

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (supported by the Fire and Rescue National Framework document) outlines the Government's priorities and objectives for all UK Fire brigades and states that they must undertake ongoing analysis and evaluation of the risks facing both the people and areas they serve.

West Midlands Fire Service is shaped by our risk analysis and by our understanding of our diverse local communities. In this way we are able to plan and allocate resources to ensure that we are managing these changing risks as effectively as possible. One way of mitigating these risks is through targeted prevention work. As we are now seeing significant reductions in the number of fires in the home and other emergency incidents, we have been able to increase the time our staff spend engaged in fire prevention activity (including carrying out home fire safety checks and fitting smoke alarms), especially with members of the community identified as being at highest risk (such as for example children, young people and vulnerable adults).

Further to this, our Fire Safety Officers routinely carry out audits of local business and commercial premises as well as monitor plans that outline proposals for new buildings. This is done to maintain and improve standards of fire safety to protect people not just in the workplace, but also at places of entertainment during their recreational time.

Such prevention and protection work is carried out whilst still operating front line fire engines and specialist resources, 24 hours a day. These resources are strategically placed to meet demand across the area and throughout the day so that we can achieve our stated response standards.

WMFS have established performance targets with regard to the time it takes for our fire engines to respond and to arrive at emergency incidents.

Response times are a critical factor for a number of reasons:

- The faster we can get to a fire or other emergency, the better chance our firefighters have, of bringing the incident to a safe conclusion, before it escalates.
- We need to employ safe working systems and for many incident types, there are minimum numbers of firefighters that we need to have on site, so that safe and effective procedures can be set up and maintained.
- Though our fire engines spend much of the day away from station, taking part in training and fire prevention work, they will still normally spend time on station, especially overnight, so the location of fire stations is an important influence on our ability to achieve fast attendance times. We have in place an estates strategy, driven by the need to meet a high standard of performance in relation to response times and we monitor how well we perform in meeting the target attendance times.

2010/11	Average Fire Engine Attendance Times		Attendance as % of Occasions		
	1st Fire Engine	2nd Fire Engine	1st Fire Engine	2nd Fire Engine	Minor (Secondary Fires)
Target Time	5 Minutes	7 Minutes	Attendance within 8 minutes on 80% of occasions	Attendance within 10 minutes on 80% of occasions	Attendance within 20 minutes on 100% of occasions
Current Performance	5 Minutes, 22 Seconds	6 Minutes, 53 Seconds	90%	90%	100%

Our resources are targeted on *preventing* incidents, *protecting* our communities and *responding* as required.