



New Zealand Fire Service

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15 July 2014

Ian Andrews
Via www.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Andrews

Information Request - Spring Hill Corrections Facility incident 1 June 2013 (our reference 2014-063)

I refer to your request for information posted on www.fyi.org.nz on 30 April 2014 for the following documents relating to the Spring Hill incident:

- Formal Review into the Springhill Incident, dated 19 August 2013
- Fire Investigation Report
- Post Incident Analysis

The following are summaries of the information contained in the documents you requested.

Fire Investigation Report

Purpose/objectives

The Officer in Charge of this incident considered the circumstances of the fire met the criteria requiring the attendance of a Specialist Fire Investigator, under the NZFS National Commander's Instruction P3. A Specialist Fire Investigator was engaged to write the report.

The objectives of the report were to determine the origin and cause of the fire through best practice analysis and investigative processes.

Summary of findings

At 12.52pm on 1 June 2013 the NZFS Communication Centre received information from the New Zealand Police that there was a fire at Spring Hill Corrections Facility, Hampton Downs Road, Te Kauwhata. Multiple Fire Stations were alerted. The incident ended on 2 June 2013 at 5.40pm.

The fire was started as a result of a riot at the prison. Fires were started with the use of wooden seats, plastic rubbish bins, plastic seats, tables and any other flammable material that could be found.

It was difficult to determine the origin and cause of the fire given the secure nature of the facility. Based on the information at the time of the investigation and the evidence available at the scene it was concluded that there were three areas of origin and the possibility of multiple points of fire origin.

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Given all the evidence available at the time of the investigation NZFS recorded the cause of the fire as incendiary.

Post Incident Analysis

Purpose/objectives

On 1 June 2013 at 12.52pm the Fire Service responded to a fire at Spring Hill, Corrections Facility located at Hampton Downs Road, Hampton Downs, Waikato District. As the incident met one or more of the triggers outlined in the NZFS Operational Instruction P3 Fire Investigation and Reporting, it was determined a Post Incident Analysis ("PIA") should be conducted.

The objectives of the PIA were to assess the performance of the building, its passive and active fire protection systems, fire fighting water supplies and the occupants' actions in so far as they affected the structure during this fire incident.

Summary of findings

A disturbance caused by prisoners began at Spring Hill Corrections Facility at approximately 11.10am on 1 June 2013. During the next two hours, prisoners were observed to light and maintain fires and to damage sprinkler heads. The sprinkler system appeared to act as designed and fires were contained but not extinguished.

NZFS was informed of the incident at 12.52pm on 1 June 2013.

At approximately 1.30pm, two fires that had previously been contained, began to develop. The cause of the development is not known.

Initially, Department of Corrections staff undertook firefighting inside the inner security cordon and from outside the unit.

Access to the unit affected by the fire was not gained by NZFS until a specialist Department of Corrections' team was available to effect a controlled evacuation of the prisoners. Once the prisoners had been extracted, NZFS personnel entered the unit to fight the fire.

Damage was caused by fires lit by the prisoners.

Formal Review into the Springhill Incident

The date of this report is 30 August 2013.

Purposes/objectives

Following the third alarm incident at Spring Hill Corrections Facility complex on 1 June 2013 the Assistant National Commander Region 2 requested a formal debrief to be conducted.

The brief was to: "bring together key people from the Fire Service to formally discuss the event and our operations".

Summary of findings

The NZFS Communication Centre received a phone call from the New Zealand Police at 12.52pm on 1 June 2013 to dispatch Fire and Ambulance to a Safe Forward Point at Hampton Downs Race Track. NZFS dispatched personnel and services accordingly.

Over the course of the incident NZFS worked with the Department of Corrections and the New Zealand Police to contain and resolve the incident.

The incident continued through the night and the next day requiring NZFS attendance throughout. The stop message was transmitted at 5.40pm on 2 June 2013.

Issues were identified in the report regarding NZFS operations at the incident.

Recommendations and remedial actions

The recommendations from the report include:

- Working closely with the Department of Corrections on planning, communications and incident management (including specific tactics to address special safety requirements).
- Working closely with the Department of Corrections on fire protection standards, fire fighting provisions and equipment, and water supply.

The contents of the requested documents have been provided in summary under section 16(1)(e) of the Official Information Act, as we consider that providing the information in the format requested would be contrary to a legal duty of NZFS in respect of the documents (section 16(2)(b) of the Official Information Act) and would prejudice the interests protected by section 6 and section 9 of the Official Information Act as set out below (section 16(2)(c) of the Official Information Act):

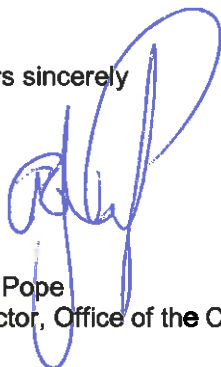
- section 6(c) which relates to prejudice to the maintenance of the law,
- section 6(d) which relates to the safety of a person being endangered,
- section 9(2)(a) which relates to the privacy of natural persons, and
- section 9(2)(ba)(i) which relates to confidential information and damage to the public interest.

You have the right to contest the decision to withhold information by seeking an investigation and review of that decision by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact me (rob.pope@fire.org.nz).

Yours sincerely



Rob Pope
Director, Office of the Chief Executive