



## 'Fast response' smoke alarms for residents

RESIDENTS in Cheshire can now have new optical smoke alarms fitted in their homes for free, thanks to a continued fire safety campaign by the Service.

The optical smoke alarm has a fast response to smouldering fires from foam filled furniture, bedding and carpets and will now be fitted as standard by firefighters and community safety advocates when carrying out home safety assessments (HSAs).

The enhanced alarm has a long-life 10-year battery pack; a lockable drawer which can not be tampered with and is also more environmentally friendly as it is free of radioactive substances.

"Most of the domestic fires we attend are slow burning, smouldering fires and the optical smoke alarm is especially effective in giving a warning to these type of fires," said Pete Walsh, the Service's Community Safety Group Manager.

"Carrying out home safety assessments is the key to reducing the number of fire deaths and injuries in Cheshire and we are committed to offering every home in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington a home safety assessment and free optical smoke alarm by 2010."

Residents are encouraged to arrange for personnel from the Service to come to their home to assess any fire hazards.

To arrange a visit, residents should contact 0800 389 0053 or fill in the online form at: [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)



WETTER - BY DESIGN: New boats to aid the Service's water-based operations.

# Safer, lighter, faster

New equipment at the cutting-edge - and water's edge - of rescue technology

CHESHIRE Fire and Rescue Service has made a major investment in new rescue equipment that is safer, lighter and faster meaning that vital seconds will be saved at the scene of an accident.

Two new rescue boat packages totalling £50,000 will replace existing crafts and include new features that will aid water rescue.

The improved technology and more sophisticated design will greatly benefit the Service's water rescue operations: the boats can travel up to over 20 miles per hour and the new tiller steering means they can hold seven people as opposed to a previous capacity of four.

The detachable motors mean that the boats are incredibly versatile allowing crews to rescue people in deep open water as well as in shallow water flooding incidents.

Each boat comes with a package which includes a new piece of equipment called a 'rescue sled'. The sled resembles an inflatable raft and will accommodate two people and can be used to paddle over to a casualty who may be difficult to reach.

HYDRAULIC rescue equipment worth £360,000 has also been invested in and will be used at the scene of road traffic collisions as well as a diverse range of other incidents.

In total 39 sets of the rescue equipment - consisting of a power unit, a cutter, a spreader and a ram - have been allocated across the Service.

"This new state-of-the-art equipment will help us to rescue people quicker, safer and

easier than before," said Deputy Chief Officer Keith Newnes.

Hi-tech precision blades deliver a cutting force of 36 tonnes. It has a reduced weight of 13kg, meaning that it can be operated by one person alone.

The equipment has been designed to cater for current and expected vehicle manufacture and operates at a lower pressure, improving safety standards and resulting in less risk of vehicle debris 'flying away'.

New top-of-the-range airbags made from

Kevlar - the same material as bullet proof vests - have also been commissioned.

The airbags provide a lightweight and flexible way of lifting extremely heavy loads and has a non-slip design. It can lift 20 tons - the equivalent of approximately one and a half fire engines!

Deputy Chief Officer Keith Newnes said: "The Authority has invested in new rescue equipment to make sure that we have the most up-to-date ways of carrying out our new formal duties to rescue people in a whole range of different scenarios."



STATE-OF-THE-ART: Hi-tech cutting gear and airbags will be used at the scene of road traffic collisions.



SMALLER IS BEAUTIFUL: One of the Service's new fleet of 'midi' fire engines

## The new fleet that saves resources as well as lives

THE Service is investing in a new fleet of smaller fire engines that will help to save both resources and lives.

So far three new 'midi' fire engines or Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) have been purchased and there are plans to purchase at least one more.

Although they are two-thirds the size of a traditional fire engine, they carry a full range of equipment including breathing apparatus and cutting gear, as well as a powerful combined foam and water jet.

They are designed to respond to smaller, nuisance incidents such as bin, rubbish and car fires, which account for around 60% of all fire incidents the Service attends.

While these incidents are low risk they normally tie up full size appliances and mean they are not available to respond to more serious emergencies.

The Service is currently carrying out detailed research and analysis to investigate the feasibility of expanding the use of TRVs in future as second appliances on certain stations.