

MEDIA RELEASE - 31 MARCH 2010

“Fire Service managers’ intention to significantly reduce pre-determined turnouts to sprinklered buildings in major metropolitan areas is both irresponsible and potentially life threatening”, said Derek Best, Secretary of the Professional Firefighters Union.

“To assume that all automatic alarm calls from sprinklered buildings is a false alarm is nothing more than a reckless approach to public safety. Any delay in sending necessary resources – Firefighters and appliances, including specialist appliances such as those with aerial capacity – must put lives in jeopardy and will increase potential risk to Firefighters who attend. A delay of even 2 -3 minutes is critical, said Derek Best.

“As well, given these buildings will be evacuated with far fewer Firefighters attending, this move will cause very significant delays in the building being determined as safe for it to be re-occupied. The cost to a business of an automatic alarm going off will greatly increase because of a far longer loss of productivity.”

“The only justification advanced by the Fire Service management is a desire to lessen traffic congestion, but there is absolutely no evidence to suggest traffic congestion is a real problem, Derek Best said.

“The public pay for necessary levels of protection against fire and the public is entitled to see the resources they are paying for being used. As well, building owners who meet the cost of sprinklering their buildings now find a result of that expenditure is a reduction in the response to their buildings.”

“There is no positive outcome for this ill-advised reduction in Fire Service response. Everyone will suffer – Building Owners, Businesses, the Public and Firefighters and the Fire Service’s reputation will be tarnished – all for nothing”, Derek Best concluded.

For any further comment please contact :

**Derek Best (04) 568 4583 or (0274) 440985
N.Z. Professional Firefighters Union**