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This circular is	Not relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This Circular provides information on the ODPM National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC) Tactical Diwali Fire Safety Awareness Campaign		

"Celebrate Diwali Safely" - ODPM NCFSC Tactical Diwali Fire Safety Awareness Campaign

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Addressed to:

The Chief Fire Officer
**The Commissioner of the London Fire and
Emergency Planning Authority**

Please forward to:

**Those people in your organisation who you
consider need to have this information**

Summary

On 1 October 2004 the ODPM National Community Fire Safety Centre launched a tactical campaign to create awareness of the fire safety issues connected with the annual Hindu, Sikh, and Jain religious festival of Diwali. This year the date of Diwali is 12 November.

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1.0 ODPM NCFSC - Tactical Diwali Fire Safety Awareness Campaign

- 1.1 The ODPM National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC) has launched a tactical fire safety campaign to raise awareness of the fire dangers presented by significant use of candles, tea lights and fireworks during the Festival of Diwali. ODPM fire statistics show that there is an increased fire risk at Diwali time, because of the use of candles and other related products and fireworks. On average, at least one person dies every year during the celebrations in a house fire caused by a candle.
- 1.2 The Festival of Diwali is one of the main festivals in the Hindu, Sikh and Jain calendar and is celebrated in large numbers by those faith communities in England and Wales. This year Diwali will be on 12 November.
- 1.3 This tactical campaign is designed to help underpin the main 'Fire Kills' strategy by targeting a group in the community at greater risk from fire. The NCFSC has provided support material and leaflets to fire and rescue services covering the main fire safety issues surrounding the Festival. All supporting leaflets have been printed in English with the reverse side in either Gujarati, Hindi and Punjabi. The support material has been made available in good time to enable Fire and Rescue Services to begin to engage with the celebrating communities in the build up to Diwali. We also provided publicity support material for Fire and Rescue Service involvement in the Asian Mela 2004 event at the NEC, Birmingham from 8 to 10 October. Nine FRSs from the Midlands area attended this major show, co-ordinated by West Midlands Fire Service.
- 1.4 A Government fire safety advertisement will also be appearing in selected minority publications such as *Garavi Gujarat*, *Asian Trader*, *India Weekly*, *Eastern Eye*, *Asian Times* and *Zee Magazine*. These are key publications and are read widely by the Asian community in England and Wales.
- 1.5 There will also be national support for community celebrations to mark the Diwali Festival in London at which Fire Safety Minister, Phil Hope, will be present. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is also arranging a Diwali awareness event on 3 November.
- 1.6 A targeted Diwali campaign will also offer opportunities to Fire and Rescue Services to address recruitment issues and help encourage people from the Asian community to consider joining the FRS as a career. Making contacts with faith groups for fire safety purposes is one way of building trust and knowledge of the FRS with groups that are currently under represented in the service. These links can prove to be powerful tools when targeted recruitment campaigns are being developed.

1.7 In due course, the NCFSC plans to develop fire safety targeted campaigns for the other faith groups i.e. Eid celebrations for the Muslim community and similar campaigns for Chinese at Chinese's new year celebrations.

2.0 DTI Fireworks Safety Campaign 2004

2.1 On a related matter, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has launched the annual fireworks safety campaign. Last year's accident figures saw a small increase in firework-related accidents across the country, despite some very proactive campaigning at both local and national level.

2.2 Last year saw some significant legislative developments relating to fireworks. The DTI have now put in place legislation that will introduce a fireworks curfew, ban dangerous air bombs, put a greater responsibility on retailers to ensure they are not selling fireworks to under 18s and introduced new requirements on importers to ensure the DTI can track fireworks coming into the country.

2.3 This legislative package provides a comprehensive legal package, which will give local enforcement agencies the backing they need to continue their crackdown on fireworks misuse and anti-social behaviour.

2.4 The DTI has produced the annual firework safety toolkit. FRSs can order copy of the toolkit from the DTI website: www.dti.gov.uk/fireworks. The toolkits are available one per FRS from the official DTI supplier 'EC Logistics' (telephone order number is available from the website), subject to stock availability.

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