



**SUBJECT:** True or Hoax

**RECIPIENTS:** All Council Services (including schools)

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## Calling 999 Is No Hoax

A man has been sent to prison after he made 17 hoax calls to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service in just three hours. Excerpts from recordings of the man's phone conversations have been made public by the organisation following a spike in the number of people misusing the emergency 999 facility. The man from persistently called the control room on Christmas Eve claiming that a person was trapped in a burning building. He also contacted other emergency services.

The man called HFRS 21 times in total between December 24 and January 4 falsely reporting that people were trapped in fires. In the audio he can be heard gloating: "I won't get arrested, I promise you." In January the man was sentenced to 12 weeks behind bars and is now subject to a two-year restraining order.

A spokesperson said "Hoax calls waste our time, costs the public money and, more worryingly, really do put lives at risk. We hope the recordings help show this. I am extremely proud of the team for the rigorous yet professional way they exposed the caller with a series of challenging questions until he hung up. On further calls they tried to explain the seriousness of his actions and the potential life-threatening consequences while also urging him to get support for himself."

Supplementary questioning by the highly trained team led them to suspect it was a hoax but they still sent engines as public safety is always paramount to the service. In total four engines were mobilised at an approximate cost of more than £300 each.

The organisation is hoping to hammer home the message that hoax calls cost the taxpayer thousands of pounds a year and put lives at risk. The appeal comes after figures show hoax calls to the fire service going up by more than 60 percent in the past four years. Statistics reveal that in 2014 the service received 183 hoax calls but by 2015 the number had risen to 192 before climbing to 231 in 2016 and 295 in 2017.



**If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:**

**Corporate Health & Safety Advisers (see George section: Corporate > Information for Working > Risk Management > H&S Advisers)**