



INDUSTRIAL FIRE NORTH ST MARYS - SAFETY UPDATES

This week, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) [announced](#) that they have launched an investigation into Saturday's 20th alarm industrial fire at North St Marys, an incident involving 200+ members.

It is understood that the premises, a waste storage facility, was storing hazardous chemicals, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and that the EPA had conducted a site visit of the property days prior to the incident.

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulations, workplaces handling or storing hazardous chemicals in specific quantities have duties to provide the Department with emergency plans and other key information. In turn, providing firefighters with information on the location, quantity and type of certain high-risk hazardous chemicals so that they can respond accordingly in an emergency. In consultation with the Department today, the FBEU has sought to establish that such information was provided in advance of the incident.

PCBs are particularly hazardous chemicals, historically used in transformers as coolants, and banned since the 1980s. Exposure to PCBs is a serious safety matter.

Inexcusably, the Department has been exceptionally slow to act on this matter and has provided little in the way of clear direction to those involved in the incident. These concerns, among others, have been ventilated by the Union and Health and Safety Reps (HSR) during Departmental post-incident IMT meetings held yesterday and again today.

Additionally, the incident is now subject to an HSR-issued Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN).

The intervention has led to some important progress, and all impacted members are encouraged to review the current status of post-incident arrangements detailed by the Department. This includes staged efforts to decontaminate fleet, the testing of garments and other PPE/C, and the swapping of SCBA used at the incident.

In meetings with the FBEU late this afternoon, the Department provided assurances that health monitoring arrangements will also follow, noting the EPA has already provided monitoring to their staff involved in the incident.

I wish to reiterate that it has taken far too long for the Department to implement the basic arrangements in place as of today. This has deepened our concerns about the adequacy of the Department's safety management system - an issue which has continued to dominate discussions throughout 2025.

The transition away from the Department's punitive health check process has unearthed internal Departmental forces bent on impeding proactive member-led safety measures. In an industry as dangerous as firefighting, these hurdles cannot be tolerated and must be addressed formally as part of any future action review process.

More information on this matter will be provided as soon as possible, with IMT meetings continuing daily into the weekend. In the meantime, impacted members are encouraged to document exposure via NIIENM and report immediate safety concerns to their local HSR.

SINGLE DAY LSL

The FBEU office is aware of changes in SAM impacting members' ability to apply for single day long service leave (LSL). Members should note that this change is opposed by the Union and that the Department failed to consult on the matter, in accordance with the Award.



SitRep 42/2025

The Department spent the last 24 hours seeking to remedy the consultation failure but refused to provide status quo by reverting the LSL change. As such, the FBEU this afternoon filed an urgent dispute with the Industrial Relations Commission.

If your single day LSL has not been approved, please call the office for assistance.

STOP THE PRESS

After lodging the dispute this afternoon, the Department finally agreed to the status quo Award condition whilst the parties discuss. More to follow.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Members are advised that, in line with our reporting requirements, our financial statements are available by [clicking here](#).

In Unity

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L. Drury".

Leighton Drury
State Secretary