

HOSELINE

INTERNATIONAL FIRE HOSE NEWSLETTER



SPECIAL EDITION

Humberside Pumps Up The Volume

Humberside Fire Brigade recently brought into service the UK's first ever specialist "Water Support Unit (WSU)" equipped with the Angus FETCH System for retrieving Hi-Vol large-diameter hose.

"The WSU is a major addition to our emergency response capability" says Humberside's DO Arthur Moore, "It carries all the equipment we need to deal with any type of incident involving the delivery or removal of large quantities of water, be it a fire or flooding situation".

The WSU uses Angus Hi-Vol 5 inch (125 mm) diameter hose to move water quickly over long distances with minimal friction losses. A total length of two kilometres of Hi-Vol is housed on the WSU in two storage pods



Humberside WSU uses Angus FETCH System to retrieve Hi-Vol large-diameter hose

separated by a central walkway. It is laid out by simply opening the rear doors of the pods, pulling out the first hose coupling manually, and then driving the vehicle off so that the hose cascades out on to the ground.

After an incident the Angus FETCH System fitted to the WSU enables fire crews to bring Hi-Vol back into the storage pods with the minimum of physical effort. "FETCH enables us to operate well within the Manual Handling Regulations" explains Arthur Moore. "The days are long gone when fire crews could be expected to lift coils of hose that can weigh more than 50 kg each".

Mounted on the front offside corner of the WSU, the FETCH System comprises a simple but cleverly designed twin-roller friction system. One of the large diameter rollers is rubber-coated and the other drives a high grip conveyor belt. Drive to the rollers is provided by a geared chain, which in turn is driven by an engine-driven PTO. A secondary hydraulic power unit is provided as back-up.



Humberside WSU carries 2 km of Angus Hi-Vol to protect the Humber Bridge



"We wanted a simple design with as little as possible that could go wrong in an emergency, and if anything did go wrong we wanted to be able to repair it ourselves quickly in the field" says Arthur Moore. "Angus have achieved this by leaving unnecessary bells and whistles out of the design that would only have made the unit less reliable and more expensive".

Based on an 18 tonne Scania chassis, the WSU was specially modified by Fosters Commercials vehicle builders in Preston. The body is constructed from aluminium sections and all the fixtures and fittings are stainless steel to avoid rust problems. Electrical components including a lighting bar, emergency stop buttons, warning lights, and a CCTV system for monitoring the hose laying and retrieval operations from the vehicle cab were fitted by Wyer Electrical & Engineering Services.

The WSU also carries a wide range of water support equipment including Angus Corru-Grip storz couplings; four Angus LW 1300 lightweight portable pumps; two 5-way dividers (enabling the hose to be layed in a ring main or to facilitate several outlets on single Hi-Vol line); Angus two 2-way "Wye" pieces (enabling the Hi-Vol hose line to be divided into two); one Angus GM1 ground monitor; six water curtains; and various adaptors.

The WSU is based at a retained Station in Barton-on-Humber on the South bank of the river and is crewed by dedicated, specially trained personnel. It is now available for use throughout the Humberside Fire Brigade region as well as for mutual aid with industrial and neighbouring local authority fire services.



Humberside WSU deploys Angus Hi-Vol quickly and easily from two storage pods

The WSU is the latest addition to Humberside's fleet of new specialist appliances which include two Rescue Support Units and two Equipment Support Units. Its looks set to be used at many locations around the Humberside Fire Brigade region that require special water supply arrangements including Humberside International Airport, a number of timber yards, and farms in remote rural locations.

The WSU replaces a Hi-Vol hose laying appliance which, while having served the Brigade well in the past, has reached the end of its economical life. Last year the Brigade used it to deploy Hi-Vol at no less than thirty-five incidents, and in previous years it has proven invaluable at some of the Brigade's most dramatic fires including Triton Foods, Station Hotel, and Johnsons DIY Store. The Brigade also used Hi-Vol during the recent wave of torrential rainfall to transfer water from flooded streets to better drained areas and so help hundreds of people stranded in

homes, shops, offices and factories at Gowdall, Pollington, and Stamford Bridge.

Perhaps the best known landmark that will be protected by the WSU from now on is the Humber Bridge. This spectacular twin tower suspension bridge has a span of 2220 metres. Fast extinguishment of any fire that breaks out on it is critical not only for saving lives, but also for preventing structural damage to the bridge itself. Traditionally the Brigade used six pumps to relay the water to the centre of the bridge either from ponds on the South Bank or from hydrants on the North Bank. But the trouble with this approach was that it tied up valuable resources. The problem was compounded by the lack of space on the bridge which made it difficult to turn vehicles around. The arrival of the WSU means all those problems are now water under the bridge!

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