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Circular: **2020HOC0161MW**

15 March 2020

TO: **ALL MEMBERS**

Dear Brother / Sister

Coronavirus: FBU position on non-essential outside activities

Over the previous couple of weeks you will be aware that the position of the governments, employers and public agencies across the UK on the matter of public events, home-working, and reducing interaction between people has been evolving.

Although there has been little central direction from any government, a number of fire and rescue services have already taken the decision to introduce measures to temporarily suspend or modify the interaction between members of the public and firefighters.

Though the specific measures vary between those services, these decisions *include* stopping or minimising:

- 7(2)(d) inspections;
- Community fire safety visits and inspections (including home safety visits);
- Audits of fire safety risk assessments and arrangements;
- Exercises;
- School visits;
- Public meetings held on fire and rescue service premises;
- Public access to fire stations

Measures have also included tightly controlled access to fire and rescue service control rooms.

These steps have been taken to:

- reduce the exposure of firefighters to members of the public who may be infected with or carrying the COVID-19 virus; AND
- reduce the exposure of members of the public (particularly vulnerable or at-risk individuals or groups) to contact with firefighters who may be carrying the COVID-19 virus.

/Cont.

The Fire Brigades Union is a strong advocate for improving community relations and for thoroughgoing fire safety inspection and 7(2)(d) inspections. However, given the imperative to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risk to the public and to maximise the availability of firefighters who are fit and well to carry out vital emergency service delivery, we fully support those steps.

Therefore, the FBU has concluded that, in the interests of public health and public safety, all fire and rescue services should cease all outside activities other than emergency response unless there is an immediate or imminent safety imperative to undertake an inspection or other such engagement. An example of such an immediate imperative would be to investigate a report of fire escape doors or routes being 'locked or blocked'.

The FBU believes that all fire and rescue services should take this step immediately.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Wrack". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MATT WRACK
General Secretary

MW/ad