

Date: Wednesday, 17 June 2009

ALL MEMBERS

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP AND JOINING/REJOINING THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION.

Dear Brother/Sister,

A number of members have asked for clarification on the matter of being able to join the Fire Brigades Union and/or rejoining the Union and I will do so within this Circular.

Annual Conference 2008 debated and decided on this issue and agreed to widen the categories that are able to join the Fire Brigades Union considerably. Rule 4(a) of the FBU Rule book was amended to read:

'The Union shall consist of members in the following categories:

(a) Members employed by Local Authority Fire Brigades under NJC Conditions of Service, other categories of employees determined by the Executive Council and elected Full Time Officials who shall be known as "Ordinary Members".

That rule change results in any category of employee as determined by the Executive Council to now be able to join the FBU such as airport firefighters as happened after employee request in GMC or the Marine River Rescue Unit as happened after employee request in Merseyside.

Further, the executive council has considered the matter and advised that certain categories of employees have the 'right' to join the FBU without having to be considered by the executive council. Those categories are:

- FBU members who are promoted into roles not covered by NJC Conditions of Service but who wish to maintain FBU membership – such members may be those promoted into principal management (not such a problem here for a year or two) some principal managers have pay rises so high that they exceed the ACO/DCFO/CFO pay rises secured within their NJC (Gold Book) negotiating bodies, so they have had to leave the NJC.

- FBU members who are removed from NJC Conditions of Service by decision of the employer locally – that could cover our control members if regionalisation is allowed to continue to completion.
- Individuals who are employed on short term contracts (for example, after retirement) in positions which would normally be represented by the FBU – such employees would be the re-engaged firefighters, fire safety technical officers and those affected by the Grey and Green Book conversion processes.

I am laying out the Unions processes on this matter and the Union is careful not to get into a poaching of members argument with other trade unions, safeguards have been agreed on that matter if the issue should ever be raised by other unions.

On the matter of joining and rejoining the Union, joining is simple and an application form should be filled out in the normal manner, any non member who wishes to join the Union can contact the officials in confidence on the numbers above, I have to say it is an absolute disgrace that some members wish their Union status to remain confidential and the Labour run fire authority should act immediately, but they don't, so confidentiality is assured for those who desire it.

The Rule Book is also clear on re-joining the Union and we are aware that some have left the Union saying that they will rejoin when they are promoted to their desired level or in time of industrial dispute and whilst I fully understand some members belief that this management and authority team view the FBU as an anathema to leave and rejoin the Union is not the way forward.

To rejoin the Union a former member wishing to rejoin shall have his/her application considered by the branch concerned and forwarded to the Brigade Committee who will consider the matter and decide whether to set a re-entry fee.

I hope this information clarifies the situation but if more information is required please contact your FBU Officials. If you require confidential advice you can contact the Membership Secretary in the strictest confidence – Bro Mark Rowe on 07834 656 090.

Yours in unity

L Skarratts
Brigade Secretary