



National
Operational
Guidance

Control measure

**Apply situational awareness: Fires in
Waste Sites**



NFCC
Fire Central
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Control measure knowledge

Situational awareness concerns the perception and understanding of a situation, along with anticipating how the situation may develop in the near future.

Understanding the site design, construction, nature of use and occupancy will assist incident commanders in making safe, informed decisions.

Depending on the size and complexity of the incident, other agencies may attend, making effective joint working critical for safety on the incident ground.

Shared situational awareness is a multi-agency common understanding of the circumstances and immediate consequences of the emergency, together with an appreciation of the capabilities available and the priorities of the emergency services.

For more information refer to National Operational Guidance: Incident command - [Organisation at an incident](#).

So that fire and rescue service personnel can operate safely and effectively at incidents involving fires in waste sites, they should develop an appropriate understanding of site design and layout, the type of materials being stored and the method of storage (for example, stacked and on-site processes).

They should also appreciate the effects of the fire and of firefighting activity on the material involved, the local community and the environment.

Information about fire behaviour and firefighting techniques can be found in National Operational Guidance: [Fires and firefighting](#).

Guidance on environmental issues can be found in the [Environment Agency and DCLG Environmental handbook](#) and National Operational Guidance: [Environmental protection](#).

To make a judgment on the effective deployment of resources, incident commanders should also be aware of the capabilities of the resources at the scene, specialist knowledge available and specialist equipment on-site that might assist in the creation of a successful tactical plan.

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Carry out pre-planning site visits and inspections to gain risk information that can be made available to responding personnel at a fire or other type of incident.
- Gather this information through joint inspection with other agencies, such as an environmental agency wherever possible. Joint visits may help fire and rescue services build a better picture of the challenges an incident may present at a particular site. Joint visits should also allow other agencies to identify concerns they may have about the potential hazards that may need to be dealt with during an incident.

Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Consider site use and occupancy
- Consider the local community and their need to shelter in place or evacuate
- Consider the responsible person (or appointed competent person) for the site
- Consider the outcomes from scene surveys - refer to National Operational Guidance: Fires and firefighting - [Scene survey](#)
- Access and secure CCTV footage for subsequent investigations and debriefs
- Consider liaison and information sharing with others, for example:
 - Environmental agency
 - Environmental health
 - Local authority
 - Police
 - Ambulance service
 - Public health agency
 - Site operator