**Firefighters strike**

Residents across Cumbria are being urged to take extra fire safety steps to protect themselves and their loved ones when firefighters go on strike.

During industrial action, set to take place on the following dates

* Commencing 31st October 2014 at 18.00 hours until 4th November 2014 at 18.00 hrs

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) is asking people in the county to minimise the risks of fire and avoid making unnecessary 999 calls.

The strike, called by the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU) in response to a dispute with the Government over proposed changes to firefighter pensions, means CFRS will be operating a reduced emergency response when industrial action takes place and is going to be unable to provide the comprehensive level of cover residents in Cumbria can usually expect.

While 999 calls will continue to be answered as normal, CFRS response to incidents where life is considered to be in danger will be prioritised. Although the Service will try to attend all emergency calls, on occasion some incidents where life is not considered to be at immediate risk such as small fires and automatic fire alarms may receive a reduced or even no response. It's therefore vital that residents do all they can to prevent fires breaking out.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service's home fire safety advice is to take extra care with these six steps:

1. If you haven't already got one, install a smoke alarm and test it every week
2. Take extra care in the kitchen - this is where most fires start
3. Check your electrical appliances - turn them off and don't overload sockets
4. If you smoke, put cigarettes out properly
5. Sleep safe - check everything in your home every bedtime
6. Plan a safe escape - make sure you know how to get out of your home in an emergency

**Advice to Business**

Businesses are reminded to be mindful of their responsibilities, as during periods of strike action the Service may not be able to respond to fire safety enquiries within its usual timescales. It remains the responsibility of employers, landlords and other premises occupiers to comply with fire safety law.

We would also like to remind businesses that your emergency escape plan should not rely on Fire and Rescue Service involvement for it to be effective. Any and all actions that are required to keep people safe in the premises, to move them to places of relative safety or to complete a full evacuation must be within your resources.

In advance of any strike, responsible persons, business owners, employers and managers should ensure that:

* The fire risk assessment for the premises is reviewed up to date and effective
* Measures to reduce the risk of fire are in place and are working
* Fire precautions in the building are working
* The premises emergency plan is up to date and appropriate to ensure evacuation in case of fire
* Your emergency plan should not rely on fire and rescue service involvement for it to be effective
* All staff know what to do in case of fire
* At no time should anybody put themselves in danger

**Contact us for advice**

Email: enquiries.fire@cumbria.gov.uk

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters

Telephone: 01768 812612 (Out of office hours please leave a voicemail message and a contact name and telephone number)