



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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TO: ALL MEMBERS

Dear Brother / Sister

AMBULANCE STRIKE: NON-PARTICIPATION IN CO-RESPONDING ACTIVITY BY FBU MEMBERS

Members will be aware that our brothers and sisters in the trade unions in other parts of the public sector will be taking strike action next week in protest over a number of matters, but primarily over the issue of poor pay as a consequence of austerity. There are variations in different parts of the UK. I am sure members will want to show their support and solidarity.

There is an important aspect which I wish to specifically address, and that is the strike action by ambulance workers on Monday 13 October 2014. Senior FBU officials met with senior officials representing ambulance workers this week and were informed that in most regions, agreement has been reached with ambulance trusts in respect of emergency cover by ambulance personnel during the strike period. It was expected that these arrangements would be in place across the country in due course.

It is imperative that FBU members and other fire and rescue service staff do not take any steps that are likely to jeopardise these agreements. We understand that a small number of fire and rescue services have suggested that firefighters should engage in activity such as co-responding and other medical service functions during the strike period. Such steps by fire and rescue services are not helpful or professional; they are highly provocative and should not be implemented by FBU members.

Members will be aware that co-responding is not a contractual obligation on firefighters. The question has been considered in the courts, where it was decisively found that fire and rescue services cannot require firefighters to carry out co-responding. All members are urged not to carry out any instruction from their fire and rescue service to carry out co-responding duties. Any member who faces any threats of disciplinary action or other sanction by their employer for refusing to do so will receive the full backing of the Union. It would be madness for any fire and rescue service to be marched into court to be humiliated yet again on this matter.

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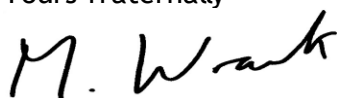
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Fire and rescue services are not just jeopardising the agreements reached between the ambulance unions and ambulance trusts - they are potentially leaving FRS and personnel and fire and rescue authorities liable in the event of legal action by a patient or their dependents should they believe that the actions of the fire and rescue service was causal or contributory to a poor recovery by the patient or worse. Members will be mindful of the criminal prosecution brought against firefighters in Warwickshire. Moreover, you will be aware that in respect of Marlie Farm, the fire and rescue authority continues to argue in the courts that it has no duty of care once crews have been mobilised. The Chief Fire Officer has consistently stated that that legal stance was the result of the insistence of the Authority's insurer - Zurich Municipal. Zurich Municipal is the insurer for 31 of the fire and rescue services in England.

Finally I would like to encourage off-duty firefighters to attend picket lines to express solidarity as so many trade unionists have been doing during our periods of strike action.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack', with a stylized, cursive script.

MATT WRACK
General Secretary

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