



National  
Operational  
Guidance

# Control measure

## Safety officers



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

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## Contents

Control measure - Safety officers ..... 3



## Control measure - Safety officers

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### Control measure knowledge

The incident commander or sector commander should assess levels of risk and consider appointing one or more safety officers to act as advisers; this appointment can be made at any time

Safety officers should have suitable competencies for the role and wear a blue and yellow tabard with the words 'Safety Officer'. If there is a safety sector, safety officers will report to a safety sector commander.

Safety officers will be responsible for functions including:

- Identifying safety issues
- Starting corrective action
- Maintaining safe systems of work
- Ensuring people are wearing appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE)
- Observing the working environment
- Monitoring the physical and psychological condition of personnel
- Regular reviews
- Recording an analytical risk assessment
- Updating the incident commander when circumstances change

### Safety within sectors

Sector commanders are responsible for the health and safety of people within their sector. However, they may need to nominate a safety officer to assist and report to them.

At a large incident, a safety officer may be appointed as the safety sector commander; they will report to a command support officer.

If a safety sector commander has been appointed, they will co-ordinate the role of safety officers and may be responsible for functions including:

- Surveying operational sectors, identifying hazards, and advising the sector commander
- Working with sector safety officers to support and exchange information
- Confirming the validity of the initial risk assessment and recording as appropriate
- Collating and recording an analytical risk assessment
- Providing additional monitoring of the safety of personnel for sector commanders



- Working with the incident commander or operations commander
- Reporting health and safety issues, including accident investigation

## Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Identify suitably competent personnel who can be appointed as safety officers or safety sector commanders
- Provide a means to identify personnel on the incident ground who are carrying out the role of safety officer or safety sector commander

## Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Appoint suitably competent personnel as safety officers
- Task safety officers to carry out activities that will maintain the safety of operational personnel
- Instigate a safety sector at large or complex incidents under the control of a safety sector commander
- Task safety sector commanders to carry out activities, primarily to co-ordinate the role of other safety officers

Sector commanders should:

- Consider appointing a safety officer to assist with maintaining the health and safety of people within their sector