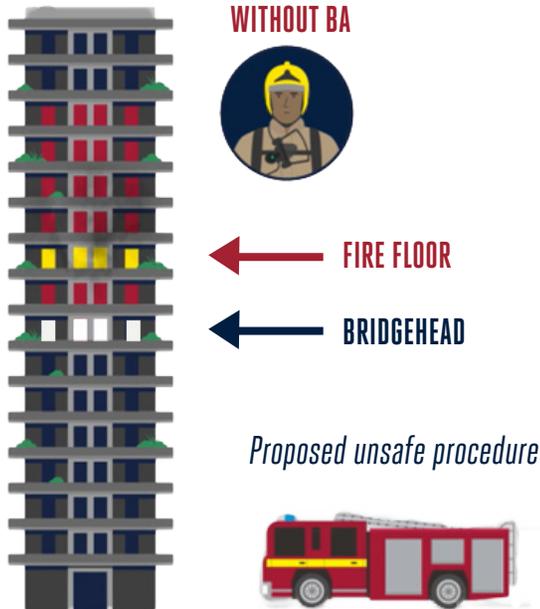


Cancer risk

If a firefighter is not using their breathing apparatus to supply safe air when they pass beyond the bridgehead, it provides no protection at all.

This exposes firefighters to toxic smoke and other harmful substances that can cause cancer. The Fire Brigades Union's research into the links between contaminants and cancer have shown that firefighters are almost four times more likely to develop cancer than the general public. A body of the World Health Organisation has recently categorised the occupation of firefighting as carcinogenic to humans.

Risking firefighters' lives is not the solution to the building safety crisis. It is scandalous that, in light of these findings and our guidance on how to better protect firefighters and prevent cancer, the NFCC would introduce this policy that puts firefighters' health at risk.



We're fighting back.

We've demanded that the NFCC withdraw this policy nationally. And we're challenging any fire and rescue service that tries to introduce it.

We need you to make this happen.

Join the movement to protect firefighters

Sign the open letter:



Find out more:



**Dead or injured
firefighters can't
rescue anyone.**

Protect firefighters' breathing apparatus safety procedures



Breathing apparatus keeps firefighters alive.



It is crucial for tackling fires safely in buildings, providing firefighters with protection from death, injury and disease when working in oxygen-deficient, toxic and hazardous atmospheres.

But new operational procedures for high-rise building fires proposed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) threaten to undermine its use and put firefighters' health and safety at risk.

The problems with the new policy

The NFCC argue that delaying firefighters' use of breathing apparatus will enable them to reach further up into the building.

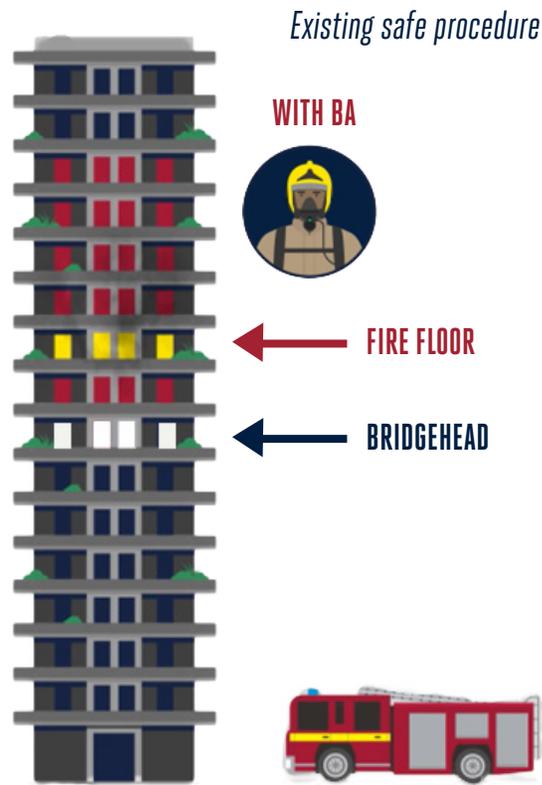
We strongly disagree. This dangerous policy threatens the lives of the public and firefighters.

Reckless proposed changes

Crews attending a high-rise fire run through a series of safety procedures at a safe position within the building - the bridgehead - before moving beyond into the fire affected zone. The bridgehead is the divider between where the air is safe to breathe and where it is potentially unsafe.

Firefighters need to be using their BA to supply safe air when they pass beyond this point.

These procedures have existed and protected firefighters for decades. Yet now, the NFCC's new proposals would permit firefighters to be sent beyond the bridgehead without being supplied with safe air.



Dealing with an equipment fault would be extremely difficult. Calculating how much air they need to get out safely becomes impossible, and if a firefighter is beyond the duration of a BA set, they are beyond the reach of rescue.

As we know from previous tragedies, a firefighter not under air could be easily and instantly overwhelmed with no chance to engage their breathing apparatus or get to safety.