



Guidance

Formation and Governance of a Branch

Version: 2

Summary:	Guidance on the creation and governance of a branch of the Institute of Fire Safety Managers. To be read in conjunction with policy document 011A.	
Target Audience:	All Members, Branch Representatives, Staff and Council	
Next Review Date:	July 2029	
Approved by:	The Management Team	16/10/23
Date issued:	October 2023	

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to expand and give guidance to the Institute's policy on the formation and running of a branch under the name of the Institute of Fire Safety Managers.

2. Scope of Activities:

Branches should focus on promoting the objectives of the Institute within their designated geographical area. This can be achieved through a variety of activities, such as:

- Hosting events to educate members on fire safety issues and promote networking.
- Encouraging member participation in local fire safety initiatives.
- Establishing relationships with local fire departments, government agencies, and other organisations to promote collaboration on fire safety initiatives.
- Promoting membership of the Institute and the benefits of membership to fire safety professionals within the branch's designated area.

3. Requirements of a Branch.

3.1. Rules, Regulations and Standards

All members of the branch will be expected to follow the Institute's rules and guidelines. It is recommended to pay particular attention to:

- The Institute's Ethics Policy.
- Guidelines on the use of the Institute's logo
- Membership Policy
- Council Policy as the same level of commitment is expected of branch committee members.
- Council Policy regarding conflicts of interest.

3.2. Constitution

The Institute can provide a template constitution on request. The constitution must contain the following:

- Name of the branch. This should be in the format ‘The Institute of Fire Safety Managers Branch’ where the space is filled with the country or region.
- A paragraph outlining the general purpose of the branch.
- Eligibility – who can be members, application – how they become members, and termination when they stop becoming members of the branch.
- What officers’ position will be held and what their duties are and how they are elected.
- Information on what type and purpose of meeting will be held and how often.
- Information on finances, including what fees may be charged and how the records are kept.
- Information outlining how the constitution can be amended and what would happen if the branch was to stop running.
- It should also detail, any legal requirement to satisfy the country within the branch sit, these must not conflict with the principles that govern the Institute in the UK.

3.3. Membership

A branch must contain at least ten members. Member of a branch should be within that branch’s “catchment area”, which will typically be defined by their relative geographical location or the geographical area in which they operate.

A member will automatically become a member of the branch if they fall within the geographical area of that branch.

3.4. Principal Positions

Officers must be elected to fill four principal positions within the branch. There may also be other appointed roles within the committee if desired. (e.g. recruitment, events and marketing). Their principal roles are as follows:

- 3.4.1. Branch Chair - The role of a chair is to provide leadership and direction for a branch and ensure that any meeting is orderly and efficient.

- 3.4.2. Branch Vice-Chair - The role of a vice-chair is to support the chair and ensure that the branch's operations run smoothly.
- 3.4.3. Branch Treasurer – They will oversee the finances and fees and take full responsibility for the branch bank account.
- 3.4.4. Branch Secretary – They will be responsible for minute-taking, arranging meetings, and the day-to-day administration of the branch.

3.5. Annual General Meetings

A branch must hold at least one annual meeting per year. This meeting will be where officers of the branch will be elected, and other business of the branch should be conducted.

3.6. Action Plans

The ranch must have an action plan either recorded using the Institute's Branch Action plan template or within the minutes of meetings held. Action Plans should consider:

- 3.6.1. The general goal of the branch.
- 3.6.2. Specific objectives for the forthcoming year, including membership growth and the number of planned events.
- 3.6.3. Clearly defining "action steps" that will be taken to achieve each objective.
- 3.6.4. A timeline for the "action steps".
- 3.6.5. A method of evaluating the plan's success and ensuring each objective has been met.
- 3.6.6. A budget.

3.7. Financial Proposals

Should a branch need additional funds to support an action plan. An annual financial proposal must be submitted by the 31st of October each year for the following year and should include:

- 3.7.1. The general goal of the branch.

- 3.7.2. Specific objectives for the forthcoming year, including membership growth and the number of planned events.
- 3.7.3. A budget, broken down by objective, for the steps the branch plans to take to achieve each objective and the monetary value each step would require in GBP.
- 3.7.4. A list of funding sources (such as membership fees, sponsorships, donations etc.) and the value the branch expects to receive from each.
- 3.7.5. A method of evaluating the plan's success and ensuring each objective has been met.

3.8. Annual Branch Meeting

The Institute will hold a yearly meeting to liaise with all its branches. At least one representative from each branch must be present for this meeting.

4. Branch Formation.

A member should express their interest in forming a new branch by contacting the Institute's head office. Assistance will be given to investigate plausibility. This may include help to send correspondence to other members in the proposed region to gauge support and introduce likeminded members. Steps can then be made within that group to organise the following:

4.1. Appointing Committee Officers

- 4.1.1. For the branch to move forward they should 'informally' appoint the key officers detailed in section 3.4. so that between them they can start the process. The Institute can only assist up to a certain point, ownership within the branch is required for it to work and drive it forward. This does not necessarily need to be carried out by those that are later appointed although it most likely will.

4.2. Submission of the Constitution

- 4.2.1. The first step in forming a branch is to develop and submit a constitution to the Institute's for approval.
- 4.2.2. Section 3.2. gives details of what needs to be included in the constitution.

- 4.2.3. The Institute will review and approve the constitution before the branch can move on to the next steps.

4.3. Submission of Initial Funding Proposal

- 4.3.1. Where additional funding is required the next step is to submit an initial funding proposal to the Institute's management team (i.e., Business Development Manager).
- 4.3.2. The proposal should outline the branch's planned activities, estimated costs, and how much funding is needed to carry out those activities.
- 4.3.3. The management team will review the proposal and determine the level of funding that the branch will receive.

4.4. Organising Inaugural Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- 4.4.1. The final step is to organise the inaugural AGM.
- 4.4.2. The purpose of the meeting is to establish the branch formally and set out its action plan for the coming year.
- 4.4.3. It is also an opportunity to invite the President and the Chair of the Institute to attend and show support for the new branch.
- 4.4.4. The committee officers will be formally appointed at the inaugural AGM, using the method of election set out in the constitution. The action plan and budget will also be presented and approved.
- 4.4.5. The meeting should be formally recorded, and the minutes sent to the Institute.

5. Funding

Branches are responsible for their finances. They must ensure they operate within the Institute's rules, regulations, and standards. This funding guidance is intended to provide Branches with information on boosting funding and ensuring financial stability.

5.1. Standard Funding

Each Branch is entitled to receive standard funding from the Institute, which is usually calculated at 10% of membership fees for the region. This funding is provided as part of the Institute's commitment to supporting the activities of its branches. The yearly financing a branch receives is at the Management Teams discretion.

5.2. Extra Funding

If a branch requires additional funding beyond the standard, it can request this by submitting a financial proposal. The proposal is usually submitted by the 31st of October each year for the following year. The Management Team will consider the request.

5.3. Boosting Funding

There are four main ways that a branch can boost its funding:

- 5.3.1. **Events** - A branch can organise technical events, social events, trade events, awards ceremonies, and sponsorship events. These events can generate revenue through ticket sales, sponsorships, and advertising.
- 5.3.2. **Sponsorship** - A branch can seek sponsorship from local businesses, government agencies, and other organisations. Sponsorship can provide a significant source of funding for the branch can accept donations from individuals, organisations, and businesses that support its activities.
- 5.3.3. **Grants** - A branch can apply for grants from local or national government agencies, charitable foundations, and other organisations providing community funding.

6. Banking & Fees:

Finances will be jointly controlled between the main body of the Institute and the branch itself. Where practical and permitted the branch treasurer will have access to an account under the Institute.

The Treasurer will be provided with a debit card, which is to be used to make payments for approved branch activities.

7. Meetings

7.1. Branch Meetings

Branches should hold regular meetings to discuss branch business, plan events, and promote networking among members. The branch committee should determine the frequency of meetings, but it is recommended that branches hold at least four committee meetings per year one of which must be

the branch's Annual General Meeting. Meetings can be held in person or virtually, depending on the needs of the branch.

7.2. Yearly Meeting of all Branches:

The Institute holds a yearly meeting of all branches to discuss the broader goals and objectives of the organisation. This meeting allows branches to share their experiences, discuss challenges, and provide feedback to the Institute.

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change
06/08/26	H Hilton	V2	ALL	Removed the requirement for submission of yearly finance proposal and formal action plan.

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date
H Hilton	Business Manager	V1 – 20/07/26