

Stay safe messaging for high-risk incidents

Standardised stay safe messaging in the force control room for officers attending high-risk incidents.

First published
10 September 2025

Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Organisational
Topic	Diversity and inclusion Operational policing Organisation including workforce
Organisation	Suffolk Constabulary
Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aaron Connolly – aaron.connolly1@suffolk.police.ukRoger Salmon – roger.salmon@suffolk.police.uk
Region	Eastern
Partners	Police
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	November 2024
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	Communities Disability General public Workforce
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Aim

The aim was to standardise 'stay safe' messages which the force control rooms send to officers and teams attending high-risk incidents.

Intended outcome

- keeping and helping deployed police officers feel safe
- keeping the public safe
- executing the statutory duty as part of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 by providing briefings to officers

Description

Force incident managers (FIM) sit in the force control room. They allocate resource according to force demand, and make sure all people are safe. As part of this work, they send 'Stay Safe' messages to teams that are deployed on the ground for incidents such as rescues from water and knife-related incidents.

A localised audit identified the inconsistent nature of stay safe. Different incident managers had a variety of differing stay safe briefings. National bench marking failed to identify any other stay safe messaging for wider incident management. This was consistent with feedback from FIMS that messaging was inconsistent between teams.

The stay safe messages help the force comply with the Health and Safety Act, which states you must keep officers and staff as safe as possible while working.

In response to the audit, stay safe messages were developed within the force. The team started by considering what incidents messages should be created for. The list of incidents was then reviewed by a working group. The group consists of people from various departments in the force:

- police federation
- Unison
- health and safety
- response specialists
- FIMs
- mental health
- dog teams
- taser and systems team
- firearms operation commanders
- force leadership
- police union federation

Following this, a 'stay safe' message was drafted for each incident. These were reviewed by the working group. The focus was on ensuring standardised language was used across the whole force, ensuring the wording aligned with all dialects across the region. The messaging takes account of Authorised Professional Practice, Policy, Law and industry standards, and best practice. Force Control room supervisors were consulted on the final drafts to make sure they would be effective operationally.

All Stay Safe messages follow the ISAFE acronym, created specifically for this purpose:

- information: what information is critical and relevant?
- safety: what are the threats and potential harms? What can be done to mitigate the risk?
- acknowledge: ask for acknowledgement, informs FIMs and supervisors and activate any appropriate emergency plan
- full PPE and equipment: reminder to wear PPE and use any other appropriate equipment such as a vehicle
- experts: are any other experts, emergency services or specialist police officers required?

The stay safe messages are held in a PDF document. The first page of the document contains links to all messages for quick access. The messages sit on the computer aided dispatch (CAD), which

is a computer system used to log incidents. The PDF document appears on the screen if someone types 'stay safe' onto CAD. The message can be easily copied from the document onto CAD to log the message.

The stay safe messaging is not mandated and each FIM develops ways in which they like to deliver messages. The script can be used by FIMs to create new messages as long as they key information is retained. There was zero cost involved in creating this resource.

The stay safe messages can be accessed by everyone in the staff room. For example, they can be accessed by the staff and used when talking to the public in dangerous situations.

Overall impact

It is too early to assess the impact of stay safe messaging, however the number of times controllers use the messaging resource is increasing over time.

Learning

- key to engage stakeholders to assist with local implementation, for example, how will the messaging be activated in your command and control system? Ensure they are part of the planning team.
- inspectors remind FIMs of the significant work which has been undertaken with subject matter experts (SME's) and the review and interrogation of Authorised Professional Practice (APP) to create these messages. They also remind controllers in the force control room to use it
- the force did not find it difficult to engage the departments that made up the working group, especially when the importance of the briefing and potential impact was emphasised

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