will be the Group Commander (GC) Community Development, NIFRS HQ.
- 4.2 FAMOs provide the valuable function of protecting property in the event of fire in buildings outside normal working hours, when unoccupied, and as backup to arrangements on-site for summoning NIFRS in accordance with the requirements of The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

- 4.3 All FAMOs will sign an agreement with NIFRS that reflects their commitment to operating in accordance with the CFOA Code of Practice, Best Practice for Summoning a Fire Response via Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisations and any agreements between NIFRS and the FAMO. NIFRS reserves the right to review, amend and terminate any FAMO agreement.
- 4.4 All agreements with FAMOs will demonstrate conformity to this policy.
- 4.5 The recommended standards for FAMOs that accept signals from AFAs are given in BS 5979. It is expected that FAMOs wishing to pass fire alarm signals to the NIFRS Regional Control Centre(RCC) will conform to this standard.
- 4.6 By consultation with the end user, arrangements should be put in place for the filtering of fire alarm signals by FAMOs, where prior to passing a signal to NIFRS a FAMO makes a call to the protected premises to confirm if the signal is a false alarm (call back).
- 4.7 Care must be taken to avoid on-site filtering by the premises **as well as** filtering by the FAMO. No form of filtering should be applied to signals from fire alarm systems in residential care premises.
- 4.8 Any arrangements for the filtering of automatic summoning of NIFRS by an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) or FAMO should conform to BS 5979.
- 4.9 ARCs or FAMOs do not commonly receive information on the type of device that has triggered the fire alarm system. However, where the type of device is known, filtering should not be applied to signals from manual break glass points, heat detectors or sprinkler systems. In addition, where it is known that a signal is only transmitted when two independent fire detectors operate (a coincidence arrangement) then filtering should not be applied.
- 4.10 FAMOs shall seek to establish filtering practices in the following ways:
- Domestic Premises – single private dwelling (not vulnerable)

All fire alarm signals received from domestic premises should be subject to a call back for confirmation of fire. The call back should be limited to 30 seconds; if not answered the call should be passed to NIFRS. If answered within 30 seconds, the call filtering process should be applied as per Appendix 1, Flowchart 1. In the context of this policy, dwellings within a sheltered housing scheme will normally be occupied by persons who are not vulnerable, but are simply receiving an element of support.
 - Domestic Premises – single private dwelling (vulnerable persons)

A vulnerable person can be defined as a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. Call filtering of a fire alarm system monitoring a vulnerable person should not be automatically applied but considered through an appropriate risk assessment.

- Commercial Premises – includes any premises that are not a single private dwelling, but excludes residential care premises.

Filtering arrangements should be supplied to the FAMO by the responsible person through the fire alarm maintainer. **This must include either on-site filtering arrangements (see Section 3) or a request for a call back facility.** Unless justified otherwise under a risk assessment, the call back should be limited to 30 seconds. This should apply to all premises with a FAMO agreement with NIFRS.

4.11 Procedures to be Adopted by FAMO

4.11.1 When a signal is received by a FAMO from a remotely monitored fire alarm system, the following procedures (Appendix 1, Flowchart 1) will be adopted:

- (a) Immediately ring back the premises by telephone (NB attempts to contact the premises to continue for 30 seconds). If the premises have been installed with an electronic delay device, which allows the signal to be investigated on-site before the signal is transmitted to the FAMO, there is no need to ring back the premises.
- (b) If the call is not answered within 30 seconds, the FAMO will forward the call to NIFRS RCC and request an attendance to an **AFA**.
- (c) If the call is answered within 30 seconds, the FAMO will then ascertain whether the signal is a **CONFIRMED FIRE**, an **AFA CAUSE NOT KNOWN** or a **CONFIRMED FALSE ALARM**.

4.11.2 If the report is of a **CONFIRMED FIRE**:

- (a) The FAMO will forward the call to NIFRS RCC and request an attendance to a **FIRE**.

4.11.3 If the report is of an **AFA CAUSE NOT KNOWN**:

- (a) The FAMO will forward the call to NIFRS RCC and request an attendance to an **AFA**.

4.11.4 If the report is of a **CONFIRMED FALSE ALARM**:

- (a) The FAMO **will not** forward the call to NIFRS RCC.
- (b) The FAMO will record the given cause of the false alarm.

5 TELECARE SERVICE PROVIDERS

- 5.1 This policy considers all organisations that monitor fire alarms have a responsibility to promote best practice in the management of all fire alarm systems it monitors.
- 5.2 Guidance on Telecare AFA Signal Filtering is contained in the Telecare Services Association Code Practice (<http://www.telecare.org.uk>).
- 5.3 NIFRS RCC will not call filter signals from Telecare as it is assumed that these will already have been filtered by Telecare in line with this policy.
- 5.4 Extract from the TSA Telecare Code of Practice Monitoring Process Module

“HANDLING OF FIRE ALARM RELATED CALLS

- Signals from fire alarm systems or smoke detectors should be handled so as to reduce as far as possible the number of false alarm calls being forwarded to the Fire Service. The Chief Fire Officers’ Association (CFOA) policy for the Reduction of False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals provides details on this issue.
- Service Providers shall have a procedure for receiving a signal from a fire alarm system or smoke detector. This shall include:
 - an initial step of making contact with the service user to check it is not a false alarm; and
 - assessing at the time of the call the ability of the service user to verify whether there is a fire.

If it is a fire or the service user cannot be contacted within 60 seconds then the Service Provider shall immediately alert the Fire Service.

- Following receipt of several false alarms from a sensor the Service Provider shall notify the service user or landlord as appropriate, and undertake a re-assessment of the service user and, if appropriate, action or advise on the re-positioning of the sensors.
- Following receipt of a fire alarm call a post fire audit shall be carried out by the Service Provider and recorded on the service user’s records.”

6 NIFRS REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE (RCC)

NIFRS will have 3 attendance levels:

- Level 1 Fire Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA).
Level 2 AFA PDA; normally 1 Pumping Appliance under Emergency Response conditions.
Level 3 1 Pumping Appliance under non emergency response conditions.

Level 3 will also be applied post-mobilisation on confirmation of a false alarm from the premises to allow inspection and completion of the UFS Policy (6.12.1).

Pre-Mobilisation

- 6.1 NIFRS RCC will be responsible for filtering calls and dispatching the appropriate pre-determined attendance (PDA).
- 6.2 NIFRS RCC will filter all calls received via the 999/112 system to identify those which do not require an NIFRS response or to determine the correct level of response.
- 6.3 NIFRS RCC will not call filter signals from FAMOs/Telecare as it is assumed that these will already have been filtered by the FAMOs/Telecare in line with this policy (Appendix 2, Flowchart 2, see notes).
- 6.4 Calls received from Camp West RCC (Donegal) will result in the mobilisation of NIFRS resources in line with their requested mobilising needs. No filtering will be applied to calls received.
- 6.5 During the call filtering process NIFRS RCC must not recommend the investigation of an alarm during a 999/112 emergency call. If investigation was possible it should already have been carried out as part of the premises' existing procedures before the emergency call was made. The caller should remain in contact with NIFRS RCC at all times.
- 6.6 Call filtering is an effective way of reducing UFS attended by NIFRS but has the potential to delay emergency attendance in the event of a fire, increasing the risk of property damage and injury if not completed in line with the guidance below.
- 6.7 Call Filtering Protocol for NIFRS RCC is contained in Appendix 2, Flowchart 2.
- 6.8 Fire Alarm Signals Received from a FAMO – Requesting an Attendance
 - 6.8.1 When NIFRS RCC receives a fire alarm signal from a FAMO, the following procedures will be adopted in accordance with Appendix 2 Flowchart 2.
 - 6.8.2 The FAMO will report fire alarm signals as one of two types: **CONFIRMED FIRE** or **AFA CAUSE NOT KNOWN**.
 - 6.8.3 If the report is of a **CONFIRMED FIRE**:
 - (a) NIFRS RCC will mobilise the appropriate **PDA** (Level 1) for a **FIRE** at the premises.
 - 6.8.4 If the report is of an **AFA CAUSE NOT KNOWN**:
 - (a) Mobilise the appropriate **PDA (Level 2)** for an **AFA** at the premises.
 - 6.8.5 Confirmed false alarms or system faults should generally **not** be transmitted to NIFRS RCC by the FAMO as these calls should have already been filtered.

- 6.8.6 If a report of a confirmed false alarm or system fault is transmitted to NIFRS RCC, the FAMO should be instructed to contact the responsible person or the nominated key holder for the premises and advise them to contact their fire alarm maintenance contractors. NIFRS RCC shall remind the FAMO that confirmed false alarms should not be passed to NIFRS. NIFRS RCC will keep a record of all confirmed false alarm calls made by FAMOs and, on request Assistant Group Commander (AGC) Control will provide that information to the GC Community Development, NIFRS HQ.

No operational response will be made to the premises in these circumstances.

6.9 Fire Alarm Signals Received from Fire Alarm Systems via 999/112 System, as per Appendix 3, Flowchart 3

- 6.9.1 NIFRS RCC may receive calls to AFAs via the 999/112 telephone system in addition to those received from a FAMO.

- 6.9.2 In these circumstances the procedure detailed in Appendix 3, Flowchart 3 will be followed.

6.10 Signals Received from an Auto-Dialler via the 999/112 System

- 6.10.1 Where a fire alarm signal is received by RCC from an auto-dialler via the 999/112 telephone system, it should be treated as an **AFA CAUSE NOT KNOWN** and the appropriate **PDA** for an **AFA** mobilised to the premises.

- 6.10.2 Following this type of call, the GC Control will send SL4 (Appendix 10) to the responsible person at the premises. This letter is to inform them that this is not an acceptable form of transmitting the fire alarm signal and that they should contact their fire alarm maintainer for advice on the most appropriate method of monitoring their fire alarm system.

6.11 Alarm Re-Activations Following Attendance by NIFRS Response

- 6.11.1 If, following the receipt of a stop message indicating a false alarm at the premises, but before appliances have returned to station, a further call is received by the RCC indicating an alarm re-activation, **an operational response will be made for an AFA Cause Unknown (Level 2)**. This will count as a further UFS if confirmed as a false alarm. Any call received confirming that there is a fire situation (smoke, heat or flames) will result in a NIFRS Fire PDA being mobilised.

6.12 Confirmation of False Alarms Received by RCC Following Mobilisation – Post-Mobilisation

- 6.12.1 If following initial mobilisation to an AFA, NIFRS RCC are advised by the protected premises that the signal is a false alarm, **then one Pumping Appliance will continue under non-emergency response conditions to the premises for inspection purposes (Level 3)** and to complete the False Alarm and Unwanted Fire Signal Policy process. All other mobilised appliances will be returned to station.

6.12.2 NIFRS RCC will monitor all stop messages to ensure UFS incidents are correctly recorded; the Incident Commander (IC) must identify the source of the false alarm, the cause of the alarm signal and the location of the alarm within the affected premises. The IC should also confirm in their stop message that a responsible person/key holder has been given the UFS Incident Information Leaflet (Appendix 5).

6.12.3 This process shall be over-ridden by any subsequent emergency call reporting a fire at the location resulting in a full fire PDA being mobilised.

7 OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

NIFRS will have 3 attendance levels:

Level 1 Fire Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA).

Level 2 AFA PDA; normally 1 Pumping Appliance under emergency response conditions.

Level 3 1 Pumping Appliance under non-emergency response conditions.

Level 3 will also be applied post-mobilisation on confirmation of a false alarm from the premises to allow inspection and completion of the UFS Policy (6.12.1).

7.1 NIFRS personnel may silence fire alarms following an AFA activation and attendance, but **MUST NOT RESET THE AFA SYSTEM**. This remains the responsibility of the responsible person or their nominated key holder.

7.2 Dependent on the time of the AFA activation, a key holder may be required to allow entry into the protected premises. Key holders must be able to:

- operate and reset the fire alarm system;
- access all areas of the premises; and
- attend the premises within twenty minutes of being notified.

Their attendance will facilitate Fire Service entry into the building, allow the key holder to complete resetting of the fire alarm system and to deal with any other post-alarm procedures detailed in the premises procedures.

In the event of there being no visible signs of fire in the premises, crews need not necessarily await the attendance of the key holder before deciding on the appropriate action to take.

Actions may include booking the appliance available to be redirected to other more urgent incidents or, after twenty minutes (dependent on the ETA of the key holder), passing a stop message to NIFRS RCC and returning to station. This will be subject to a risk assessment by the IC that includes an external survey of the building.

7.3 Large multi-premises sites such as hospitals and factories will have separate buildings with their own fire alarm systems. UFS will be apportioned to individual systems, for example in the case of shopping centres, each shop unit and mall should be treated as a separate system and be allocated a separate Unique Premises Reference Number (UPRN). It is vital that the precise address and location of the fire alarm system is entered in the UFS Incident Investigation Form (Appendix 4) and the Incident Recording System (IRS) by the IC.

7.4 UFS incident 'Stop Message'

A standard 'stop message' shall be sent from every UFS incident where no action has been taken by NIFRS. This message shall be composed as follows:

"From - (Incident Commander), Stop for Domestic/Non-Domestic UFS Incident at - (premises name and address)"
"Source of Alarm..." (Refer to UFS Incident Investigation Form) ***"Cause of Alarm Signal"*** (Refer to UFS Incident Investigation Form), **Location** of alarm, ***"UFS Incident Policy Implemented"***

7.4.1 When the incident is concluded, the UFS Incident Investigation book shall be completed and incident details recorded (Appendix 4 - triplicate books will be placed in all appliance cabs for this purpose).

7.4.2 Once completed, the blue copy of the form shall be given to the responsible person (where available) or key holder and the white copy shall be forwarded to the Station Commander (SC) Community Development of the relevant District for information. The white UFS Incident Investigation Form shall be placed in the premises UFS file for reference and audit purposes by the SC Community Development.

7.4.3 Before leaving the incident, the IC shall advise the responsible person or key holder to contact their fire alarm engineer to confirm the cause of the actuation and take immediate action to rectify any system faults or deficiencies. The responsible person or key holder shall be advised to record the false alarm in the system log book.

7.4.4 Furthermore, the IC will provide the responsible person or key holder with the UFS Incident Information leaflet and guidance on reducing false alarms (Appendix 5) and, if appropriate, advise them of the possible causes and actions which may be taken to prevent a future actuation.

7.4.5 This information will direct the responsible person/key holder to the Fire Industry Association (FIA) website <http://www.fia.uk.com/en/cut-false-alarm-costs/> and NIFRS website.

7.4.6 Supplies of NIFRS UFS Incident Information leaflets shall be stored within all appliance cabs in suitable quantities for issue to the responsible person or key holder as appropriate.

7.5 Multi-Appliance AFA Mobilisations

- 7.5.1 Within NIFRS, it is accepted that the vast majority of AFA mobilisations will involve a single operational appliance. However, some premises retain a multi-appliance PDA as a result of a specific risk assessment for that premises. In these circumstances the following will apply.
- 7.5.2 On arrival, the initial IC shall consider the nature of operational activities required and provide the RCC with an informative message including a tactical mode. Where there are no immediate signs of fire, then a message must be transmitted to the RCC as soon as possible to allow them to advise oncoming resources.
- 7.5.3 On acknowledgement of this 'no sign of fire' message, and unless directed to do otherwise, supporting appliances shall continue to proceed under normal road speed, without blue lights and audible warning devices, until arrival at the incident or until returned by the IC via a 'no additional appliances required'.
- 7.5.4 The IC of the initial attendance must advise the RCC when indications/signs of fire are detected at the premises.
- 7.5.5 A confirmation of fire signs at the premises will require supporting appliances to continue to the incident under emergency response conditions, with blue lights and audible warning devices operating.
- 7.5.6 For all AFA calls attended, the incident details should be recorded fully and accurately on every occasion in both the UFS Incident Investigation Form and the IRS, as the information gathered is used to measure fire alarm performance levels and to provide important monitoring statistics to the SC Community Development within the relevant District.
- 7.5.7 The relevant District Commander will be responsible for ensuring that ICs follow the correct UFS Policy.

7.6 Attendance at Normal Road Speed

Where indicated in this policy, appliances should proceed at normal road speed. However, Officers-in-Charge of appliances can decide to travel under emergency response conditions (with blue lights and audible warning devices operating) where there is traffic congestion or other extenuating circumstances that would significantly delay attendance. The expectation here is that normal road speed will apply in the vast majority of cases.

Note: NIFRS Circular 27/2005 - The Use of Audible and Visual Warning Devices.
NIFRS OHS&W Bulletin 6/2006 - Emergency Sirens, as contained in the Health & Safety Policy on the Management of Occupational Road Risk.

8 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NIFRS will have 3 attendance levels:

Level 1 Fire Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA).

Level 2 AFA PDA; normally 1 Pumping Appliance under emergency response conditions.

Level 3 1 Pumping Appliance under non-emergency response conditions.

Level 3 will also be applied post-mobilisation on confirmation of a false alarm from the premises to allow inspection and completion of the UFS Policy (6.12.1).

8.1 The AGC Community Development will monitor all UFS in their respective Area and provide UFS statistics on a monthly basis to the SC Community Development within each District. (Each Area will ensure resilience by nominating a SC Community Development from Area to complete the statistical report in the absence of the AGC Community Development).

8.2 The SC Community Development within each District is responsible for identifying those premises which have reached the pre-determined trigger points as per 8.5.

8.3 The SC Community Development within each District will provide a monthly summary report of premises identified under the policy and action taken to address the five worst UFS offenders to the AGC or GC Community Development in the relevant Area. (Dependent on available resources an increase in the number of premises identified for action may be agreed with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Community Protection and the GC Community Development of the relevant Area). The format of the report will be agreed by the GC Community Development of the relevant Area.

8.4 A database will be maintained at District level for each premises identified for follow-up action, detailing UFS statistics relative to fire alarm system details, UPRNs and the action taken by the SC Community Development to address levels of UFS.

8.5 The trigger point for initial action is three or more UFS in any 12 week period.

8.6 If **three UFS or more are received in any rolling 12 week period**, the SC Community Development within the relevant District will send SL1 (Appendix 6) to the responsible person for the premises (signed off by a District Officer). An Automatic Fire Alarm Registration Form will accompany the letter (Appendix 7) to allow NIFRS to gather information about the fire alarm system. The information gathered will be entered into the premises' UFS folder and database (see 8.4) by the relevant District SC. If necessary, the SC Community Development will call with the identified premises to complete/collect the automatic fire alarm registration form.

8.7 The premises will continue to be monitored. Where appropriate, the relevant SC Community Development will liaise with the relevant premises to provide guidance on reducing and managing false alarms in line with BS 5839 Part 1. If appropriate, a note of the actions being taken to reduce false alarms will be placed in the UFS file for the premises on a note for file. No changes to attendance levels will be considered at this time.

- 8.8 **Where monitoring identifies premises where the rate of UFS signals exceeds 6 or more UFS in any rolling six month period** the SC Community Development within the relevant District will ensure that a fire safety audit is completed at the premises (where they are a relevant premises under The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006). Where appropriate, the SC Community Development will liaise with the relevant premises to provide guidance on reducing and managing false alarms in line with BS 5839 Part 1.
- 8.9 Following completion of the fire safety audit, the SC Community Development must, in conjunction with the AGC/GC Community Development of the relevant Area, carry out a review of all available information on the premises including, where applicable, the audit outcome and the number of UFS that NIFRS has attended.
- 8.10 At this meeting the SC Community Development and the AGC/GC Community Development will determine the risk profile of the premises (high or low risk) and if further action is appropriate under The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.
- 8.11 Prosecution action proposed under The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 will require consultation between the relevant area GC Community Development and the GC Community Development NIFRS HQ.
- 8.12 Monitoring of premises will be on-going and **where it is identified that a premises is generating 12 or more UFS calls in any rolling 9 month period** consideration will be given to amending NIFRS attendance levels. The premises' UFS file with all relevant information should be forwarded to the relevant area GC Community Development who will arrange a meeting with the ACFO Community Protection at NIFRS HQ.
- 8.13 Attendance Level 3 (see 8.14) should be considered at this juncture. The decision to amend any AFA attendance levels to premises will be made by the Area Commander and GC Community Development of the respective Area in consultation with the ACFO Community Protection who will issue instructions after consultation with the Director of Operations.
- 8.14 Attendance Level 3 is a non-emergency response where mobilised resources (normally 1 Pumping Appliance) respond at normal road speed without the use of blue lights and audible warning devices. The NIFRS response will not normally be available for other emergency calls during this response and should attend the premises indicated to investigate the AFA actuation, unless advised by the responsible person that the actuation is a confirmed false alarm (see 6.12.1). NIFRS RCC will retain the discretion to redirect and mobilise the NIFRS response for an identified operational need.

- 8.15 If the decision is made to change to Attendance Level 3, SL2 (Appendix 8) must be sent recorded delivery to the responsible person to inform them of the decision by NIFRS to change the attendance level to their premises, on receipt of calls based solely on the activation of their fire alarm and fire detection system by the GC Community Development of the relevant Area. This provides the responsible person with 14 days' notice from the date of the letter so that they can review their fire risk assessment, emergency evacuation plans and inform their insurance company prior to the implementation of Attendance Level 3. Where appropriate, the relevant SC Community Development will continue to liaise with the relevant premises to provide guidance on reducing and managing false alarms in line with BS 5839 Part 1:2013.
- 8.16 An SC61(a) will be completed by the ACFO Community Protection and sent to Operations Support and the relevant Area Commander to identify premises with a current SL2 in force, confirming Attendance Level 3, (non-emergency attendance at normal road speed), by NIFRS to calls based solely on the actuation of premises fire alarms and fire detection systems. This will include the start date of the amended attendance. An operational text message will be added to the turnout, alerting the appliance Officer-in-Charge and RCC Call Handler. **It must be emphasised that calls to confirmed fires will still result in the mobilisation of a full fire PDA.**
- 8.17 Following the commencement of Attendance Level 3 (non-emergency attendance under normal road speed and without blue lights and audible warning devices) to all AFA cause not determined calls, on-going monitoring will continue.
- 8.18 For premises with a Level 3 attendance in place, on-going assessment of the UFS performance for the premises will be carried out by the SC Community Development of the relevant District in conjunction with the AGC/GC Community Development of the relevant Area on a three monthly basis. This information will inform the reinstatement process as per 8.20.
- 8.19 Note, changes to attendance can be time/occupancy related, i.e., Attendance Level 3 could be imposed during the hours of occupation for an office building with Attendance Level 1 reinstated during non-occupancy periods.

It must be emphasised that calls to confirmed fires will still result in the mobilisation of a full fire PDA.

8.20 Reinstatement of Attendance Level 1

To achieve reinstatement of Attendance Level 1 the premises must fully demonstrate that a previously problematic AFA system has been properly maintained, repaired, modified, upgraded or replaced, or managerial arrangements at the premises have changed appropriately. This will be required to comply with a satisfactory industry standard in order to avoid or minimise future UFS incidents and **will be evidenced by 3 months in which there have been no UFS in the premises.**

The decision to reinstate Attendance Level 1 will be taken in consultation with ACFO Community Protection and the GC Community Development of the relevant Area.

- 8.21 The responsible person will be notified in writing by the GC Community Development of the relevant Area of reinstatement of Attendance Level 1 via standard letter SL3 (See Appendix 9). The GC Community Development of the relevant Area will be responsible for informing the Area Commander of the reinstatement.

The normal PDA for fire alarm actuations should be reinstated with the performance of the automatic fire warning system again being subject to continuous monitoring by the SC Community Development of the relevant District.

- 8.22 A SC61(a) will be completed by the ACFO Community Protection to inform Operations Support, NIFRS HQ of the reinstatement of Attendance Level 1 and will include the start date of the amended attendance.
- 8.23 Community Development Officers should ensure premises are aware of all potential filtering measures as outlined in BS 5839 Part 1. As a general rule Level 3 attendance will not be applied to high risk premises as detailed below; premises used for sleeping accommodation (these premises are defined within the incident recording system as hospitals and hospital accommodation, residential care homes, single private dwellings, including dwellings within a sheltered housing complex, houses in multiple occupation, hostels, hotels, bed and breakfast establishments, children's homes, places of lawful detention, boarding schools, military barracks, convents and monasteries).
- 8.24 Each Area will seek to reduce its overall UFS calls in line with the stated targets in the current Community Development strategy and will provide a monthly update to the ACFO Community Protection via the Senior Safety Officers' Forum monthly report.

9 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is currently exploring the introduction of legislation relating to the ability of NIFRS to charge for services, including NIFRS' response to reports of fire in specific circumstances. This legislation should provide NIFRS with the potential to introduce a charging policy in support of its strategy to deal with UFS from automatic detection systems. When the legislation is enacted, NIFRS will establish a policy on charging for attendance at UFS which will include a means of determining the level of charge, who is likely to be charged and how liability will be established. Charging will not prevent or preclude the provision by NIFRS of appropriate advice to the responsible person as part of a fire safety audit of the premises, or compromise the ability of NIFRS to take appropriate enforcement action under The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

10 REVIEW

It is anticipated that this document will be reviewed six months after its introduction or as a result of new legislation or guidance that may impact on its effectiveness.

FURTHER INFORMATION

CFOA Protocol for the Reduction of False Alarms & Unwanted Fire Signals.
CFOA Code of Practice, Best Practice for Summoning a Fire Response via Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisations.
BS 5839 Part 1.
CLG Costs and Benefits of Alternative Responses to Automatic Fire Alarms 2008.
HFRS Publication 'Guide to Reducing False Alarms from Automatic Fire Detection Systems'.
Loss Prevention Standard LPS 1014.
BAFE SP203

GLOSSARY

CoP	Code of Practice.
AFA	Automatic Fire Alarm (AFAs indicates plural form).
AFAS	Automatic Fire Detection and Fire Alarm System (as defined in BS 5839 Part 1).
ARC	Alarm Receiving Centre (ARCs indicates plural form). A continuously manned remote centre to which information concerning the status of one or more alarm systems is reported (see FAMO) (source BS 5979:2000).
BS 5839 Part 1	Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings – Part 1; Code of Practice for the Design, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of Systems in Non Domestic Premises (source BS 5839 Part 1: 2013).
BS 5839 Part 6	Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings – Part 6; Code of Practice for the Design, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of Systems in Domestic Premises (source BS 5839 Part 6:2013).
BS 5979	British Standard Code of Practice for Remote Centres Receiving Signals from Security Systems (source BS 5979:2000).
BS8951	Remote Centres Receiving Signals from Alarm Systems – Code of Practice.
BS 7671	British Standard Code of Practice for Requirements for Electrical Installations - IEE Wiring Regulations.
Call Back	A type of call filtering process undertaken by FAMOs to prevent UFS. Where call back is in place, on receipt of a fire alarm signal, a FAMO will call the premises contact, waiting for a maximum of 30 seconds for an answer. If the phone is answered at any time within the 30 seconds, the call filtering process commences. If the phone is not answered within the 30 seconds, the call back process ends and the signal is relayed to NIFRS.
Competent Person	A person with enough training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them properly to assist in undertaking the preventative and protective measures.
FAMO	Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisation (FAMOs indicates plural form). A combined term that includes all remote fire alarm monitoring organisations, e.g. ARC, TSP, etc.

False Alarm

A fire alarm signal resulting from a cause or causes other than a fire, in which a system has responded, either as designed or as the technology can be reasonably expected to respond to any of the following:

- a fire-like phenomenon or environmental influence, e.g., smoke from a nearby bonfire, dust or insects, processes that produce smoke or flame or environmental effects that can render certain types of detector unstable, such as rapid air flow;
- accidental damage;
- inappropriate human action (e.g., operation of a system for test or maintenance purposes without prior warning to building occupants and/or an alarm receiving centre);
- equipment false alarms, in which the fire alarm has resulted from a fault in the system;
- deliberate false alarms, in which a person operates a manual call point or causes a detector to initiate a fire signal, when no fire actually exists;
- false alarms with good intent, in which a person operates a manual call point or otherwise initiates a fire signal in the belief that there is a fire, when no fire actually exists (source BS 5839 Part 1:2013 definitions); or
- a false alarm becomes an UFS at the point NIFRS is requested to attend.

Filtering

Steps taken to limit a false alarm being transmitted to NIFRS as an UFS and action taken by NIFRS to determine if an emergency response is necessary. Filtering can be done through measures introduced on site by FAMOs or by NIFRS. (Call filtering is the preferred term for call challenging or call verification).

PDA

Pre-Determined Attendance. Specific number and type of each appliance, specific equipment required, together with such Junior, Senior and Principal Officers that are required to attend or be notified.

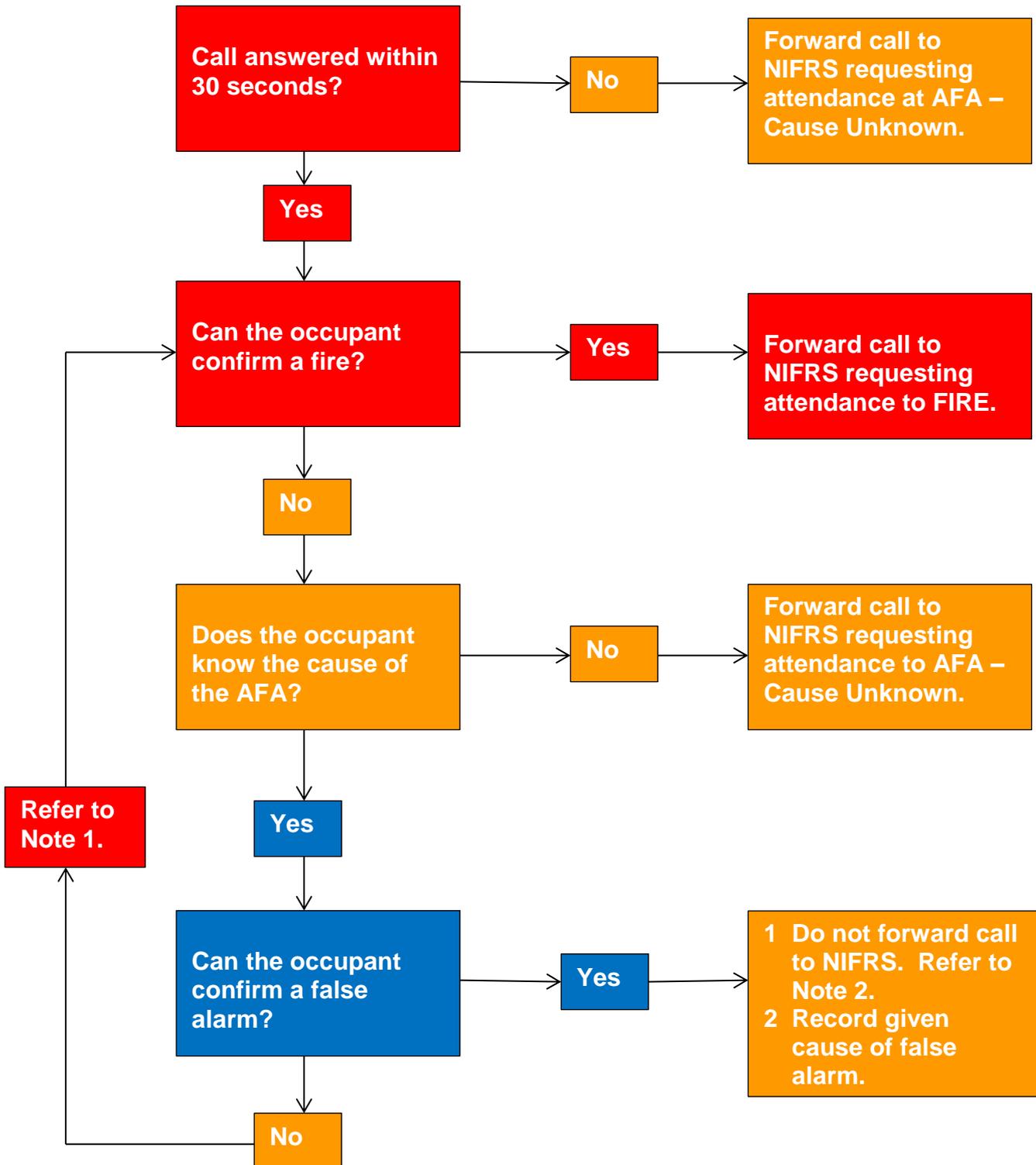
Responsible Person

For the purposes of this Policy the following definition will apply; refers to a single named member of the premises management team appointed to supervise all matters pertaining to the fire detection and fire alarm system. In relation to relevant premises means a person subject to a requirement under Article 25 or 26 of The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 in relation to the relevant premises.

This includes employers, a person with control to any extent of a relevant premises, the owner of the relevant premises, a person who by virtue of a contract or tenancy has an obligation of any extent in relation to maintenance or repair of relevant premises, or anything in or on relevant premises or safety in respect of harm caused by fire in relevant premises.

TSP	Telecare Service Providers were formally known as Social Alarm Providers (SAP). It is a service that enables people, especially older and more vulnerable individuals, to live independently in their own home. It can be as simple as the basic community alarm service, able to respond in an emergency and provide regular contact by telephone. It can include detectors or monitors such as motion or falls and fire and gas that trigger a warning to a response centre staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (see FAMO).
TSA	Telecare Services Association - the representative body for the Telecare industry within the UK.
UKAS	The United Kingdom Accreditation Service - the sole national accreditation body recognised by government to assess, against internationally agreed standards, organisations that provide certification, testing, inspection and calibration services.
UPRN	Unique Premises Reference Number - the number, issued by NIFRS, by which an individual protected premises is uniquely recognised.
UFS	Unwanted Fire Signal - a false alarm from an automatic fire detection and fire alarm system that has been passed through to NIFRS.

FAMO Call Filtering Flowchart



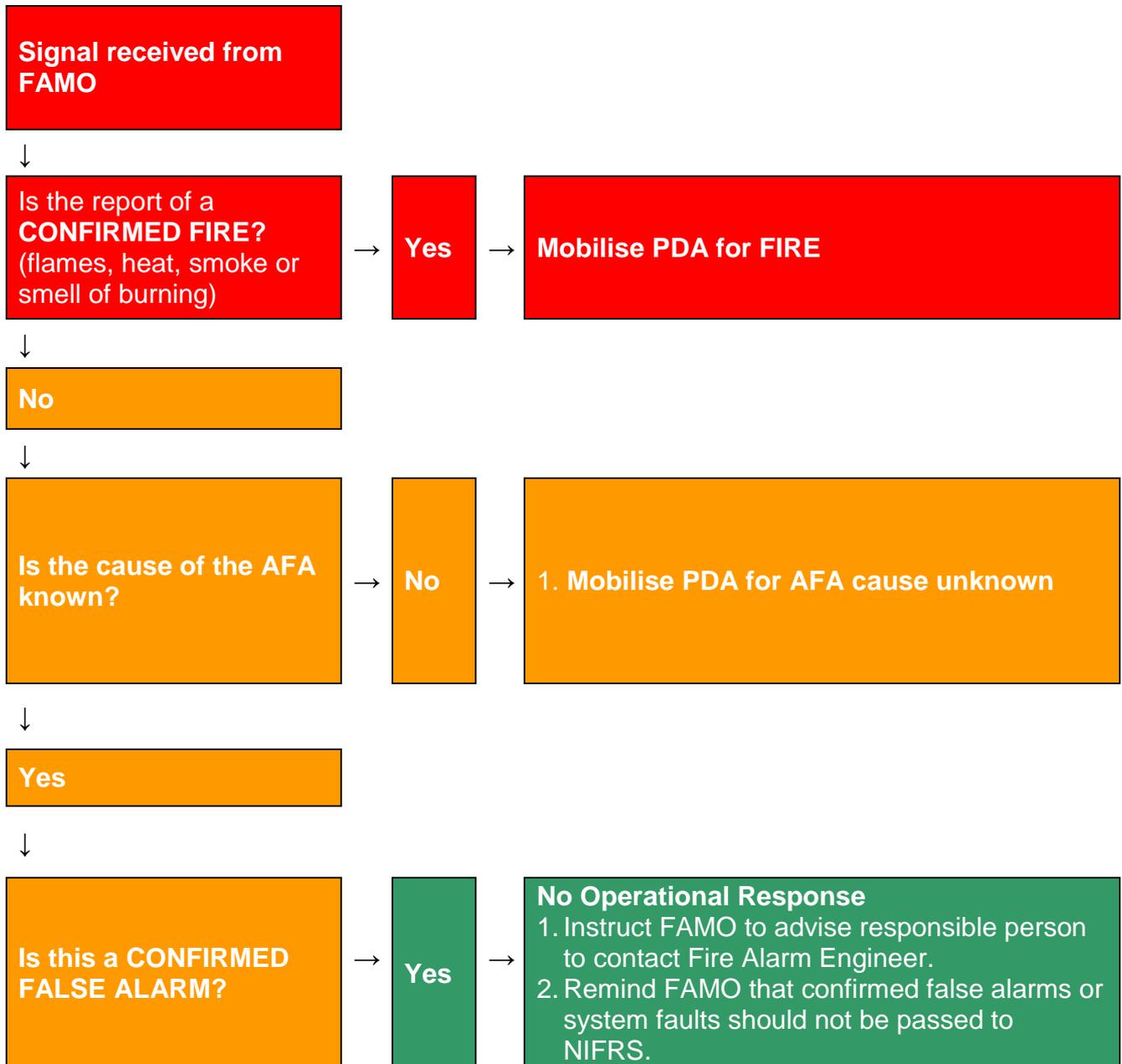
Note 1 – Do not recycle an enquiry more than once.

Occupiers who are confused over the filtering process should have been identified under the risk assessment and alternative filtering measures put in place. If the false alarm cannot be confirmed, forward call to NIFRS requesting attendance to AFA.

Note 2 – If the alarm signal is not sent to NIFRS:

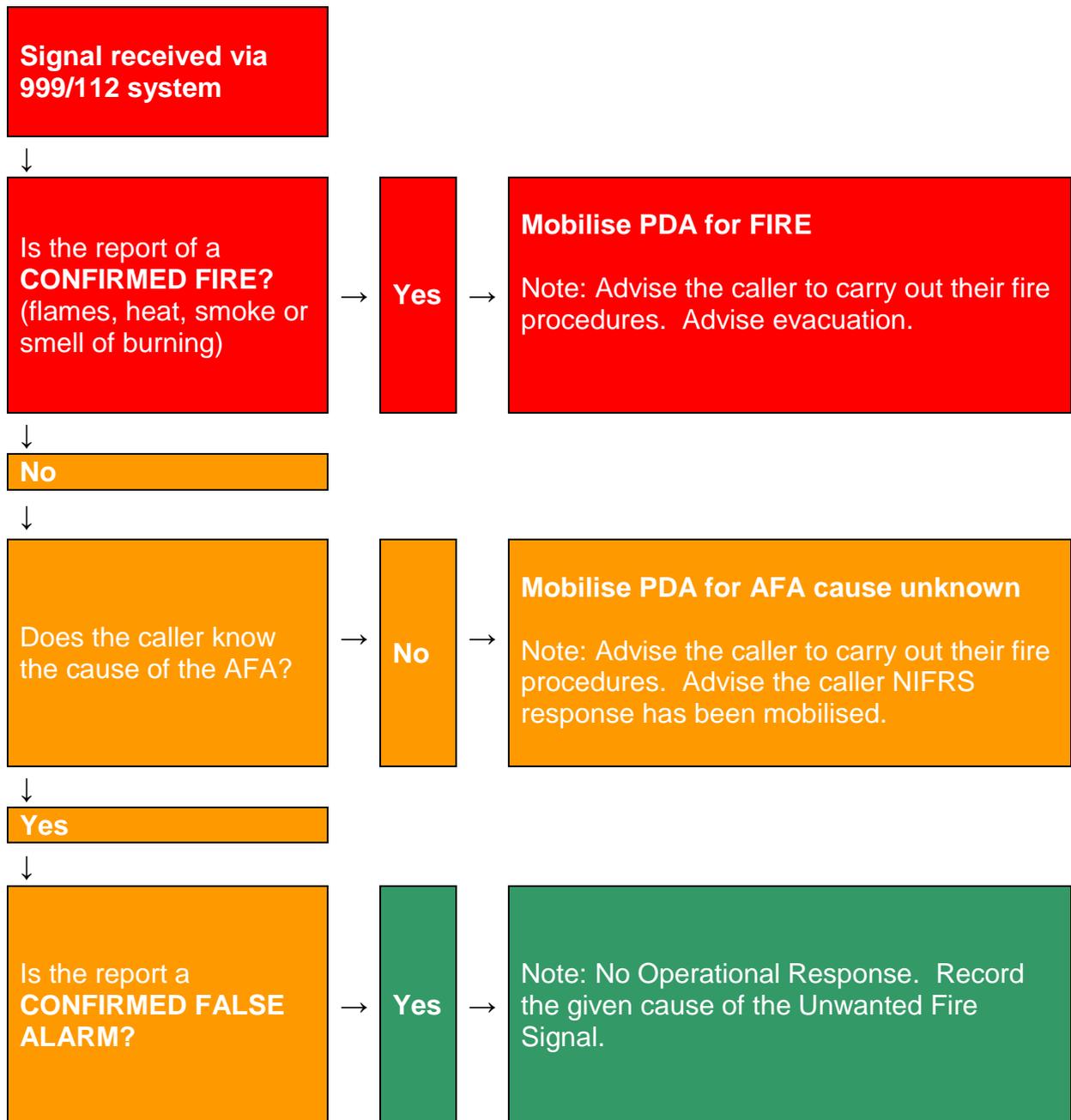
Inform the caller that if a fire, or signs of fire, are subsequently discovered, a new alarm call will be required in order to alert emergency services.

AFA SIGNALS RECEIVED VIA FIRE ALARM MONITORING ORGANISATION (FAMO)



* Premises with a current SL2 indicating Attendance Level 3 will be tagged to confirm a non-emergency response by NIFRS until a confirmation of fire is received from the premises via the 999 system or other acceptable source.

AFA SIGNALS RECEIVED VIA 999/112 (INC. DOMESTIC)



* RCC retains the right to amend the mobilisation on receipt of additional information from the occupier.

UNWANTED FIRE SIGNAL (UFS) INCIDENT INVESTIGATION FORM

INCIDENT NUMBER: UPRN (if Known):

NAME & ADDRESS OF PREMISES: STATION AREA:

TYPE OF PREMISES:

TIME OF ALARM:

SOURCE OF ALARM:

Heat Detector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smoke Detector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multi-Sensor Detector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multi-Criteria Fire Detector	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carbon Monoxide Detector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Beam Detector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manual Call Point	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Known	<input type="checkbox"/>

EXACT ALARM LOCATION:

FIRE ALARM MAINTENANCE PROVIDER:

ALARM RECEIVING CENTRE (If Known):

Cause of Alarm Signal

Fumes from Cooking Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burnt Toast	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steam (from bathroom, shower rooms and industrial processes)	<input type="checkbox"/>
High Humidity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tobacco Smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoke from Sources Other than a Fire in Building (e.g. external)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cosmetic Smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dust	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insects	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aerosol/Chemicals (e.g. deodorants, cleaning fluids)	<input type="checkbox"/>
High Air Velocities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pressure Surges on Water Mains Serving Automatic Sprinkler Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance/Refurbishment Works – Non-Fire Alarm Related	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cutting/Welding or Similar Hot Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance Works – Fire Alarm Related by Alarm Engineers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Testing of System – Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Ingress	<input type="checkbox"/>
System Fault – Equipment False Alarm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliberate False Alarm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accidental False Alarm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Confirm Alarm Receiving Centre was Informed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirm Alarm Receiving Centre was Informed	<input type="checkbox"/>

UFS INCIDENT LEAFLET ISSUED TO RESPONSIBLE PERSON (RP) or KEYHOLDER (KH)? YES

COPY OF UFS INCIDENT INVESTIGATION FORM GIVEN TO RESPONSIBLE PERSON (RP or KH)? YES

INSERT NAME (RP or KH): INCIDENT COMMANDER (PRINT NAME):

CONTACT NUMBER (RP or KH): SERVICE NO:

DATE:

BURNT TOAST THINK OF THE CONSEQUENCES



98% of all Fire Alarm Signals
AREN'T FIRES

* Based on responses to activated Automatic Fire Alarms

FALSE FIRE ALARMS. YOUR SIGNAL.
YOUR FALSE ALARM. YOUR PROBLEM –
HELP US MANAGE THEM OUT.



Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service
Protecting Our Community

MAIN TYPES OF DEVICES THAT CAN TRIGGER FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS:

Smoke Detectors

This type of detector responds to smoke and similar airborne pollutants.

Heat/Optical Detectors

These are generally used in kitchens, boiler rooms and similar areas where smoke detectors may be too sensitive and cause unwanted alarms. False Fire Alarms can be caused by excessive heat in the protected area.

Break Glass Call Point

Call points are not generally prone to alarms caused by faulty equipment. They can be operated accidentally or through vandalism. To help prevent this they can be fitted with a protective flap or cover which can be alarmed.



Smoke Detectors



Heat/Optical Detectors



Break Glass Call Point

Toasters

Nobody wants to be responsible for the loss of a life yet everyday as a result of the misuse of toasters alarms are triggered and the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service's ability to attend real emergencies is seriously reduced. When making toast never leave toasters unattended.

To prevent False Fire Alarms being caused by the generation of smoke, dust or paint spray, contractors should be made aware that the building is equipped with an automatic fire alarm system.

During building work or other similar activities, smoke detectors should be protected by a temporary cover or by replacing, where possible, with heat detectors.

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service can assist you and will provide free advice on how to prevent false fire alarms occurring.

CALL NIFRS TODAY AND GET IT SORTED.



Protecting Our Community

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FIRE SAFETY
call: 028 9045 6788
Text phone/minicom: 028 9262 8800
internet: www.nifrs.org

Ref: 2595

COMMON CAUSES OF UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS (UFS): Causes and Remedies

System Fault – Have fault fixed. Ensure a service programme is in place and only use competent persons¹.

Cooking Fumes – Kitchens should have heat detectors and be provided with adequate ventilation.
Is the area suitable for cooking or for using toasters?
Consider having toasters permanently wired (fused spur).

Workmen/Engineers – Inform Workmen/Engineers that an automatic fire alarm system is in operation. No one works on the system without a permit to work clearance.

Cigarette Smoke – No smoking policy/dedicated smoking area. For inside areas consider an optical sensor element instead of a smoke detector. Provide smoke extraction facilities.

Dust – Protect the detector with a temporary cover or replace where possible with a heat detector. The smoke detector must be re-instated when conditions return to normal.

Steam – (See cooking fumes advice). Provide adequate ventilation for bathrooms/shower rooms, etc.

¹ **Competent Person** - A person is to be regarded as competent for the purposes of this document where they have sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them to properly carry out the duties required.

² **Toasters** - The key to effectively avoiding many unwanted alarms caused by the misuse of toasters is having suitable procedures, correct supervision and the awareness of the potential consequences.

To prevent False Fire Alarms being caused by the generation of smoke, dust or paint spray, contractors should be made aware that the building is equipped with an automatic fire alarm system.

During building work or other similar activities, smoke detectors should be protected by a temporary cover or by replacing, where possible, with heat detectors.

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service can assist you and will provide free advice on how to prevent false fire alarms occurring.

CALL NIFRS TODAY AND GET IT SORTED.



Protecting Our Community

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FIRE SAFETY
call: 028 9045 6788
Text phone/minicom: 028 9262 8800
internet: www.nifrs.org

Ref: 2595

Name (Name of Responsible Person)

Registered Business Address (Registered Address in the case of a Limited Company or plc)

Date: _____

Enquiries To: _____

Our Reference: _____

Extension: _____

Your Reference: _____

Dear Sir/Madam

[Address of premises to which this letter applies]

Automatic Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems – False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals

Our records indicate that we have attended a number of Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS) at your premises.

Include dates/times, locations of unwanted fire signals for the premises in question.

In view of the number of UFS being transmitted to Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) from the above premises, steps should be taken immediately to remedy the situation. You should contact your fire alarm maintenance company as soon as possible in order to obtain advice on reducing the number of false alarms and UFS being transmitted.

In accordance with The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the responsible person must, where necessary, ensure appropriate firefighting equipment, detectors and alarms are fitted and that the premises, facilities, equipment and devices are maintained in an efficient state, of working order and good repair in order to safeguard the safety of people on the premises. The responsible person must also, where necessary, nominate a competent person to implement these measures. Information on The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 is available from the NIFRS website www.nifrs.org.

Fire alarm and fire detection systems fitted to BS 5839 Part 1 or equivalent must be maintained in accordance with the British Standard as detailed in Section 7. Your maintainer should have a copy of the standard, or they can be obtained from the British Standards Institution (<http://www.bsi-global.com>).

If your fire alarm system is monitored by a Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisation (FAMO), you will need to ensure liaison between yourself, the fire alarm maintainer and the FAMO in order to minimise the number of false alarm calls being put through to NIFRS and to ensure that any details held by your FAMO and your fire alarm maintainer are identical to those you have registered with NIFRS.

You should also fully complete the attached registration documents relating to your fire alarm and fire detection system and return them to us within 28 days. Registration of your fire alarm system will result in the allocation of a Unique Reference Number (URN). This number should be used in all communication between NIFRS and yourselves pertaining to the fire alarm and fire detection system and should be provided to NIFRS in the event that an emergency call is made.

Confirmed fires via the 999/112 exchange telephone system will always receive a full emergency response. Call NIFRS as soon as possible if there are signs of a fire or indications that a fire situation may exist. **Do not call NIFRS in the event the alarm is a known false alarm.**

Dependent upon the circumstances, it may be appropriate for you to implement a procedure to investigate the cause of alarm activation at the premises in order to confirm whether or not there is a fire before calling NIFRS. The responsible person should determine if this is a suitable course of action and if so ensure it is supported by the necessary management procedures (e.g., training). Any amended procedure must be part of your emergency plan and included in your fire risk assessment.

In accordance with NIFRS policy, should the performance of your fire alarm system fail to meet standards appropriate for the premises, NIFRS may change the level of attendance made when receiving a call from your premises based solely on the actuation of your fire alarm system. Any change in the NIFRS attendance level to your premises will be communicated to you prior to its implementation.

In addition, NIFRS may, as a result of poor fire alarm system performance, take enforcement action in accordance with The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. You should take immediate steps to minimise the false alarms and improve the management of your fire alarm system.

The number of UFS attended by NIFRS from your premises will continue to be monitored.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require additional information or have any queries concerning this matter.

Yours faithfully

For Chief Fire Officer

Enc Registration Documents
NIFRS Leaflet



Automatic Fire Alarm Registration Form

Office Use Only URN Number:

1 Reason for Application (please put a cross in the appropriate box)

- (a) New registration
- (b) Amendment to existing registration (Circle number of amended sections)
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

2 Details of Protected Premises

Organisation Name:				
Trading Name (if different from above):				
Address:				
Postcode:		County:		O/S Grid Map Ref: (if known)
Organisation Tel (inc STD):				Organisation E-mail:

3 Details of Responsible Person

A responsible person is a single named member of the premises management team with responsibility to supervise all matters pertaining to the fire detection and fire alarm system or in relation to relevant premises means a person subject to a requirement under Article 25 or 26 in relation to the relevant premises.

Title:		Initials:		Surname:	
Job Title:					
Organisation Name:					
Address:					
Postcode:		County:			
Telephone (inc STD):				E-mail:	

4 Details of Competent Person

A competent person is: a person with the relevant training and experience and with access to the requisite tools, equipment and information and capable of carrying out a defined task.

Title:		Initials:		Surname:	
Job Title:					
Organisation Name:					
Address:					
Postcode:		County:			
Telephone (inc STD):				E-mail:	

5 Type of Premises (please put a cross against all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airports | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals and Clinics | <input type="checkbox"/> Defence Establishments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Dispersed Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Establishments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheltered Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotels and Boarding Houses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> Crown Establishments | <input type="checkbox"/> Prisons and Detention Centres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational - Assembly | <input type="checkbox"/> Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please give details below: | | |

--

6 Standard to which the Fire Alarm System is Designed and Installed

(please put a cross in the appropriate box)

- BS 5839 Part 1
- NHS Firecode 3 HTM 82 or equivalent
- BS 5839 Part 6
- Other – please give details below:

--

Name (Name of responsible person)

Registered Business Address (Registered address in the case of a Limited company or plc)

Date: _____

Enquiries To: _____

My Reference: _____

Extension: _____

Your Reference: _____

Dear Sir/Madam

[Address of premises to which this letter applies]

Automatic Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems – False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals

Our letters dated [Dates] refer. An investigation of available information and a review of the number of Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS) being transmitted to Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) in the last 9 months has been completed.

Include dates/times, locations and action taken by NIFRS in relation to unwanted fire signals for the premises in question.

We are writing to inform you that the number of false alarms passed to NIFRS from your premises exceeds the threshold within the NIFRS UFS Policy for receiving a normal Level 1 Attendance from the Fire Service. After 14 days from the date of this letter, your premises will be on a Level 3 Attendance. **This means that NIFRS resources will be sent at normal road speed when responding to calls based solely on the activation of your fire alarm and fire detection system.**

You will need to review your premises' fire risk assessment and emergency evacuation plans, inform your insurance providers of the change in the Fire Service attendance level to your premises and make contact with your fire alarm system maintenance company. NIFRS will require you to provide supporting evidence from your fire alarm maintainer to verify your reinstatement to Level 1 Attendance. This, supported by no UFS for a period of three consecutive months, will result in NIFRS reinstating a Level 1 Attendance to your premises

You are required to manage your fire alarm system in accordance with current fire safety legislation. Any false alarms should be fully investigated and recorded. **Action as necessary must be taken to avoid future false alarms.** You should ensure that measures are in place to prevent false alarms being sent through to NIFRS. Appropriate training on the fire alarm system must be provided, including training for key holders who must be available to attend your premises within 20 minutes to facilitate entry. You must have a suitable maintenance programme for your fire alarm system and you must also ensure your fire risk assessment and emergency plans are up-to-date.

Confirmed fires via the 999/112 exchange telephone system will continue to receive a full emergency attendance from NIFRS.

Do not call NIFRS in the event the alarm is a known false alarm.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require additional information or have any queries concerning this matter.

Yours faithfully

For Chief Fire Officer

Name (Name of responsible person)

Registered Business Address (Registered address in the case of a Limited company or plc)

Date: _____

Enquiries To: _____ My Reference: _____

Extension: _____ Your Reference: _____

Dear Sir/Madam

[Address of premises to which this letter applies]

Automatic Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems – False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS)

I refer to my letters dated [dates], concerning the number of false alarms generated by the fire detection and fire alarm system at your premises.

I am pleased to inform you that, following improvements you have made in reducing the number of UFS, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) are re-instating Attendance Level 1 to your premises. **This means that NIFRS will provide an emergency response to automatic fire alarm calls received from your premises.**

Fire detection and fire alarm systems should perform to an acceptable standard (normally BS 5839 or equivalent), with measures to minimise unnecessary summoning of the Fire Service. It is important that you continue to manage your fire alarm and fire detection system in accordance with current fire safety legislation and the standards applicable at the time of installation. Any false alarms should be fully investigated and recorded. Action as necessary should be taken to avoid future false alarms and measures put in place to minimise the number of false alarms being transmitted to NIFRS.

Should the number of false alarms generated from your fire alarm system and passed to NIFRS exceed the Performance Levels acceptable to this service, we reserve the right to review our attendance levels to an automatic fire alarm actuating at your premises.

Confirmed fires via the 999/112 exchange telephone system will continue to receive a full emergency attendance from NIFRS.

Do not call NIFRS in the event the alarm is a known false alarm.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require additional information or have any queries concerning this matter.

Yours faithfully

For Chief Fire Officer

Name (Name of responsible person)

Registered Business Address (Registered address in the case of a Limited company or plc)

Date: _____

Enquiries To: _____

My Reference: _____

Extension: _____

Your Reference: _____

Dear Sir/Madam

[Address of premises to which this letter applies]

Fire Alarm Signals from Automated Messaging Machines – False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals

I refer to your Automatic Fire Alarm System and the existing method of raising the alarm with Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS).

I must inform you that it is no longer acceptable for NIFRS' Regional Control Centre to receive Direct Dial Automated Messages from your premises. You are requested to contact your fire alarm maintainer or installer who can advise you on the acceptable methods for monitoring your fire alarm system and for transmitting calls to NIFRS.

NIFRS will only accept automated fire signals through a recognised Fire Alarm Monitoring Organisation (FAMO).

Please do not hesitate to contact the Officer named above should you require additional information or have any queries concerning this matter.

Yours faithfully

For Chief Fire Officer

Policy Directive Flowchart

