

## **NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS No. 10 – 16 APRIL 2010**

### **CUTS IN RESPONSE TO SPRINKLERED BUILDINGS**

Attached is a self-explanatory letter from the Union to Mike Hall which seeks the information that he presumably based his decision to cut responses to Sprinklered Buildings.

The Union can find no evidence that “International Best Practice” is to cut responses to sprinklered buildings to two appliances – but obviously Mike Hall has that evidence and will quickly provide it to the Union for our consideration.

Interestingly “International Best Practice” must also allow single appliance responses to continue if that is what has historically been provided. Obviously then, it’s a very flexible “International Best Practice”.

The Union has seen no evidence that “Senior Fire Officers have reviewed all buildings with a sprinkler installed to asses their risk”. Maybe they did this during their weekends.

Mike Hall obviously has that evidence and will quickly provide it to the Union for our consideration.

Similarly, the Union looks forward to considering the list of buildings designated by Senior Fire Officers as high risk.

The benefits claimed for this cut in response is less traffic congestion and less traffic accidents.

Again, the Union looks forward to the evidence of any such benefit. Any benefits would have to be both significant and measurable to outweigh the obvious additional risks the cuts will create.

Will the hard evidence that Mike Hall must have based his decision to cut responses be quickly provided as requested by the Union? And, if it isn’t forthcoming – why not?

### **CRUDE ATTEMPT TO BLACKMAIL WON'T WORK**

Members were advised in the last Newsletter that the breakdown of the lump sum/back-pay would be provided within the next 2 weeks. The Fire Service has now told the Union that they will refuse to supply this information unless the Union withdraws its application to the Employment Relations Authority for a penalty regarding the late payment of the new wage rates/back-pay.

There is no connection and never has been a connection between the late payment of new wage rates/back-pay Dispute and the commitment made by the Fire Service negotiating team to provide a full breakdown of the lump sum/back-pay.

Such a connection has never been raised with the Union at any of the discussions on the format/detail of the breakdown.

This crude attempt at blackmail is a complete breach of good faith.

It will not work.

The Union will not withdraw its application in the E.R.A.

The Fire Service has been explicitly told this and told they must honour the commitment made to provide the breakdown. If they do not honour this commitment, the Union will pursue this breach of good faith in the E.R.A. as well.

### **TAPs EVALUATION**

The Union repeats its advice as in Newsletter 8 – 22 March to complete and return this evaluation in order to ensure that any necessary modifications to TAPs Programmes can be firmly based on information provided from all involved with TAPs programmes.

**N.Z.P.F.U.**

15 April 2010

Mike Hall  
Chief Executive/National Commander  
N.Z. Fire Service  
P.O. Box 2133  
WELLINGTON 6140

Dear Mike,                   **Sprinklered Building Responses**

You will recall that on 23 December 2009, the Union wrote to you noting that with the settlement of the C.A. it was likely the Fire Service would wish to introduce changes that had been identified but put on hold while Agreement negotiations were continuing.

The Union indicated a desire to discuss these issues prior to any implementation, and consequently proposed a rapid resumption of the regular quarterly meetings between the Union and yourself and members of your senior management team.

Unfortunately these meetings have not yet been resumed. Janine Hearn did contact the Union on 26 March with a proposed timeframe for a meeting. This was replied to on 31 March when the Union advised of unsuitable dates, and the Union awaits a reply to this.

An important matter the Union wishes to discuss at that forum was the intention – as at 23 December 2009 – to reduce response to sprinklered buildings. By way of a media release from the Fire Service, the Union was advised that you intend to introduce reduced responses from 29 April 2010.

This determination is of real concern to the Union and its members – both the determination itself and the fact that there has been no discussion, let alone consultation with the Union.

The cut in responses impacts directly on the work of many Union members. It is a cut in service to the communities our members serve.

In order to further consider an appropriate response from the Union and its members to this cut

in service, the Union requests the following information:

1. What is the “international best practice” that this cut in service brings New Zealand “in line with”? Please provide full details of the information you assembled that allowed you to make this claim.
2. Please provide full information of the review that Senior Fire Officers made on all sprinklered buildings that assessed the risk of those buildings; this information to include specific risk assessments done for each building.
3. Please provide the list, broken down by Fire Districts of all buildings assessed as high risk.
4. Please provide all evidence you assembled to make the claim that this cut in service will result in less traffic congestion and will reduce traffic incidents.
5. Please provide the information you have regarding the number and type of traffic incidents arising out of the present response to sprinklered buildings for the last 5 years.

The Union would also appreciate clarification of how, if this cut in service brings New Zealand into line with “International Best Practice” and consequently the default PDA is a response of two appliances, existing one pump responses will continue? This would appear to be completely contrary to “International Best Practice”.

Finally, given that the basic rationale of the cut in response is a belief that almost all alarms based on a single automatic detection/suppression system or from a single telephone call is a false alarm, the Union would seek some clarification as to why therefore firefighters who do respond should not do so in compliance with all normal traffic rules.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

DEREK BEST - SECRETARY