

# **FIRE BRIGADES UNION**

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## **FIRE SALE, GOING CHEAP - ANYONE WANT TO BUY ENOUGH FIRE ENGINES AND KIT TO RUN A LARGE FIRE SERVICE?**

The Fire Brigades Union has condemned the 'for sale' notice placed on the floundering company which owns all London's fire appliances. The company, Assetco, has seen its share price and profits plummet and is facing court action to recover a £1.3 million loan.

The Fire Brigades Union says news of more possible buyers underlines the fact that the London Fire Brigade has no control over what happens to all its fire engines and 50,000 pieces of rescue and safety kit. Debtors could seize assets and the fire engines and kit could be forfeited to creditors and sold off in full or part to any fire service in the world.

The latest bidder is Seacorps, based in the US. Others mentioned in news reports include Arcapita Bank, based in Bahrain, InvestIndustrial, an Italian company, and Consilia, a Manchester based company. Northern Ireland based Northern Bank has a court date of 29 June over attempts to recover a £1.3 million loan.

Matt Wrack, FBU General secretary said: "Assetco could be bought, bought and re-sold, bought and broken up or creditors could take court action and the fire engines and kit sold off piecemeal or as a job lot. London fire service is being forced to sit on the sidelines waiting to see what's going to happen to all its fire engines and 50,000 pieces of critical fire kit.

"The privatisation of almost its entire operational capability has left the London fire service facing enormous uncertainty. It is a ridiculous situation for an emergency planning authority not to be in direct control of its appliances and the result is there for all to see."

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