

## WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

### POLICIES

#### Work health and safety policy

The [Work health and safety policy](#) is on the [Administration Policies](#) page of the Intranet.

This policy outlines FRNSW's commitment to health and safety and establishes responsibilities for all staff, as required by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. It applies to all FRNSW workers and workplaces.

*Contact Officer:* Assistant Director Health and Safety, (02) 9265 2642

*File Reference:* CHO/00054

*Commissioner's Orders 2012/22*

#### Occupational health and safety risk assessment policy

##### 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 of the [Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001](#) imposes an obligation on Fire and Rescue NSW to identify and assess any foreseeable risks and hazards and to eliminate hazards or, if this is not possible or practicable, to control the risks and hazards at the place of work. It is acknowledged that the role of the operational firefighter inherently involves dangerous situations, and these risk assessments will allow identification of the risks and prioritise them for action.

##### 2 Definitions

The following definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy.

**Plant** includes any powered or non-powered tool, machinery, equipment, or appliance.

**Place of work** means premises where people work. In Fire and Rescue NSW it also includes any location or incident ground associated with Fire and Rescue NSW duties.

**Premises** includes:

- any land, building or part of a building, eg garages, construction site, shop, etc,
- any vehicle, vessel, or aircraft,
- any installation on land, water or under water, and
- any public places or residences where work is carried out.

**Hazard** means the source of potential harm or a situation with a potential for harm to people and/or to property.

**Risk** means the chance of something happening that will have an adverse impact on occupational health, safety and welfare objectives. It is measured in the terms of a hazardous situation occurring and the possible consequences arising from a hazardous event.

**Risk analysis** means the systematic use of available information to identify hazards and then determine the possible risk to people, property and/or the environment.

**Risk assessment** is the overall process of *risk analysis* and *risk evaluation*.

**Risk control** is the decision-making process for managing and/or reducing risks. It includes the implementation of policies, standards, procedures and physical changes using the results from the OHS risk assessment process to eliminate or minimise hazards.

**Amenities** means facilities provided for the welfare or personal hygiene needs of persons and include toilets, rest rooms, shelter sheds, seating, dining rooms, change rooms, provision of drinking water, lockers and washing facilities.

### **3 Employer to identify hazards (OHS Regulation 2001, Chapter 2, Section 9)**

A manager, supervisor or officer in charge (managers) must take reasonable care to identify any foreseeable hazard that may result from the work process which has the potential to harm the health and safety of the employee, or any person legally at the place of work.

In particular managers must take reasonable care to identify hazards that arise from:

- the work premises,
- work practices, work systems and shift work arrangements,
- plant (including its transport, installation, erection, repair, dismantling, storage and disposal),
- hazardous substances (including their production, handling and storage),
- the presence of asbestos at the place of work,
- manual handling and the potential for overuse injuries,
- the layout and condition of the place of work,
- biological or chemical products or substances, and
- the physical environment such as slipping, electrocution, contact with moving or stationary objects and other environmental conditions.
- A manager must ensure that hazards are identified and that procedures are in place to identify, assess and control the hazards:
  - before setting up the work place,
  - when planning the work process,
  - before installing, commissioning or erecting plant,
  - when changes are made to the work place,
  - when changing the system or method of work,
  - when changing the plant used,
  - when changing the chemicals used, and
  - whenever new information on the work process becomes available.

The most effective way to identify potential risks and hazards is when work activities are being designed, planned and discussed. It is at these initial development stages that decisions about their impact on the health and safety of employees can be made without compromise. OHS risk assessment must be planned, systematic and comprehensive enough to cover all the potential hazards.

#### 4 Pre-incident planning

Pre-incident planning assists operational personnel to identify and assess the potential risks to firefighters when attending incidents. Effective pre-incident risk assessments of premises that may present a risk to fire fighters should be undertaken by the Station Commander. This pre-incident planning will assist the officer in charge to meet their obligations under the [OHS Act 2000](#) and it is vital for the proper evaluation of firefighting strategies and all potential dangers to operational personnel.

#### 5 Risk assessment (*OHS Regulation, Chapter 2, Section 10*)

Once a hazard has been identified or a new work activity has been introduced, the manager must, in consultation with the employees, determine how likely it is that an employee could be harmed by the hazard, and also consider the potential severity of any injury or illness.

This assessment is done by completing the [Occupational Health and Safety Risk Assessment \(OHSRA\) report](#) which is available on the Intranet. This process satisfies Fire and Rescue NSW's obligation under the new legislation to formalise consultation with its employees. The legislation states that once a hazard has been identified an individual manager is required, in consultation with the employees, to determine how likely it is that an employee could be harmed and how serious the injury or illness could be. This process is done by reviewing the information regarding the hazard.

The following will need to be considered when undertaking the OHS risk assessment:

- hazard information that has been supplied with the product or plant,
- employees' past work experiences together with information that has been collected regarding previous injuries or near miss incidents,
- control measures, which identify the risk regarding particular hazards and minimum control measures for known hazards,
- WorkCover guidance material which assists in assessing potential risks for hazardous processes in the workplace,
- industry codes of practice, which provide direction and detailed guidance on the identification and control of hazards in line with accepted legislative requirements and industry standards,
- Australian Standards, which set out specifications for a range of equipment, products and materials. Guidance should also be sought from AS/NZS 4804: 2001 *Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems* in relation to occupational health and safety procedures, and
- Australian Standards relating to risk management (AS/NZS 4360:2004), and the [Risk management policy](#) on page 201.

Once the OHSRA form has been completed a copy must be forwarded through the chain of command. The OHSRA reports must be reviewed to ensure that the actioning officer has undertaken all the necessary action, and, that the OHS risk assessment has correctly identified the control procedures required to minimise or control the potential hazard or risk.

## **6 Risk control (*OHS Regulation 2001, Chapter 2, Section 11*)**

### **6.1 Employer to eliminate or control risks**

Managers must eliminate any reasonably foreseeable risk to the health and safety of any employee or person legally at the place of work. If it is not reasonably practicable for the manager to eliminate the risk then the manager must endeavour to control the risk.

If the problem is identified and the risk of injury is high, the manager must act to control the risk immediately as an interim measure. The next step is to complete the OHSRA report and make a decision on more permanent control options. OHS risk assessment involves considering what actions are required to eliminate or minimise the risk, and then, in consultation between the manager and the employees, deciding on the most appropriate option or action, given the risk. The hierarchy of control as referred to in Chapter 1, Section 5, of the *OHS Regulation 2001* should be adhered to when deciding on control actions.

Consultation with the appropriate OHS committee or OHS representative or other agreed arrangements is also required to meet the obligations relating to consultation in the *OHS Regulation 2001*.

## **7 Consultation**

Consultation is one of the central features of OHS risk assessment because it involves the employees who perform the tasks in identifying the hazards and in deciding how to control the risks in the most effective way. Consultation is required:

- whenever risks to employees' health and safety are being examined or reviewed,
- when decisions are being made about measures taken or to be taken to eliminate or control risks,
- when introducing or amending procedures for identifying or monitoring workplace risks,
- whenever changes that may affect health and safety are to be introduced into the workplace (ie the system of work, and/or the plant or substances used), and
- whenever decisions are made about consultation arrangements.

## **8 Who is responsible for OHS risk assessments**

### **8.1 Duties of managers**

While managers have the main responsibility for making sure that the work premises and practices are safe, employees should be encouraged to notify their supervisors of hazards in the workplace when they become aware of them. Managers and supervisors should consult employees when seeking to identify potential hazards and risks.

To ensure that the workplace follows occupational health and safety guidelines, managers need to have in place procedures to indicate who is responsible for:

- initiating the actions that are required,
- developing actions into procedures,
- training employees to follow procedures,
- supervising employees to ensure that they follow procedures,

- reviewing the procedures to ensure that they are current, valid and do not require updating as plant and work practices change, and
- keeping written records of all risk assessments carried out in the place of work under the manager's jurisdiction.

## **8.2 Duties of employees**

Employees are expected to:

- follow safe working procedures and take reasonable care for the health and safety of other people at the place of work,
- wear the protective clothing provided,
- report any safety problems or issues,
- report accidents, injuries, and incidents or near misses and potential hazards, and
- cooperate with the employer's efforts to maintain safe working procedures.

Employees are required to report any potential hazards in the workplace to the attention of their manager. Employees have a role to play in creating a safe workplace but they can only meet their responsibilities if the relevant reporting procedures are in place.

## **9 Employer to review risk assessments and control measures (*OHS Regulation 2001, Chapter 2, Section 12*)**

An employer must review a risk assessment, and any measures adopted to control the risk whenever:

- there is evidence that the risk assessment is no longer valid, or
- there has been an injury or illness from exposure to a hazard to which the risk assessment relates, or
- a significant change is proposed in the place of work or in work practices or procedures to which the risk assessment relates.

## **10 Supporting the OHS risk assessment process (*OHS Regulation 2001, Chapter 2, Sections 13 to 20*)**

The following considerations require effective planning and implementation by management at all levels in this OHS risk management process:

- ensure adequate instruction, training and information (including any induction training) for all employees as is necessary to ensure their health and safety,
- ensure adequate supervision by a competent person to ensure employees' health and safety whilst at work,
- provide personal protective equipment (PPE) commensurate with the risks undertaken and ensure that PPE is used correctly and maintained as required. Employees are to be made aware of the limitations of the PPE used,

- provide adequate information to all employees with respect to the hazards faced by the employees and the control measures available to protect them,
- ensure that emergency contingency plans are available and communicated to all employees with appropriate treatment of injured persons if required,
- ensure that amenities are available to employees at the place of work, with due consideration to the nature of the work undertaken, size and location of the workplace, and the number of men and women at the place of work,
- ensure that any amenities and accommodation provided in the workplace are maintained in a safe and healthy condition, and
- ensure that adequate first aid facilities and trained personnel are available in accordance with *OHS Regulation 2001* section 20.

## 11 Purchasing

OHS risk assessments should be carried out before purchasing any piece of plant and/or substances to be used in the workplace. Managers responsible for purchasing have an obligation when ordering new plant and substances to ensure that enough information is available to ensure that Fire and Rescue NSW is able to fulfil its responsibilities under the *OHS Regulation 2001* with respect to:

- identifying hazards,
- assessing risks arising from those hazards,
- eliminating or controlling those risks, and
- providing information to all employees, for example material safety data sheets (MSDS), operating manuals, safety procedures and training.

## 12 Further information

Employees are encouraged to read and become familiar with the employee's and employer's duties regarding risk management as prescribed in the [OHS Regulation 2001](#).

*Contact Officer:* OHS Risk Management Coordinator, (02) 9265 2800

*File Reference:* CHO/00054

*In Orders 2002/18, with amendments*

## OHS consultation arrangements for firefighters

### 1 Policy

The Fire and Rescue NSW is committed to maintaining and improving occupational health, safety and welfare in the workplace, and reducing the incidence and severity of workplace accidents, injuries and illnesses. Fire and Rescue NSW recognises that every person has the right to a safe and healthy working environment. Fire and Rescue NSW will meet its moral and statutory obligations through the processes of consultation with employees, workplace committees, Safety Representatives and unions.

Fire and Rescue NSW recognises that consultation contributes to increased participation and cooperation at the workplace. Such an arrangement provides for information exchange, discussion of current issues, and discussion on matters of concern to reach early agreement. Consultation can also contribute to reducing the potential for conflict and industrial action.

After extensive negotiations, Fire and Rescue NSW and the Fire Brigade Employees' Union (FBEU) have agreed to implement 'Other Agreed Arrangements' (pursuant to section 16 of the *OHS Act 2000*) to best facilitate effective OHS consultation within Fire and Rescue NSW.

Fire and Rescue NSW will consult with employees to enable them to contribute to the making of decisions affecting their health, safety and welfare at work by:

- sharing relevant information about OHS matters with employees,
- giving employees the opportunity to express their views and to contribute in a timely fashion to the resolution of OHS issues at their workplaces, and
- valuing the views of employees and taking them into account in making decisions that affect their health, safety and welfare.

### 2 When consultation will occur

Fire and Rescue NSW will consult with employees to enable them to contribute to the making of decisions affecting their health, safety and welfare at work. Specifically, Fire and Rescue NSW will consult directly with the employees concerned, their elected Safety Representative, and/or the FBEU, when:

- risks to health and safety arising from work are assessed or when the assessments of these risks are reviewed,
- decisions are made about the measures to be taken to eliminate or control those risks,
- procedures for monitoring those risks are introduced or altered,
- decisions are made about the adequacy of facilities for the welfare of employees,
- changes that may affect health, safety or welfare are proposed to Fire and Rescue NSW premises, systems or methods of work, or to plant or substances used at work, or
- decisions are made about the procedures for consultation under the *OHS Act 2000*.

This is based on recognition that employee input and participation improves decision making about health and safety matters. However, decisions about OHS issues remain Fire and Rescue NSW's responsibility.

### 3 The consultative structure

The consultative arrangements include: Safety Representatives at every station, communication centre and other workgroup; employee and/or FBEU representation on special committees, such as the PPE Committee; and a Joint Consultative Committee, as follows:

- one elected Safety Representative for each designated workgroup ie each fire station, communication centre and other workgroup (eg Hazmat, ComSafe).
- FBEU representatives on OHS related specialist committees, such as the PPE Committee, the Alcohol and Drug Safety and Rehabilitation Committee, the Fleet Implementation Group, and the Strategic Programs Project Team.
- the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with the FBEU. The JCC deals with OHS issues that have a Fire and Rescue NSW-wide impact. It consists of senior Fire and Rescue NSW managers and FBEU representatives, and meets on a regular basis to consult on a range of issues, including OHS issues, and to monitor and review the consultation arrangements. The JCC secretariat function is provided by Fire and Rescue NSW's Industrial Relations Clerk.

A diagram showing the consultative structure is available on the [OHS Intranet site](#).

### 4 Functions and rights of Safety Representatives

A Safety Representative has the following functions for their designated workgroup:

- a. to liaise with a supervisor or manager during the risk management process at their workplace:
  - when risks to health and safety are being assessed or reviewed, and
  - when decisions are being made about measures to be taken to eliminate or control risks,
- b. to consult with employees in their workgroup, and represent them in discussions with a supervisor or manager about OHS issues,
- c. to carry out inspections of the workplace to investigate health and safety complaints from employees in the workgroup,
- d. to attempt to resolve any OHS matter but, if unable to do so, to request a meeting between management and FBEU representatives, and
- e. to be informed about work injuries, workplace changes, OHS inspections of the workplace or OHS notices issued in relation to their workgroup.

A WorkCover Inspector who is proposing to undertake an inspection of a place of work with respect to a matter that may affect the health, safety or welfare of employees at the place of work:

- must, to the extent that it is practicable, consult a representative of the employees or an industrial organisation of employees whose members are employed at the place of work, and
- must, if requested to do so by the representative, take the representative on any such inspection (section 69 of the *OHS Act 2000*).

To assist with performing their functions, Safety Representatives will be provided with reasonable access to workplace facilities (access to computers, email, telephone, faxes, stationery, notice boards,



etc) for the purposes of carrying out their role, including communicating with workgroup members, seeking OHS advice and undertaking Safety Representative training.

Fire and Rescue NSW will not dismiss or detrimentally alter an employee's position because the employee:

- makes a complaint about an OHS risk, or
- is a Safety Representative and is performing the functions of a Safety Representative.

## 5 Election of Safety Representatives

Elections of Safety Representatives will be conducted at least every two years. An election is also required when there is a permanent vacancy due to resignation of a Safety Representative or if the Safety Representative ceases to be an employee of that workgroup. Current OHS Committee members and Safety Representatives can nominate for re-election.

Nominations for Safety Representatives will be requested from the employees in each workgroup. Where more than one nomination is received for a particular workgroup, an election will be held by the employees from that workgroup to determine the elected Safety Representative.

Where a casual vacancy occurs, the Safety Representative will be selected from the top of the eligibility list compiled from the results of an election held within the previous six months. If no eligibility list exists, nominations will be requested to fill the casual vacancy, and where more than one nomination is received, an election will be conducted to fill the casual vacancy.

Elections will be conducted in accordance with recognised democratic principles. All employees of the workgroup will have the opportunity to nominate and vote in elections. The election process will be managed at the local level, coordinated by the relevant Zone Commander or Manager, with assistance provided by the Health and Safety Branch.

Following the election, the relevant Zone Commander or Manager will inform all employees in the workgroup of the name and contact details of their elected Safety Representative. For further details on the election process, refer to the *Procedures for the Election of Safety Representatives*, which is available on the [OHS Intranet site](#).

## 6 Training of Safety Representatives

Safety Representatives will complete the Safety Representative's training course within three months of being elected. Safety Representatives training is a self-paced distance learning course, involving approximately six hours study time on shift for Permanent Firefighters, and equivalent paid study time for Retained Firefighters.

In accordance with Part 11.2 of the *WorkCover NSW OHS Consultation Code of Practice*, the training course includes the following:

- the importance of OHS consultation and systematically managing health and safety,
- the requirements for consultation under the *OHS Act 2000*,
- the general duties of employers, employees and others, under the *OHS Act 2000*,
- how effective consultation can result in better decision-making about OHS,
- effective communication techniques,
- how to systematically manage health and safety,
- a practical exercise in how to conduct a risk assessment, and
- how to undertake additional, ongoing learning on OHS consultation via the Intranet and Internet.

## **7 Procedures for resolution of OHS issues**

OHS issues should be raised and resolved at the local level as far as possible. An employee must take reasonable steps to prevent risks to health and safety at work by notifying their supervisor of any OHS matter (clause 28 of the *OHS Regulation 2001*). The supervisor is to consider the issue and resolve it in a timely manner.

If not resolved, the issue should be referred to the Safety Representative for consultation with relevant supervisors or managers. If the issue is not resolved after supervisors and/or managers have been given a reasonable opportunity to consider and respond to the issue, a joint meeting between the relevant Zone Commander or Manager, FBEU representative(s) and the Safety Representative is to be convened to resolve any outstanding issues. This meeting may be held by teleconference or other means. If the issue remains unresolved, the Safety Representative or the FBEU may report it to the JCC for review, or request an investigation of the issue by a WorkCover Inspector.

A flowchart summarising this process is available on the [OHS Intranet site](#).

## **8 Review of consultative arrangements**

These consultative arrangements will be reviewed for their appropriateness and effectiveness at the end of the first and second years after implementation. The review will be coordinated by the JCC.

*Contact Officer:* OHS Risk Management Coordinator, (02) 9265 2800

*File Reference:* CHO/02224

*In Orders 2004/13, with amendments*

## **Safety Bulletins**

### **1 Introduction**

Under Section 8(1)(d) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* it is the employer's duty to provide information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the safety and health of all employees. Under Section 20(1) it is the duty of employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of people who are at their place of work and who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

### **2 The purpose of Safety Bulletins**

The purpose of Safety Bulletins is to provide timely information, guidance and instruction on critical safety issues.

Safety Bulletins are authorised for publication by the Director Operational Capability under delegation from the Commissioner. Where necessary, they will be republished in In Orders.

### **3 Safety Bulletins must be read and followed**

To ensure the safety of workplaces and adherence to safe work practices, all staff must follow the instructions and guidelines issued in Safety Bulletins.

Officers, supervisors and managers must ensure that all staff under their supervision read each Safety Bulletin as soon as possible after publication. Review of new Safety Bulletins should become an integral part of each Station Drill or training session.

Duty and Zone Commanders, on their regular station visits, will check that these procedures are followed.

A copy of the latest Safety Bulletin must be displayed on the station noticeboard for the attention of all staff.

**Note:** Safety Bulletins can also be found on the [Intranet](#) on Station Portal.

#### **4 Record keeping**

When a Safety Bulletin is received, the Station Commander must note the receipt in the Occurrence Book and the Station Commander's diary.

The Bulletin must be signed off by all officers at the station, and filed for reference.

Safety Bulletin records will be checked during the annual OHS inspection.

#### **5 Reporting safety issues**

Officers in the chain of command (Station Commanders, Duty Commanders, Zone Commanders, managers, etc) are responsible for dealing with identified OHS issues in the first instance.

If you identify an issue that may have organisation-wide safety implications, report it to your Safety Representative, your supervisor and the Operational Safety Coordinator.

*Contact Officer: Director Operational Capability, (02) 9265 2713*

*File Reference: CHO/06178*

*In Orders 2001/6, with amendments*

#### **Role of Brigades' Medical Officer**

Fire and Rescue NSW engages the services of an occupational physician, referred to as the Brigades' Medical Officer.

The role and function of this position is:

1. to conduct medical assessments on behalf of the organisation for employment related purposes (eg pre-employment medicals, rehabilitation and fitness to undertake firefighting duties);
2. to provide expert medical advice to the organisation in relation to occupational health and safety and the work performance of individual employees; and
3. to provide counselling.

It is inappropriate for the Brigades' Medical Officer to act as a treating doctor in respect of individual employees.

Any employee wishing to see a doctor for an injury or illness not related to work is to see their own medical practitioner or attend the nearest medical centre. The only exceptions will be:

1. emergencies, or
2. special cases at the request of the Commissioner or his delegate.

*In Orders 1997/7, with amendments*

## **Capturing occupational health and safety costs**

### **1 Introduction**

Fire and Rescue NSW has statutory obligations to identify and report all costs associated with occupational health and safety (OHS) training (including salaries and wages), maintenance, working and capital improvement expenses.

An Internal Order number 20301 has been established to capture OHS recurrent costs. This number is not used to capture capital costs associated with OHS (see section 3 below).

### **2 Timesheet entries**

Firefighters should include the Internal Order number 20301 on their timesheets for hours worked in relation to OHS activities such as:

- occupational health and safety training
- attendance at Occupational Health and Safety Committee Meetings, and
- audits of fire stations by Occupational Health and Safety Committees.

On permanent firefighters' timesheets the Internal Order number 20301 is entered in the Special Costing column. For Retained Firefighters using the electronic timesheet, go to the drop-down box labelled 'Project Code' and select the Internal Order number 20301 - Occupational Health and Safety.

### **3 Capital works costs**

To capture costs of a capital nature for OHS a different Internal Order number will be required. This number can be obtained by contacting the Asset Control Officer at Greenacre on (02) 9742 7462.

### **4 Further information**

For further information contact the Asset Control Officer on (02) 9742 7462, Finance Manager Greenacre on (02) 9742 7438 or Finance Manager Head Office on (02) 9265 2937.

*Contact Officer: Manager Financial Accounting, (02) 9265 2844*

*File Reference: CHO/04064*

*In Orders 2008/6, with amendments*

## INFECTION PREVENTION

### Infection control manual

#### 1 Scope and application

Fire and Rescue NSW staff are exposed to the risk of infection by disease at all workplaces and during operational activities. Fire and Rescue NSW's [Infection control manual](#) gives instructions on how to prevent infection in situations likely to be encountered by staff.

The *Infection control manual* is based on the standard infection control precautions used by health care workers. It emphasises the safety and hazard awareness with the aim of preventing exposure of staff to undue risk of infection.

The manual covers:

- information on disease transmission
- standard infection control precautions
- additional precautions for high risk situations
- exposure management
- vaccination requirements
- personal hygiene
- workplace hygiene, and
- precautions for specific diseases.

The *Infection control manual* applies to all staff, including firefighters, administrative and support staff and Community Fire Unit volunteers. Infection control measures should be applied in all Fire and Rescue NSW premises and at all activities and incidents.

#### 2 Publication

The [Infection control manual](#) is published on the Intranet. It can be accessed through Station Portal.

#### 3 Training

All commanders and supervisors must ensure that their staff are aware of the *Infection control manual* and a review of the manual must be incorporated into training activities annually.

Commanders and supervisors of stations and sections that use the antiseptic hand rub must conduct training on the use of antiseptic hand rub, using the session plan in Appendix B.

*Contact Officer:* Manager Health, Fitness and Wellbeing, (02) 9265 2800

*File Reference:* NFB/00130

*In Orders 2008/14, with amendments*

## Sharps handling and injury management

### 1 Scope and application

- 1.1 This instruction applies to handling sharps such as needles, syringes and other instruments at incidents or workplaces.
- 1.2 While the risk of an injury from a sharp object transmitting a blood-borne disease is considered relatively low, all staff must be aware of the risk of injury and the appropriate procedures to follow.

### 2 Immunisation

- 2.1 All operational staff must keep their Hepatitis B immunisation up to date. If you are unsure of your immunisation status, contact the Health and Safety Branch on (02) 9265 2800 or 1800 425 282.

### 3 Managing needle stick injuries

- 3.1 Immediately wash away any blood with soap and running water. If these are not available, use the Avaguard non-water, alcohol-based hand cleanser.
  - 3.2 Do not massage or squeeze the injured area.
  - 3.3 Report the incident immediately to your supervisor.
  - 3.4 Before collecting the sharp, gather as much information as possible, by taking notes or photographs, on:
    - incident location
    - whether there was visible blood on the instrument
    - who may have used the instrument.
  - 3.5 Follow the procedure for sharps collection in section 5 below.
  - 3.6 Phone the Health and Safety Branch on 1800 425 282, (02) 9265 2800, or after hours on 0417 677 802, to report exposure and receive follow-up advice and counselling.
  - 3.7 *Seek medical attention* as soon as possible (preferably from the nearest hospital emergency department) for assessment of your risk of infection and appropriate management.
  - 3.8 Fill out a [Notification of injury, illness, exposure or near miss form](#). If necessary, follow the [Management and investigation of safety incidents policy and procedures](#) on page 178.
- ### 4 Remove sharps when found
- 4.1 Never leave a sharp to injure one of your colleagues or a member of the public.
  - 4.2 If circumstances do not allow you to collect the sharp, notify the **Needle Clean Up Hotline on 1800 633 353** or contact your Communication Centre to arrange safe disposal.

## 5 Procedure for sharps collection

- 5.1 Wear appropriate personal protective equipment including:
  - firefighting boots (at incidents) or other appropriate closed footwear
  - rubber gloves under firefighting gloves.
- 5.2 Get the sharps container and tongs from the appliance.
- 5.3 Take the sharps container to the location of the sharp and place it on the ground.
- 5.4 Use the tongs to pick up the sharp.
- 5.5 Carefully place the sharp directly into the container. If the sharp jams, gently agitate the container to allow smooth entry. *Do not* force the needle into the container. *Do not* put your hand in the container.
- 5.6 Place the lid back firmly on the container to seal. To reduce the possibility of injury, ensure that no container is filled to more than three-quarters full.
- 5.7 Place the container back in its designated storage space on the appliance.
- 5.8 Take the sharps container to the local hospital or ambulance station for disposal.

**Note:** Station Commanders should ensure that local arrangements are in place for sharps disposal.
- 5.9 Place the spare sharps container on the appliance and order a new one from [ESCAT](#).

## 6 Appliance stowage

- 6.1 Station Commanders must ensure that a sharps container and a pair of tongs are placed on each pumping and salvage/rescue appliance, in the following locations:
  - Class 1 4X4 AFAC build NS1.3 pocket
  - Class 1 Mills Tui build OS1.2 pocket
  - Class 3 OS2.4 pocket
  - Class 2 N2.3 pocket, and
  - or all other appliances, next to the SCBA cleaning gear.

## 7 Supply information

Sharps containers and tongs are available for purchase through [ESCAT](#).

*Contact Officer:* Health Officer, (02) 9265 2800 or 1800 425 282, or after hours on 0417 677 802  
*File Reference:* NFB/00130 *In Orders 2007/19, with amendments*

## Workplace hygiene

### 1 Introduction

Good workplace hygiene helps to reduce the risk of infection by disease to employees, volunteers and members of the public. In particular, viruses and bacteria can be transmitted by blood and body substances when an infected person shares facilities, equipment or an environment with other people.

### 2 Policy

Fire and Rescue NSW staff and volunteers must ensure that:

- they maintain personal hygiene by hand washing, etc
- they wear appropriate personal protective equipment to protect their hands, faces and other exposed areas when dealing with incidents involving:
  - blood or body substances
  - injured people
  - people suspected of being infected by bacteria or viruses
- they keep their workplace clean.

Standard infection control measures such as:

- regular hand washing
- deliberate and regular cleaning of equipment and facilities

should be routine in Fire and Rescue NSW workplaces.

Station Commanders and managers are responsible for ensuring that the hygiene practices detailed below become common workplace routine.

### 3 Hand washing

All staff and volunteers should wash their hands regularly. In particular you should wash your hands:

- before cooking
- before eating
- after going to the toilet
- after operations at incidents
- after dealing with incidents involving blood or body substances, injured people, or people suspected of carrying bacteria or viruses
- before attending an incident rehabilitation area.



You should wash your hands with liquid hand wash and water or with alcohol-based hand rub products when access to water is limited.

**Note:** Do not use the alcohol-based hand rub on your face or for cleaning surfaces or equipment.

Liquid hand and body wash is issued to all fire stations and alcohol-based hand rub is issued to all appliances for use in the field.

These washing products are for regular use and do not replace industrial hand cleansers which should be used when appropriate.

#### **4 Showering and washing areas**

Liquid body wash replaces all bar soaps in shower facilities and hand washing areas.

You may use your own personal bar soap, but it must be kept in your personal toiletry bag and not left in the shower area.

#### **5 Cooking facilities and equipment**

All cooking areas must be regularly cleaned with detergent and water.

Cooking and eating utensils must be cleaned immediately after use with hot water and detergent, then allowed to dry before re-use.

#### **6 Stowage and installation of washing products**

Alcohol-based hand rub dispensers must be stowed on appliances in the same pocket as the SCBA cleaning gear.

Station Commanders and managers must ensure that:

- liquid hand wash dispensers are fitted above or adjacent to each hand basin in washing facilities and bathrooms.
- liquid body wash dispensers are fitted in each shower cubicle.
- a liquid hand wash pump pack is placed on the bench next to the sink in the kitchen.

Double sided tape can be used to attach soap dispensers in shower cubicles and basin areas.

#### **7 Availability of alcohol wipes and tissues**

Station Commanders and managers are responsible for ensuring that 70% alcohol wipes and tissues are provided in all administrative areas, communication centres and fire stations.

#### **8 Supply of workplace hygiene products**

Supplies of hand and body wash, alcohol-based hand rub, tissues and alcohol wipes are available through [ESCAT](#).

*Contact Officer: Health and Fitness Coordinator, (02) 9265 2968*

*File Reference: NFB 00130 In Orders 2007/19 and In Orders 2007/28, with amendments*

## Animal handling

This instruction provides guidance on minimising the risk of infection from handling animals.

1. Firefighters should treat all animals as if they are carrying a disease. Animals can carry a number of diseases, including salmonella bacteria which research has shown is carried by almost all animals, particularly reptiles and amphibians. Ingesting salmonella bacteria causes diarrhoea, nausea, fever and discomfort.
2. Wear adequate PPE when there is a risk of contacting animals, or their secretions, or being bitten or scratched. The minimum requirement is gloves and a long-sleeved workshirt or bushfire jacket, with the sleeves rolled down and buttoned. Eye protection (goggles or helmet and visor) and respiratory protection should also be considered.
3. Firefighters must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling animals, and after handling materials or equipment that have been in contact with an animal.
4. Remove and decontaminate any items of PPE contaminated by animal secretions such as urine, blood, saliva or faeces.
5. Clean contaminated equipment as per the BA disinfection procedure in the SIMS Worksheet for [SCBA Sets](#).

Reference: Taronga Zoo Veterinary and Quarantine Centre (1999), *General staff hygiene, disinfection, and injury and infection management protocols*.

Contact Officer: Operational Safety Coordinator, (02) 9265 2901

File Reference: CHO/06178

In Orders 2001/2, with amendments

See also the policy on [Reptile handling and awareness](#) on page 7.

## Tick borne illnesses

Personnel carrying out their duty in and around bushland areas may come into contact with ticks.

Generally tick bites cause no more than local irritation, however it is not uncommon for people to develop an allergy to ticks, in which case allergic reaction will develop from tick bites.

Ticks have also been known to transmit illnesses such as tick typhus or spotted fever and Lyme disease. These are the least common forms of tick transmitted illnesses but have the most serious health implications.

In line with Fire and Rescue NSW's commitment to occupational health and safety, the following measures are to be adopted by all staff who may come into contact with ticks during the course of their duties.

1. Any tick found embedded or attached to the skin should be removed immediately.
2. Pull the tick out by grasping the tick behind the head with a pair of fine point tweezers and applying steady pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick.
3. *Do not* attempt to use other methods of removal such as methylated spirits or other substances as this will only cause the tick to disgorge the contents of its stomach which contain toxins and bacteria.

4. After removal wash hands, disinfect bite and tweezers.
5. Any person unable to completely remove an embedded tick should seek immediate medical assistance to do so.
6. As soon as practicable after removal, details of the bite, such as part of the body from where tick/s were removed, location of the incident, and activities being undertaken, eg hazard reduction, firefighting, etc, are to be recorded in the station occurrence book. The Health and Safety Branch should be informed on (02) 9265 2800.
7. Any person who has been bitten by a tick and suffers flu-like symptoms, such as headache, fever, muscle pain, unusual tiredness, a rash at the site of the tick bite or generally feeling unwell, should seek medical attention.

### **General information**

An information kit on tick awareness has been distributed to all stations.

All Station Commanders must ensure that a pair of fine point tweezers is available in first aid kits. These can be ordered through AE Baker, stock number (forceps fine) 00819457, or purchased locally where AE Baker is not available.

Any person requiring further information should contact the Brigades' Medical Officer, on (02) 9265 2800.

*In Orders 1996/25, with amendments*

### **Sutured wounds**

The fact that a wound is sutured is not of special significance. The position of the wound (eg it may prevent the wearing of head gear, or BA) and its liability to fresh injury are the determining factors.

Each case is to be considered on its merits. It may be that full duties are deemed appropriate or that limited duties can be performed during the period of convalescence.

*In Orders 1991/1, with amendments*

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IN THE WORKPLACE

### Notification of exposure

The [Notification of injury, illness, exposure and near miss form](#) is to be used in all situations where firefighters and other staff are exposed to the following:

- blood or body fluids
- chemicals or toxic substances which result in any ill-effect up to 48 hours after exposure.

The aim of this notification is to inform the occupational health and safety staff of such exposure so that firefighters and others can be monitored to ensure that appropriate checks and investigations are carried out in the interests of occupational health.

This form is required to be filled out on return to station after firefighting duties. It is then to be dispatched as soon as possible in accordance with the procedures on [What to do when a work related injury, illness, exposure or near miss occurs](#) on page 189.

If a firefighter is taken ill and cannot fill out this form, the Station Commander or the next most senior member of the crew will fill out this form on behalf of the firefighter. Similar procedures apply to all other non-station workplaces. See also the [Management and investigation of safety incidents policy and procedures](#) on page 178.

It is essential that all firefighters and other staff adopt safe working procedures, use appropriate personal protective equipment, and practise good teamwork to protect against these hazardous materials.

*In Orders 1991/34, with amendments*

### Medical management of firefighters exposed to chemicals

Arrangements for the medical management of firefighters who may come into contact with chemical/toxic substances in the course of their duties are as follows:

1. Members who have attended an incident at which they have reason to believe that they were exposed to chemicals or toxic fumes which may lead to impairment of their health should contact the Occupational Health Nurses. The Occupational Health Nurses can be contacted on (02) 9265 2800.
  - a. At incidents/fires involving chemical/toxic substances the Incident Controller is to advise the Sydney Communication Centre in order to ensure that the Brigades' Medical Officer is immediately notified of the situation.
  - b. The Response Coordinator at the Sydney Communication Centre is to take appropriate action to notify the Brigades' Medical Officer either by telephone or pager unit, immediately the Sydney Communication Centre is advised that personnel are involved with chemical/toxic substances.
2. The Response Coordinator at the Sydney Communication Centre will ensure that the following are also notified:
  - a. Director Metropolitan Operations when incident/fire occurs in the Greater Sydney Area (0800 - 1600 hours Monday to Friday).
  - b. Duty Zone Commander when incident/fire occurs in the GSA at times other than in (a).

- c. Country Zone Commander when incident/fire occurs in country areas.
  - d. on-shift Duty Commander for *all* such incidents.
3. The Brigades' Medical Officer will liaise with the appropriate authorities and with hospitals, as necessary, for advice and for such medical treatment, tests, etc, as might be required as a result of such incidents.
  4. Recovery of information following the testing of personnel exposed to chemical/toxic substances is important to their future medical management. The Brigades' Medical Officer recommends that the following protocol be observed in that regard:
  5. Each firefighter taken to hospital for tests should complete an 'Authority' form requesting the hospital to forward results of the tests under confidential cover to:

Brigades' Medical Officer  
Fire and Rescue NSW  
PO Box A249  
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1232

This protocol will allow a complete medical history of possible exposures to be maintained by the Brigades' Medical Officer for the assurance of each member or the firefighting staff.

*In Orders 1987/25, with amendments*

## **Control of workplace hazardous substances**

### **1 Introduction**

This procedure outlines the requirements for the management of hazardous substances and dangerous goods in the workplace to minimise effects on health and safety, in accordance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*. The procedure relates to all personnel.

An online resource, the [Chemwatch ChemFFX database](#), enables staff to access chemical information pertinent to the workplace, including material safety data sheets. In addition to existing manifests, a generic station manifest has been developed by the Health and Safety Branch, in consultation with employees, to provide access to relevant substance information for the majority of Fire and Rescue NSW workplaces, including risk assessments relating to typical usage of the substances. The manifest incorporates information also relevant to administrative and office-based personnel. The manifest must be reprinted on a minimum annual basis in conjunction with the Workplace Inspection process or on a needs basis.

### **2 Material safety data sheets**

A material safety data sheet (MSDS) is a document prepared by the manufacturer or a third party that contains essential information describing the properties and uses of a particular substance, including classification of the substance as a designated hazardous substance and/or dangerous good and/or scheduled poison. It includes details of the substance's identity, chemical and physical properties, health hazard information, precautions for use, safe handling information and procedures for emergencies such as fires, spills, and leaks.

An MSDS is available for all substances on the Chemwatch on-line database, which can be readily accessed by personnel.

### 3 Training

Supervisors and Managers are to ensure appropriate health and safety information and instruction is provided to relevant employees for the task or process in which hazardous substances or dangerous goods are used.

Before using Chemwatch ChemFFX, all personnel are to view the [Chemwatch 3 FFX User Guide](#), a PowerPoint presentation on how to access information in ChemFFX.

### 4 Risk assessment

The generic station manifest developed on Chemwatch houses risk assessments for the substances in the manifest. However, if the intended usage of the substance or dangerous good differs from the risk assessment on the manifest, then a new risk assessment must be recorded and kept on the local workplace Hazardous Substance Register.

These risk assessments are to be undertaken by a Supervisor or Manager, in cooperation with relevant employees and with the assistance of an OHS Advisor from the Health and Safety Branch. Any required controls must be based upon the hierarchy of controls. All control measures are to be implemented prior to the substance being used.

If a hazardous substance or dangerous good at a Fire and Rescue NSW workplace is not listed on the generic station manifest on Chemwatch, then an application to the Manager Safety for approval to use the hazardous substance, and to include it on the manifest, is required (see Section 7, *Changes or additions to the generic station manifest*).

Risk assessments will be reviewed when:

- there is a change of process
- there is a change to plant or a substance
- new information regarding the hazards or inadequate exposure control is identified
- new or improved controls become reasonably practicable.

As a minimum all risk assessments must be reviewed every five years.

### 5 Reporting incidents

Employees must immediately report any incident involving hazardous substances or dangerous goods to their line manager or supervisor. Line managers and supervisors must report the incident to senior management and the Health and Safety Branch immediately. Refer to [What to do when a work related injury, illness, exposure or near miss occurs](#) on page 189, for further information.

Additionally, all personnel must report any inappropriate use of hazardous substances and/or dangerous goods to their line manager, supervisor and/or safety representative. Inappropriate use constitutes any use outside the intended purpose of the substance according to the directions of use, including adhering to all relevant safety information.

## 6 Workplace Hazardous Substances Register

All workplaces in NSW must maintain a register for all hazardous substances used or produced in any work process. The generic station manifest developed on ChemFFX can be utilised for this purpose by readily accessing the online information, and/or printing it and storing it in an accessible location within the workplace.

The generic station manifest includes the class of any dangerous goods listed, and the maximum allowable quantities.

The register must be current at all times. The generic station manifest will be updated by the Health and Safety Branch when new substances are introduced and approved for use.

## 7 Changes or additions to the generic station manifest

The Health and Safety Branch must evaluate hazardous substances or dangerous goods not on the generic station manifest for approval to use and to be added to the manifest. Approval and risk assessment for the storage of product quantities in excess of the maximum allowable quantities must also be sought.

To apply for approval, send a [Request to store/use unapproved or additional quantity of hazardous substance & dangerous goods form](#) to the Manager Safety, Health and Safety Branch.

**Note:** The proposed introduction of any new product needs to be in accordance with the principles outlined in the [Purchasing policy](#) on page 706.

## 8 Labelling

The Supervisor must ensure that a container that holds a hazardous substance, including one supplied to or produced within the premises, is appropriately labelled and that the label is not removed defaced or altered.

Without limiting the above point, the Supervisor must ensure that the label:

- clearly identifies the hazardous substance, and
- provides basic health and safety information about the substance, including any relevant risk phrases and safety phrases.

**Note:** A container into which a hazardous substance is decanted for use within the next 12 hours need only be labelled with the product name and the relevant risk phrases and safety phrases.

A container into which a hazardous substance is decanted for immediate use need not be labelled, so long as it is cleaned as per MSDS or manufacturer's instructions immediately after it has been emptied of the substance.

## 9 Storage

All chemicals, hazardous substances and dangerous goods must be kept in appropriate and secure storage facilities. Any substance removed from storage must undergo a risk assessment, taking into consideration information regarding the safe use and handling of the substance, utilising the information on the MSDS.

### 9.1 General requirements for the storage of all hazardous substances and dangerous goods

The area where hazardous substances and dangerous goods are stored should be:

- well ventilated and lit
- separated from ignition sources
- secured from the public (including contractors)
- protected from temperature fluctuations and direct sunlight.

Shelving/cupboards should:

- be constructed of chemically resistant materials
- provide a lip at the front of the shelf, where applicable.

For liquid dangerous goods stored outside of a chemical storage cabinet, secondary containment (eg spill trays) should be considered.

## 10 Transportation

Hazardous substances and dangerous goods that are to be transported outside Fire and Rescue NSW premises must comply with containment and packaging guidelines laid down in the *Australian code for the transport of dangerous goods by road and rail*.

Refer to the policy on [Courier services](#) on page 718, for further information.

## 11 Disposal

Information contained in the MSDS is to be referred to when determining the most appropriate means of disposal of any substance. For more information contact the relevant local council or the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

## 12 Resources

[Chemwatch ChemFFX](#) access is available from Station Portal; no password is required. The generic station manifest is available to all personnel and includes substances pertaining to the majority of Fire and Rescue NSW premises. A [User guide](#) and [Substance assessment process flowchart](#) are also available.

The Health and Safety Branch [Intranet site](#) also includes information on hazardous substance and dangerous goods management, including relevant WorkCover publications.

Contact Officer: Manager OHS Risk Management, (02) 9265 2874

File Reference: NFB/05222

In Orders 2010/22, with amendments



## WORKPLACE SAFETY

### Annual workplace inspections

#### 1 Introduction

Annual occupational health and safety inspections of all fire stations and workplaces aim to:

- reduce the number of accidents by identifying hazards
- remove potential hazards
- provide an ongoing assessment of the health and safety of workplaces
- develop and promote safe working environments and practices.
- This instruction should be read in conjunction with the [Work health and safety policy](#) on page 137, which sets out the responsibilities of employers and employees in managing a safe working environment.

#### 2 Inspection forms

OHS workplace inspection forms for both [stations](#) and [administrative/office areas](#) are available from both [Station Portal](#) and the Health and Safety Branch [intranet site](#).

#### 3 The inspection

Zone Commanders and managers are to ensure that each station and section carries out an inspection by 31 May each year.

The inspection will be done by working through the *Inspection form*, identifying unsafe conditions and noting actions required.

Instructions for filling in the form are given on the form.

#### 4 Forwarding inspection forms

The original copy of the *Inspection form* is to be forwarded to the Duty Commander, Zone Commander, Area Commander, Manager, Officer-in-Charge or Supervisor of the section, as appropriate. Senior Officers and Managers are to action the report and follow up outstanding problems.

Duty Commanders, Zone Commanders, Managers, Officers-in-Charge or Supervisors of sections must then forward the Inspection forms to their Director.

Copies of the *Inspection form* must be:

- filed at the workplace where the inspection was completed
- posted on the OHS notice board of the workplace where the inspection was completed
- forwarded to the Health and Safety Branch, and
- in the case of administrative and trades staff, forwarded to the relevant OHS Committee if applicable

## 5 Removal of hazards

Actions that can be taken at the station or section to remove hazards should be carried out by the Station Commander, Manager, Officer-in-Charge or Supervisor of the section as soon as they have been identified.

Such actions may include:

- repair of equipment
- modifying work practices
- notification of problems to appropriate sections, eg Properties, Fleet, Communications, Breathing Apparatus Section.

All staff in the station or section should be informed of possible hazards.

Hazards that require further investigation or greater resources should be taken up through the chain of command. Senior Officers should investigate identified hazards and keep staff informed.

Occupational Health and Safety Advisors from the Health and Safety Branch can give advice on problems, or may be requested to visit sites, make inspections or investigate hazards.

Reports on safety matters that require in-depth study or involve other sections should be forwarded to the Manager OHS Risk Management.

## 6 Unresolved issues

The [\*Resolution of OHS problems flowchart\*](#) outlines the process for addressing unresolved issues. Staff may contact their Safety Representative for assistance and advice in this process. Additionally, OHS Advisors in the Health and Safety Branch may be contacted for assistance

## 7 Annual reports

Directors must submit annual reports to the Commissioner on the occupational health and safety issues in their areas of responsibility. The reports are to include a summary of problems identified through this process, and the steps that have been taken to resolve the issues. Reports are due in December each year.

*Contact Officer:* Manager Safety, (02) 9265 2829

*File Reference:* NFB/05193

*In Orders 2009/25*

## **WorkCover investigations into deaths at work**

### **1 WorkCover Inspectors can examine witnesses**

If an employee has died at their place of work, a WorkCover Inspector may examine witnesses at the inquest into the cause of death. The scene of any fire, hazardous materials incident, rescue, recovery operation or similar is a 'place of work' for the purposes of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*.

If you are a witness at an inquest into a workplace death, you may be required to attend an interview with a WorkCover Inspector. The WorkCover Inspector will be interested in information or evidence about any possible contravention of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*.

### **2 What to do if you receive a notice**

If you receive a notice to appear before a WorkCover Inspector to produce information or give evidence, notify the Senior Legal Officer immediately on (02) 2965 2950.

Before you attend a WorkCover interview, the Senior Legal Officer will inform you of statutory powers and protections available under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*. The Senior Legal Officer and/or a legal representative engaged by Fire and Rescue NSW will usually attend the interview to provide you with advice.

It may also be appropriate for a senior Fire and Rescue NSW officer to attend to assist with technical issues. This must not be an officer who was associated with the incident.

### **3 What will happen at the interview?**

WorkCover interviews are usually in question and answer form. You will be required to answer all questions. At the end of the interview you will be given a transcript to read and sign.

### **4 What will happen at the inquest?**

WorkCover may submit the transcript of the interview to the Coroner's Court as a statement from you. You will have the opportunity to amend any part of your WorkCover statement before you give evidence. You will usually have also been required to produce a court statement for the Police or solicitors. The Coroner may ask you to speak on both your court statement and your WorkCover statement.

*Contact Officer:* Senior Legal Officer, (02) 9265 2950

*File Reference:* CHO/03486

*In Orders 2003/11, with amendments*

## Emergency procedures for Fire and Rescue NSW workplaces

### 1 Introduction

Fire and Rescue NSW will ensure that Fire and Rescue NSW premises have emergency procedures and plans developed and implemented in accordance with clause 17 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*.

An emergency is defined as:

‘any event which arises internally or from external sources, which may adversely affect persons or the community generally, and which requires an immediate response’, AS 3745-2002  
*Emergency control organisation and procedures for buildings, structures and workplaces*.

Emergencies include (but are not limited to) fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas emission, natural phenomena (earthquake, wind storm, lightning, floods, hailstorm), release of bio-hazardous material, dust emission and release of hazardous substances.

### 2 Requirements for emergency procedures

All Directors must ensure that Fire and Rescue NSW premises in their area of responsibility have emergency arrangements documented for:

- the safe and rapid evacuation of persons from the place of work, including egress paths available from the building,
- emergency communications e.g. WIP phone, contact numbers, and
- appropriate medical treatment of injured persons (see [First aid in the workplace](#) on page 178).

When deciding on emergency procedures the Director must take into account:

- the nature of the hazards at the place of work,
- the size and location of the place of work, including isolated or mobile workers,
- the number, mobility and capability of persons at the place of work. Arrangements are to include the evacuation of mobility-impaired persons.

Some workplaces that are leased by Fire and Rescue NSW have emergency evacuation plans developed by the building management. The Properties Section is responsible for provision of fire escapes, exit signs and provision of on-site fire fighting equipment for the Greenacre complex. The provision of fire escapes, exit signs and on-site fire fighting equipment in other Fire and Rescue NSW premises must be arranged by the Director. The relevant equipment can be purchased through Supply Services and must be installed by a licensed contractor. Inspections and maintenance of this equipment is under contract, Directors are to arrange the inspections with the appropriate contractor.

For all Fire and Rescue NSW premises, Directors must ensure that site-specific emergency plans are developed and documented that include:

- evacuation plans showing emergency evacuation routes, location and type of installed fire fighting equipment and assembly area/s,
- the method of accounting for everyone onsite,
- shutting down of plant (if relevant).

Details of site specific emergency evacuation plans are to be displayed at appropriate locations at the place of work.

Directors of shared workplaces should reach agreement on which senior manager will be responsible to implement this In Orders.

### **3 Fire wardens**

One or more people are to be appointed and appropriately trained to oversee evacuations and, if appropriate, in the safe use of on-site fire fighting equipment (in order to minimise the impact of emergencies to the extent that it is safe to do so).

At permanent stations, one firefighter on each platoon is to be designated the fire warden, at retained stations, a nominated firefighter is to perform the role (no additional training is required). The fire warden role does not affect the operation of the Incident Control System in any way.

At other Fire and Rescue NSW worksites, sufficient fire wardens are to be nominated and trained.

### **4 Role of warden**

In response to information that an emergency incident is impacting, or is likely to impact upon Fire and Rescue NSW premises, the warden will report to the designated communication point and assume overall control.

On becoming aware of the emergency, the warden will take the following actions:

- ascertain the nature of the emergency and take action in accordance with the relevant emergency plan,
- if necessary, initiate evacuation and control entry to affected areas,
- ensure everyone onsite is evacuated to a safe area using safe egress routes, including staff, contractors and visitors, and
- organise an immediate roll call to ensure everyone is accounted for and report the results to the OIC of the attending emergency service.

The evacuation procedure may need to be varied for different emergencies, for example, if a fire or suspect package is located near a fire exit or assembly point the safest alternative route is to be taken.

### **5 Training in evacuation procedures**

Directors are to ensure all staff are trained in the evacuation procedures for their workplace. An emergency evacuation drill is to be conducted annually for each workplace and each platoon. The drill is to be followed by a documented debrief (see point 6 *Debrief and review*). Drills are to be conducted more often for large or complex worksites.

### **6 Debrief and review**

A debriefing session should be conducted and documented after each drill or emergency evacuation. The debrief is essential to identify or correct deficiencies in emergency procedures. The Evacuation Debrief Checklist is to be completed and analysed during the session and any failure of emergency procedures is to be identified.

**Note:** An [Evacuation Debrief Checklist](#) is available from the OHS Intranet site.

Subsequent action may include reinforcement of evacuation procedures or changes to the emergency plans and procedures. These changes must be clearly communicated to all employees at the relevant workplace.

## **7 Resources**

Further information including a resources list for the development of emergency evacuation procedures and plans is available from the [OHS Intranet site](#).

*Contact Officer:* OHS Risk Management Coordinator, (02) 9265 2800

*File Reference:* CHO/07796

*In Orders 2004/24, with amendments*

## **Drug and alcohol policy**

Fire and Rescue NSW and the Fire Brigade Employees' Union (FBEU) have worked together to develop a drug and alcohol policy for firefighting staff which aims:

- to eliminate the hazards associated with drugs and alcohol
- to facilitate the health, safety and welfare of firefighters
- to ensure the safety of the public and the community
- to be an integral part of the occupational health and safety strategy
- to provide support and fairness through support, counselling and rehabilitation
- to encourage and support precautionary measures.

Copies of the policy, a summary of the policy and promotional material has been sent to all fire stations and workplaces. Every firefighter has been sent a copy of the summary at their home address.

The policy includes protocols for staff and supervisors for dealing with situations involving the abuse of alcohol or drugs and for referrals to the Employee Assistance Program. All staff should make themselves familiar with the policy and protocols.

Fire and Rescue NSW and the Fire Brigade Employees' Union are committed to improving occupational health and safety in Fire and Rescue NSW by supporting the implementation of this policy.

*Contact Officer:* Assistant Director Employee Relations, (02) 9265 2677

*File Reference:* CHO/00361

*In Orders 1998/8, with amendments*

## **Consumption of alcohol or drugs on Fire and Rescue NSW premises**

### **1 Introduction**

The use of alcohol and other drugs in the workplace poses a risk to the health and safety of the community and to employees.

Fire and Rescue NSW employees must not commence duty whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs or, whilst on duty, consume any alcohol or take non-prescription 'recreational' drugs on Fire and Rescue NSW premises.

### **2 Consumption of alcohol at sanctioned functions**

Under certain extenuating circumstances, the consumption of alcohol by guests on Fire and Rescue NSW premises may be permitted at special functions.

On duty employees may attend the function but are strictly prohibited from consuming alcohol under any circumstance whilst they are on duty. Any employee who consumes alcohol whilst on duty will be the subject of disciplinary proceedings.

### **3 Approval to consume alcohol at sanctioned functions**

The appropriate Zone Commander/Manager responsible for the station/facility at which the sanctioned function is to be held is the responsible person for approving the consumption of alcohol at the function.

Approval is conditional on the submission of a written request to hold the function on Fire and Rescue NSW premises. A copy of the written approval, which must restate the conditions outlined in this instruction, must be forwarded by the approving officer to the relevant Area Commander and Director.

*Contact Officer: Manager Standards and Conduct, (02) 9265 3923*

*File Reference: CHO/03984*

*In Orders 2007/28, with amendments*

### **No smoking policy**

Fire and Rescue NSW recognises the harmful effects that smoking can do to the health of both smokers and non-smokers. There is overwhelming evidence from various sources on the effects of both passive and active smoking in producing health hazards in the long term and also in aggravating existing medical conditions. In addition, the employer's obligation to ensure the health at work of all employees is an *absolute* requirement under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*.

Employees are also required while at work to take care of the health and safety of other persons in the workplace and to co-operate with Fire and Rescue NSW in the interest of health, safety and welfare.

Accordingly, the following orders are to be adhered to:

1. Smoking is prohibited in all buildings and vehicles under the control of Fire and Rescue NSW with effect from 1 July 1990.
2. Signs are to be displayed which clearly indicate that Fire and Rescue NSW now maintains a smoke free workplace.
3. Where workplaces are ventilated centrally and other lessees in the building do not have a smoke free workplace policy, Fire and Rescue NSW will endeavour to encourage such lessees to adopt a similar policy.
4. Persons applying for jobs in Fire and Rescue NSW will be notified of the smoke free workplace policy.
5. All heads of Branches, Sections, Units and Brigades shall act as policy coordinators. They will act as the local source of information and coordination where necessary. Problems that cannot be resolved locally or at coordinator's level are to be channelled to the OHS Risk Management Coordinator, telephone (02) 9265 2800 or to any member of an Occupational Health and Safety Committee or a Safety Representative.
6. An active campaign will be maintained through media and training courses to constantly upgrade information and to assist employees to comply with this policy. Employees will be provided, on request, with the literature on health hazards associated with smoking.

*In Orders 1990/10, as amended by In Orders 1991/21, with amendments*

## Infringements

1. Fire and Rescue NSW implemented a policy of no smoking in all buildings and vehicles on 1 July 1990 (see above). This policy has received the support of the majority of members who wish to work in a healthy environment. These members are to be congratulated.
2. It has been alleged that some members are not complying with the no smoking policy. In some cases, it has been stated, officers are either not complying themselves or ignoring members who smoke in buildings and vehicles.
3. Section 8 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* places on absolute obligation on Fire and Rescue NSW to ensure the working environment of employees is safe and without risks to health.
4. Those members who persist in smoking inside buildings and vehicles are advised that they are contravening Section 20 of the Act, which states that *'an employee must, while at work, take reasonable care for the health and safety of people who are at the employee's place of work and who may be affected by the employee's acts or omissions at work'*. A penalty of 30 penalty units is stipulated in the Act.
5. Members may report a breach of this policy to the Station Commander who, as the person in control of the station, exercises the obligations of an employer.
6. If no action is taken or if the non-compliance of the policy is by the Station Commander or Duty Commanders themselves, then a member may report the incident to the OHS Risk Management Coordinator, who will then, in the case of an infringement of the no smoking policy, inform the relevant Director, giving details of the incident. Further progression will be based on normal disciplinary procedures.
7. Members who desire to stop smoking can obtain a free 'quit book' from the national Quitline by phoning 131 848.
8. In addition, members may use the resources of the [Employee Assistance Program](#).
9. For internal counselling, call the Health and Safety Branch on 1800 425 282 or (02) 9265 2800 and register with the Quit Smoking Program.

*In Orders 1991/21, with amendments*

## Fatigue management policy

The [Fatigue management policy](#) has been published on the [Administration Policies page](#) of the Intranet.

FRNSW has identified fatigue as a risk to workers' health and safety. This policy establishes the fatigue management framework and details the roles and responsibilities of each FRNSW worker for the management of fatigue. It outlines how FRNSW minimises the risk of fatigue as far as reasonably practicable. This policy applies to all FRNSW workers and workplaces.

*Contact Officer:* Manager Safety, (02) 9265 2829

*File Reference:* NFB/01748

*Commissioner's Orders 2012/24*



## **Manual handling**

### **What is manual handling?**

Manual handling is any activity which requires force to lift, lower, pull, push, load, hold, move and restrain objects in the workplace.

It is not just bad lifting technique that causes back injuries. Other factors include the shape and size of the object, the personal characteristics of each individual and the physical constraints of the workplace.

All employers and their employees must take steps to minimise the risk of manual handling injuries at work and this can be achieved by adopting the following process:

### **Risk identification**

Steps that are available to identify activities and situations which are likely to generate workplace injuries include:

- monitor injury records and accident entries;
- check with employees on-the-job hazards;
- observe good work practices in the use of equipment.

### **Risk assessment**

Decide on the order of priority for dealing with risks. Factors such as incidence and severity need to be considered when deciding on the relative importance of each factor.

Areas that need to be assessed when deciding whether employees can perform their tasks safely are:

- workplace and workstation layout, for example, lifting things while seated;
- a working posture and position;
- a high frequency of manual handling especially during the deployment of equipment (consider use of trolleys and other mechanical devices);
- the weight and shape of load (be aware of increasing risk factor of weights above 16 kg);
- the work organisation;
- poor work environment (look for hazards);
- insufficient training, instruction or experience of employees in performing manual handling tasks;
- inappropriate, incorrect, or insufficient protective clothing.

### **Risk control**

Following identification and assessment of workplace risks, steps should be taken to eliminate, reduce and control the various risk factors.

Risk control can best be accomplished by a combination of:

- initial design of all equipment;
- job redesign;
- introduction of mechanical handling equipment and team lifting, where possible;
- provision of training;
- regular inspections and checks.

Often, the solution will be a combination of re-design and the use of mechanical alternatives coupled with training and education of staff.

Control measures should be evaluated so that their effectiveness is monitored on an ongoing basis.

Supervising Officers in consultation with employees and safety representatives are to endeavour to organise all manual handling activities in the manner prescribed.

Workplaces intending to purchase equipment or planning re-deployment of resources are advised to seek the assistance of the OHS Risk Management Coordinator for input such as ergonomics, hazardous substances, material safety data sheets, protective clothing, safe work practices and any legislative requirements that are likely to impact upon such work practices.

*In Orders 1992/27, with amendments*

### **Team lifting during Fire and Rescue NSW operations**

A high proportion of manual handling injuries appear to be directly related to operational personnel lifting heavy equipment.

Operational personnel handling any equipment are therefore required to identify the task, assess the risks and adopt risk control measures. These measures could include team lifting and the use of trolleys or other equipment issued from time to time to aid in portability. In operational circumstances, the officer in charge may be required to make a decision consistent with safe working procedures.

Team lifting and the use of mechanical devices should be planned and rehearsed prior to operational activity. Officers in charge of all operational units are therefore required to pre-plan these activities with practical training sessions until personnel can carry out manual handling tasks in a safe manner.

*Contact Officer: OHS Risk Management Coordinator, (02) 9265 2800*

*File Reference: CHO/03290*

*In Orders 1999/21, with amendments*

## Safe practice for use of fire poles

Guidelines have been developed for the safe use of fire poles, including safe practices, training and regular inspections, to assist Fire and Rescue NSW to comply with OHS legislation.

The [Safe practice for use of fire poles](#) is published on the [Intranet](#).

Officers and fire fighters at stations where fire poles are installed must comply with these guidelines.

*Contact Officer: OHS Risk Management Coordinator, (02) 9265 2800*

*File Reference: CHO/03701*

*In Orders 2005/16, with amendments*

## Safety precautions for using whipper snippers

Whipper snippers with various model names are used by many fire stations. This equipment needs to be operated in a safe way to prevent injuries from foreign bodies and moving parts of the machine. These guidelines are not a substitute for the operator's manual produced by manufacturers. Please consult these manuals before using the whipper snippers at fire stations.

### Operator Safety

1. Wear eye protection.
2. Wear protective clothing such as long pants, boots and gloves.
3. Do not operate this snipper while you are tired, ill or under the influence of drugs, alcohol or medication.
4. Wear approved hearing protection.
5. Never start or run the engine inside a closed room or building.
6. Keep handles free of oil and fuel.

### Snipper Safety

1. Inspect entire snipper before use. Replace damaged parts and check for fuel leaks.
2. Replace trimmer head parts that are cracked, chipped or damaged.
3. Use appropriate type and width of weed line.
4. Install the shield properly before using the snipper.
5. Use only the specified trimmer head.
6. Make carburettor adjustments with the drive shaft housing supported to prevent the trimmer line from contacting any object.
7. Keep others away when making carburettor adjustments.
8. Maintain the snipper according to recommended procedures.

**Fuel Safety**

1. Mix and pour fuel outdoors and where there are no sparks or flames.
2. Use a container approved for fuel.
3. Do not smoke or allow smoking near fuel or the snipper or while using the snipper.
4. Wipe up all fuel spills before starting the engine.
5. Move at least 3 metres away from fuelling site before starting engine.
6. Stop engine before removing fuel cap.
7. Empty the fuel in the tank of the snipper, if prolonged storing of more than one month is required.
8. Store snipper and fuel in an area where fuel vapours cannot reach sparks or open flames from water heaters, electric motors or switches, furnaces etc.

**Cutting Safety**

1. Inspect the area to be cut before each use. Remove movable objects such as rocks, broken glass, nails.
2. Keep bystanders outside the 20 metre hazard zone.
3. Always keep the engine on the right hand side of your body.
4. Hold the snipper firmly with both hands.
5. Keep firm footing and balance. Do not over-reach.

*Contact Officer:* OHS Risk Management Coordinator, (02) 9265 2800

*File Reference:* CHO/03290

*In Orders 1999/20*

**Vehicle exhaust fumes**

Excessive exposure to vehicle exhaust fumes can be harmful to your health.

The following guidelines are issued to assist staff to reduce exhaust fume problems in their workplace.

1. Before starting a fire appliance engine:
  - open all engine bay doors
  - close any doors leading to other areas of the fire station.
2. Where possible, take fire appliances out of the engine bay when running pump tests or during other tests that require the engine to be operating.
3. If it is not practical to take the above measures in your fire station, the Station Commander should submit a report through the chain of command to the Director Logistics Support detailing the problems and requesting consideration for priority installation on an extraction fan system.

4. Where extraction fans have been fitted, they must be switched on whenever a fire appliance is started.
5. If a fire appliance is producing excessive exhaust fumes, it may indicate a problem with the vehicle's performance. The Station Commander should report these problems to the Fleet Operations Officer.

*In Orders 1996/24, with amendments*

### **Automatic external defibrillators**

At sites where hot fire cell training is carried out, automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) have been provided to meet occupational safety needs in the event that a member suffers a collapse and cardiac arrest.

The defibrillator provided is Lifepak 500, distributed by Acute Care Systems, 9 Lyon Park Road, North Ryde.

### **Location**

One AED has been acquired for each training centre and one for the State Training College to be used during training sessions.

Two AEDs have been acquired for breathing apparatus training vehicles, for use throughout the State.

These units are physically located at the nominated training centres and vehicles. They are not to be carried by Senior Instructors or Principal Instructors, but stored and maintained at the nominated training centres.

### **Training**

Training will be provided to Principal Instructors, Senior Instructors, personnel attached to BA Training, and nominated staff at each hot fire centre and attached to Head Office.

The training will provide user status only. Those trained must not act as Unit Trainers on the use of AEDs.

### **Use**

AEDs are to be used only by officers trained in their use and operation and in accordance with the protocols associated with AED operations. Untrained personnel are not to use the equipment.

### **Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the Senior Instructors and Principal Instructors to ensure that the equipment is maintained and in working order at all times, and checked before the start of each training session. A maintenance log is to be kept with each AED and filled in each time the unit is checked or used.

At all times a spare new battery is to be available, and the AED unit must include at least two unused electrode pads.

On all occasions when the units are used, a report must be submitted through the Assistant Director Learning and Development to the Brigades' Medical Officer, advising the cause, performance, operator and outcome.

## Equipment

With each AED a carry case is to be maintained at all times containing:

- 1 AED
- 2 packs adhesive electrodes
- 10 satchels alcohol wipes
- 2 disposable razors
- 1 absorbent cloth
- 1 spare battery

## Maintenance

Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations. All faults are to be reported to the Assistant Director Learning and Development who will arrange for maintenance/repairs through Acute Care Systems.

*In Orders 1997/20, with amendments*

## Ultraviolet radiation in sunlight

Employees are required to comply with all instructions given by their employer for reasons of health and safety and take all reasonable precautions to protect themselves and others in the workplace against exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. This includes seeking early medical advice if warranted.

## Exposure assessment

UV radiation may vary in outdoor environments depending on when work is being performed. Exposure assessment by supervisors/managers should identify:

- jobs/tasks, including breaks which involve solar UV radiation exposure;
- time of day tasks are performed and frequency thereof;
- shade provided by natural environment;
- reflective surfaces: glass, polished metal etc;
- protection afforded by present uniform.

In most cases, one exposure assessment is sufficient. Reassessment should be made if work practices change involving greater exposure to UV radiation.

## Control strategy

Supervisors should ensure exposure to UV radiation in workplaces are kept to a minimum by a control strategy, where practicable. It may include:

1. use of natural and/or artificial shade;
2. personal protection. Maximum use should be made of current items of uniform, as these provide adequate protection from UV radiation.

Implementing (1) and (2) together should minimise exposure to solar UV radiation.

## General

Employees are also encouraged to take reasonable precaution in protecting themselves during off duty hours. Self-examination and early referral to medical practitioners are recommended where there is concern.

Any adverse effects from exposure, if work related, are to be reported to the respective supervisors or managers in the first instance, for assessment and further action if required.

*In Orders 1993/28, with amendments*

## Sunglasses

Fire and Rescue NSW issues one pair of sunglasses to each firefighter.

### Use

These sunglasses only provide protection against ultra violet radiation. They are not designed to be worn as protective equipment during firefighting operations or as eye protection from sparks, splashes and debris. Sunglasses must not be worn when a higher level of eye protection is required or when impaired vision could create a hazard for the wearer.

### Care and maintenance

Firefighters are responsible for the care and maintenance of the sunglasses issued to them. Issue and replacement is to be supervised by the Officer-in-charge of the station or the workplace.

### Prescription sunglasses

Where a firefighter requires prescription sunglasses, in lieu of sunglasses provided by the Department, the maximum subsidy will be \$10.40 per pair which is the price of the new sunglasses to be issued by A E Baker. Firefighters issued with sunglasses from A E Baker will not be eligible for a subsidy for prescription sunglasses.

*In Orders 1996/16, as amended by In Orders 1996/19, with amendments*

## Sunscreen and insect repellent

Sunscreen and insect repellent are available from A E Baker. Officers-in-Charge of stations and workplaces are to ensure that the 1 litre containers are available for use by firefighters as required. To ensure protection, the sunscreen and insect repellent should be carried on appliances at all times.

*In Orders 1996/16*

## Rest breaks for staff using keyboards

Rest breaks are recognised as an important factor in preventing occupational overuse syndrome, formerly known as repetitive strain injury (RSI).

Staff who use computer equipment should organise their tasks so that they are able to take breaks from keyboard work throughout the day. A break may be:

- an interruption from work
- a change in activity to non-keyboard work.

Staff should note that it is important to relax the muscles and not just cease keyboard activity.

Breaks are an opportunity to exercise the eyes' long-distance focus and to rest the arms and wrists from repetitive movements. Some breaks should include the opportunity to move from the work station.

There is no agreed length of time for a break from keyboard operation but most sources agree that *at least 5 minutes per hour is needed*.

Some flexibility will be needed to accommodate different situations, eg longer or more frequent spells may be needed if work is of a continuous nature, unusually demanding or there is excessive repetition. Generally, staff themselves will be able to determine the most effective arrangement of rest periods for their present tasks.

The *5 minute* rest break in each hour should be taken by any staff member who is engaged in sustained keying activities for more than one hour.

Use of these rest breaks needs to be taken seriously by both managers and keyboard operators. Breaks should *not be deferred* throughout the day. It is in the interests of both staff and management that accepted safety standards and practices are followed in order to prevent painful injury, work dislocation and compensation claims.

*In Orders 1995/22*

## **Use of copying machines**

Copying machines include photocopiers, laser printers, facsimile machines, diazo printers and spirit duplicators.

Photocopiers emit very small amounts of ozone, selenium and cadmium during operation. However, the resultant concentrations are well below concentrations associated with adverse health effects. Toners contain carbon black dust and these could irritate the respiratory tract when exposed, resulting in coughing and sneezing.

Physical discomforts from operating the above equipment could be possible discomfort from the light, heat and noise generated. Burns from hot components may occur when clearing paper misfeeds.

Musculoskeletal discomfort may arise from continuous photocopying and collating. Sustained and repetitive postures may lead to muscular fatigue.

To counter the above effects, the following are to be adhered to in the use of copying machines:

1. Persons responsible for selection or purchase of copying machines are to ensure that 'activated carbon filters' are fitted to such machines to reduce the ozone generated.

In addition, each machine should be delivered with a Material Safety Data Sheet, operating diagram and instruction manual. These are to be attached to the machine or displayed nearby.

2. The equipment should be installed in an adequately ventilated area to facilitate the safe removal of dusts, gases and vapours. Ventilation means natural or mechanical (eg an air-conditioned building or room).

Copiers installed in small enclosed rooms should have adequate natural or other mechanical means of ventilation. Doors to such enclosed area should be left open, if practicable, during photocopying.



3. There should be adequate space all around the machine (at least 150 mm) to ensure adequate airflow.
4. All copying machines should be regularly maintained by authorised service personnel. A register of maintenance, repairs or replacements is to be maintained. This will ensure that equipment is maintained in an acceptable working order.
5. The working surface of the copier should be at a comfortable height for an average person. Where necessary, a collating table at a comfortable height should be provided beside the copying machine.
6. The document cover of all machines should be closed when photocopying light is in operation.
7. When clearing paper misfeed from rollers or other areas inside the machine, adequate safety precautions must be exercised. These include switching off the power source and taking necessary precaution to protect against hot components. If unsure, report to your supervisor or to the officer in control of the place of work.
8. Continuous photocopying and collating should be avoided. A 10-minute break, away from copying machines, should be observed for every one hour of continuous work.

*In Orders 1990/25, with amendments*

### **Wearing of spectacles and contact lenses**

Permanent and Retained Firefighters who find it necessary to wear spectacles on the fireground are to notify the Brigades' Medical Officer (in writing) accordingly.

There is concern that if it is necessary for a firefighter to wear spectacles on the fireground he or she may be placing him or her self at risk. Should the spectacles or contact lenses become dislodged, broken or lost in smoke or obscured by water or otherwise contaminated, then the user will be at risk and perhaps become a rescue problem.

This view is reinforced by a Home Office United Kingdom Fire Circular 21.1982 which states:

*'a fire[fighter]'s level of uncorrected visual acuity should be taken into account when reviewing whether he [or she] is fit for the operational duties expected of him [or her]. Artificial aids to vision cannot be worn in training or on the fireground where it is essential that a fire[fighter]'s uncorrected vision should be adequate for his [or her] own safety and that of others.'*

The Brigades' Medical Officer advises that any firefighters who require spectacles or contact lenses to carry out firefighting duties may unwittingly be:

- a. subjecting THEMSELVES to increased hazard;
- b. exposing fellow firefighters to increased hazard.

A simple test at the Health and Safety Branch will provide an answer, alternatively country firefighters would ask their local Doctor to test visual acuity without spectacles or contact lenses - each eye. Separately test visual acuity with spectacles or contact lenses - each eye.

Forward the results under confidential cover to the Brigades' Medical Officer.

*In Orders 1984/4, with amendments*

## SAFETY INCIDENTS

### Management and investigation of safety incidents policy and procedures

The following policies and procedures have been published on the [Administration Policies](#) page of the Intranet:

- [Management and investigation of safety incidents policy](#)
- [Management and investigation of serious safety incidents procedure](#)
- [Management and investigation of minor safety incidents procedure](#)

This policy and the associated procedures establish the principles and procedures FRNSW will follow when managing and investigating safety incidents. Effective management and investigation of these incidents reduces the risks to workers and allows FRNSW to determine measures that can be implemented to prevent similar incidents.

They apply to all FRNSW workers involved in safety incidents occurring in FRNSW workplaces.

*Contact Officer:* Manager Safety, (02) 9265 2829

*File Reference:* NFB/03663

*Commissioner's Orders 2012/22*

### First aid in the workplace

The [First aid in the workplace procedure](#) is available on the [Administration Policies page](#) of the Intranet.

This procedure details how FRNSW will manage first aid in all workplaces as required by work health and safety legislation. This procedure applies to all FRNSW workers, as detailed in the [Work health and safety policy](#).

*Contact Officer:* Assistant Director Health and Safety, (02) 9265 2642

*File Reference:* CHO/03681

*Commissioner's Orders 2012/24*

### Workers requiring medical assistance and transportation

The procedure for [Workers requiring medical assistance and transportation](#) has been published on the [Administration Policies page](#) of the Intranet.

From time to time FRNSW workers require medical assistance in emergency or non-emergency situations. The *Workers requiring medical assistance and transportation procedure* defines the difference between an emergency and a non-emergency, details the procedure for transport in each case and provides direction for contacting and using the Ambulance Service of NSW.

*Contact Officer:* Team Leader Health and Medical Programs, (02) 9265 2976

*File Reference:* NFB/06166

*Commissioner's Orders 2012/6*

## HYDRATION AND NUTRITION

### Policy

#### 1 Introduction

Firefighting is a strenuous occupation that requires you to be in good physical condition to optimise performance and minimise the chances of suffering injury or illness. Firefighters are at an increased risk of heat illness due to their exposure to high temperatures at incidents. The resulting high sweat losses from working in these conditions increase the risk of dehydration. Inadequate fluid and food replacement when undergoing hot heavy work can lead to overheating, dizziness, nausea, weakness, fatigue and mental confusion. On the incident ground, these effects can have life threatening consequences.

#### 2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform all firefighters on the most appropriate nutrient and fluid intake practices to prevent heat illness, and to maximise performance and firefighter safety. It aims to ensure all operational personnel can make informed decisions to maintain optimal physical condition.

This policy provides guidelines, based on the National Health and Medical Research Council's [Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults](#), for appropriate hydration and nutrition for firefighters when at the station and at incidents.

#### 3 Application

This policy applies to all operational personnel. It sets out responsibilities for firefighters, both permanent and retained, in maintaining their own health in relation to hydration and nutrition. It also outlines the responsibilities of Incident Controllers and supervisors managing hydration and nutrition of their crews.

#### 4 Responsibilities

Fire and Rescue NSW has a duty of care to ensure firefighter health and safety on the incident ground and at training exercises.

##### 4.1 All operational personnel

It is the responsibility of all operational personnel to:

- make every effort to maintain personal health and fitness and to ensure adequate hydration and nutritional status prior to arriving for and while on duty
- cooperate with Fire and Rescue NSW in its efforts to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all operational personnel
- comply with the intent and provisions of this policy.

##### 4.2 Incident Controllers and supervisors

It is the responsibility of Incident Controllers and supervisors to:

- make every effort to encourage their crew's maintenance of personal health and fitness, along with adequate hydration and nutritional status, while on duty
- comply with the intent and provisions of this policy

- ensure that food and beverages provided by Fire and Rescue NSW are only used for the purposes for which they are provided
- maintain awareness of the food and fluid intake of crews at incidents and training exercises.

## 5 Hydration

Hydration refers to the water content of your body. Appropriate fluid levels are vital in ensuring that your body is able to function optimally. Dehydration results from the loss of too much body fluid and can result in heat illness, dizziness, confusion, reduced decision making ability, impaired cardiovascular function and reduced overall physical ability and performance.

The overall aim of your hydration plan is to prevent a reduction in your body weight of greater than 2% (see section 6.3 below on how to calculate % fluid losses) and prevent excessive changes in electrolyte balance (body salts), particularly through excessive losses of sodium in sweat. Excessive fluid or sodium loss may increase your risk of cramp. Due to wide variation in activity levels, environmental conditions, sweat rates and composition between individual firefighters - even those of the same age, gender and weight - your fluid ingestion rate may need to be different to that of other firefighters. As such, it is recommended that you gain an understanding of your own personal fluid needs for a variety of tasks.

It is also recommended that you do not just use thirst as an indicator to guide your fluid consumption. When you are busy or distracted by the incident, thirst may not adequately promote sufficient fluid intake. Changes in body weight, urine colour and the appearance of other symptoms such as feelings of fatigue, nausea and overheating should also be used as other indicators of possible inadequate hydration and the development of heat illness.

## 6 Required fluid intake for firefighters

There are three main situations in which you need to gain an understanding of your fluid losses and the required fluid intake.

### 6.1 Performing light activities

In order to be prepared for incidents, you should always commence duty well hydrated and continue to drink fluids during shift to maintain hydration. Living in a temperate climate such as NSW, you should aim to consume the amount of fluid listed in the table below when sedentary. These intakes would be considered a baseline to maintain hydration levels when not active in training or incidents.

**Table 1: Fluid intakes recommended for sedentary men and women in a temperate climate (Nutrient reference values for Australia and New Zealand 2005)**

Gender <sup>1</sup>	Total water (food + fluid)	Fluids (including plain water, milk and other drinks)
Men (19-70 yr)	3.4 L	2.6 L (10 cups)
Women (19-70 yr)	2.8 L	2.1 L (8 cups)

1. excludes pregnancy and lactation

To achieve these levels of daily intake male firefighters need to consume approximately 500 mL (~ 2 cups) with every meal (3 meals per day) and approximately 250-500 mL (~ 1-2 cups) between meals. Female firefighters (who are not pregnant or lactating) need slightly less fluid to meet their daily sedentary needs. These levels are approximate and may vary between individuals or with environmental conditions.

The most appropriate fluid for all individuals to drink is water. Other fluids such as milk, juice, tea, coffee, etc, can contribute to fluid intake, but water should be your main fluid replacement beverage throughout the day.

## 6.2 Performing heavy firefighting activities

Fluid requirements at incidents for individual firefighters depend upon body size, workload, temperature, airflow, humidity and personal protective equipment (PPE) worn. In situations where prolonged or repeated incidents occur (particularly in summer or in warm, humid weather) sweat and hence fluid loss is likely to increase and additional fluids should be provided and consumed.

Typical fluid losses experienced by male firefighters during active firefighting are approximately 1-2 L per hour, but may be higher or lower depending on work rate, protective equipment worn and individual differences in sweating rate. Daily water losses up to 7 L per day have been reported in extreme firefighting situations.

Typically, male firefighters should aim to ingest at least 1 L of fluid per hour of hot, heavy activity. Due to physiological differences and lower sweating rates, female firefighters should aim to ingest at least 500 mL per hour of active firefighting. Heavy sweaters may lose up to 3 L per hour but this is difficult to replenish within an hour due to the demands of firefighting tasks and also the stomach emptying rate which is typically not much greater than 1 L per hour. Firefighters with heavy sweating rates need to take rest often to keep pace with losses. These intakes are approximate and you are encouraged to monitor your own fluid losses so you can gauge how much you need to ingest to maintain hydration.

While water is still the most recommended fluid for you to consume, a carbohydrate/electrolyte replacement ('sports') drink may be beneficial if you have been performing strenuous firefighting or other heavy work activity for more than one hour. These drinks will assist in replacing not only the fluid lost, but also the electrolytes that are lost with heavy sweating. They also contain carbohydrate to support your energy needs. You will typically not need more than one serve (600 mL) of these drinks per hour of strenuous firefighting activity and water should be consumed in between these drinks.

## 6.3 Following heavy firefighting activities

While not always a practical measure, every kilogram of body weight lost represents approximately 1 L of net fluid loss. Losses of more than 2% of body weight represent a situation where physical performance is more likely to be compromised. For example, if hydrated body weight prior to activity is 90 kg, and afterward falls to 88.2 kg then this 1.8 kg or 2% loss of initial hydrated body weight represents a level at which performance is more likely to be compromised. As losses increase, the risk of more serious heat injury also increases.

As a firefighter, you need to be aware that lost sweat is trapped in clothing so weighing yourself while wearing PPE is very inaccurate. Where possible, you can evaluate the effectiveness of your personal hydration strategy after some incidents by weighing yourself on return home or to the station (in minimal clothing). A loss of 1 kilogram is approximately equivalent to 1 L of fluid. Losses of greater than 2% of your usual hydrated body weight indicate that you have not replaced fluid losses adequately during the incident.

To efficiently restore fluid lost, 1½ times the net fluid loss should be consumed within the first few hours after firefighting (this means consuming 1.5 L of fluid for each kilogram of body weight lost).

An alternative measure of your individual hydration state is urine colour (a urine colour chart is available on the [FireFit website](#)). When hydrated, urine colour should be clear/light yellow, while a darkened (brownish) colour is likely to indicate dehydration. Use of vitamin supplements or intake of large amounts of fluid in a short period can, however, make this measure more difficult to interpret.

## 7 Recommended fluids

Water is the most appropriate drink for fluid replacement at the fire station and for short, less demanding incidents under 1 hour. Combining fluid with food provides the best results, stimulating thirst and increasing absorption rates. Regular and adequate fluid intake will assist you to recover lost fluids during and after incidents and to rehydrate before attending subsequent incidents.

Moderate use (3-4 cups a day) of caffeine-containing beverages such as tea or coffee (assumes 1 tsp of instant coffee per cup; halve the number of cups for strong or large espresso coffee) poses no risk to hydration status. Heavy use of caffeine may compromise hydration and is a potential health hazard and not recommended.

**Note:** Although unlikely, it is possible to drink too much fluid which can dilute blood salts (electrolytes) to a level which is life threatening (known as hyponatraemia). It is important for fluid ingestion to closely match and not exceed fluid loss.

## 8 Nutrition

Nutrition requirements differ according to age, gender and, most importantly, physical activity level. Balancing your nutrition needs is challenging as requirements for nutrients such as energy, fluid and carbohydrate are likely to be very different during an incident compared to at the station. Achieving energy balance - the right amount of energy consumed for the work required to be performed - is essential for preventing fatigue, decreasing the risk of illness and injury, and promoting optimal job performance.

Like most Australians, an increasing number of firefighters have been identified as being at risk of lifestyle diseases such as obesity, type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Although some firefighters are protected due to higher levels of physical activity and adoption of a healthy diet, at stations where there is infrequent incident attendance firefighters may have low levels of physical activity and an increased risk of weight gain and associated health issues. As such, you should assess your own energy expenditure and requirements to maintain a healthy weight. For detailed information regarding healthy eating, see the [FireFit website](#).

## 9 Dietary guidelines

In line with healthy eating guidelines, you should consume at least three meals a day at regular intervals during waking hours to meet daily energy and carbohydrate requirements. Refreshments between meals are recommended when undertaking heavy workloads at incidents or if you undertake vigorous training to maintain fitness levels.

During an incident, you need to be able to judge your own energy and fluid requirements based on experience and other signals such as hunger, thirst, changes in mental function (eg concentration) and fatigue levels. Fire and Rescue NSW's catering contract (see [Incident ground and event catering](#) on page 128) and dietary guidelines for refreshments and meals at incidents reflect Australian dietary and public health guidelines for replenishing energy stores lost with physical activity.

Table 2 outlines the Australian recommended dietary intakes for energy in adult men and women.

**Table 2: Average daily energy requirements (KJ/day) - Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand (2005)**

Activity Level	Male (weight ~70kg)		Female (weight ~ 60kg)	
	19-30yrs	31-50yrs	19-31yrs	31-50yrs
Sedentary/maintenance	10 300	9 900	8 400	8 000
Moderate	13 300	12 700	10 800	10 300
Heavy	16 300	15 600	13 200	12 500

Table 3 outlines the minimum and range of core food groups and servings required to provide the body with specific nutrients which have a vital role in maintaining health and peak performance. While examples are provided in the table regarding serving sizes, a more detailed serving sizes list is available on [FireFit](#).

**Table 3: Minimum number of serves required for men and women**

Core food groups	Women 19-60yrs	Men 19-60yrs	Serving size example
Bread, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles	4 (up to 6)	5 (up to 7)	2 slices of bread 1½ cups cereal 1 cup cooked rice or pasta
Vegetables, legumes	4 (up to 7)	6 (up to 8)	½ cup cooked vegies 1 cup salad
Fruit	2 (up to 3)	3 (up to 4)	1 medium size fruit (apple) 2 small pieces (apricots)
Milk, yoghurt, cheese	2 (up to 3)	2 (up to 4)	1 slice low fat cheese 1 tub low fat yoghurt 250 ml low fat milk
Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, legumes	1 (up to 1½)	1½ (up to 2)	1 egg 1 handful of nuts 80 - 100 g lean meat
Extra foods	0 (up to 2 per week)	0 (up to 3 per week)	1 tablespoon margarine

## 10 Healthier take-away choices

To assist in making better choices when purchasing food from local outlets, a [Healthier Take-Away Choices](#) document is available on the Intranet. It is recommended that this be used when deciding on meal choices at the station and when required at incidents or training exercises.

## 11 Guide to other healthier food choices

To maintain optimal health, a strong emphasis should be placed on home or station prepared healthy meals, rather than commercially prepared food. To assist you in making healthier food choices, a [Healthier Station Syndo](#) list and a [Firefighter Cookbook](#) containing simple recipe ideas for groups and individuals has been developed and available on the [FireFit](#) Intranet site.

*Contact Officer: Manager Health, Fitness and Wellbeing, (02) 9265 2800*

*File Reference: CHO/03854*

*In Orders 2008/23, with amendments*



## HEALTH, FITNESS AND WELLBEING

### Policy

The [Health, fitness and wellbeing policy](#) is published on the [Administration Policies](#) page of the Intranet.

The *Health, fitness and wellbeing policy* provides a supportive foundation that encompasses links to the various underlying health, fitness and wellbeing programs and procedures. The intention is to assist all employees to make a shift from reactive responses in relation to illness and injury, to focussing on safety, health promotion and prevention.

All employees must familiarise themselves with this policy and the updated [FRNSW Fitness Program Procedures](#).

*Contact Officer:* Manager Health Promotion (02) 9265 2827

*File Reference:* NFB/11061

*Commissioner's Orders 2012/4*

### Chaplain

The Chaplain's services include:

1. to be available to members of Fire and Rescue NSW and their families for counselling, pastoral and welfare matters. He or she would have in mind at all times that if any particular matter was of a denominational nature it would be referred to their pastor or priest unless the party requested otherwise;
2. to be available to members in times of serious injury or hospitalisation;
3. to accompany Senior Officers to visit next of kin in the case of fatality or serious injury;
4. to coordinate selection and training of Associate Chaplains;
5. to be, in general, a pastor and friend to members and their families;
6. to have the opportunity to speak to Recruit Firefighters in their initial period of training on:
  - the Chaplain and the role of Chaplains in Fire and Rescue NSW;
  - a segment along the lines of character development.

*In Orders 1981/33, with amendments*

### Associate Chaplains

The services of the Associate Chaplains are:

1. to be available to members of Fire and Rescue NSW and their families for counselling, pastoral and welfare matters. He or she would have in mind at all times that if any particular matter was of a denominational nature it would be referred to their pastor or priest unless the party requested otherwise;
2. to be available to members in times of serious injury or hospitalisation;
3. to accompany Senior Officers to visit next of kin in the case of fatality or serious injury;

4. to be, in general, a pastor and friend to members and their families;

*In Orders 1983/28, with amendments*

### **Family support during major incidents**

In order to meet our obligations under the *Fire Brigades Act 1989* and other acts relating to emergency services, firefighting staff and some other employees may be responded to protracted or remote incidents.

Although staff are expected to be aware of this possibility when arranging their personal lives, Fire and Rescue NSW is aware that exceptional circumstances may arise during such incidents where a close family member of an employee may require care or support.

If such circumstances arise, employees can contact the Incident Controller and request assistance, giving all relevant details. Depending on the circumstances, the Incident Controller may:

- arrange through the MICC for a welfare service associated with Fire and Rescue NSW to assist the family, or
- if necessary, arrange for the employee to return to their normal work location.

The definitions of family and relative used in relation to personal carer's leave will be used to determine who is a close family member in relation to this instruction.

*Contact Officer: Assistant Director Operational Personnel, (02) 9265 2869*

*File Reference: 800/78-2*

*In Orders 1999/27, with amendments*

### **Blood donors**

The Brigades' Medical Officer has advised that, to maintain the maximum physical fitness required by firefighting, it is essential that a recovery period of twelve hours elapses between the time of donating blood and resuming duty. This is confirmed by the Red Cross Society's Medical Officer.

Members are instructed that they are not to donate blood within the twelve hour period preceding commencement of duties.

The work of the Australian Red Cross Society's Blood Bank is commended to all staff.

*In Orders 1988/14, with amendments*

### **Sporting events**

Normal workers' compensation provisions apply to Retained Firefighters' Championships and to rescue competitions approved by the Commissioner. The following provisions apply to the participation of Fire and Rescue NSW employees in all other sporting events.

1. Participation in sporting events does not form part of Fire and Rescue NSW employees' duties. It is not required under any member's contract of employment with the Fire and Rescue NSW.
2. Fire and Rescue NSW employees who participate in sporting events do so as private individuals, not as Fire and Rescue NSW employees.

3. Fire and Rescue NSW employees participate in sporting events at their own choice and risk. Workers' compensation does not apply. Staff are fully responsible for third party injury and property damage arising from their participation.

### **NSW Fire Brigades Sports Association Inc**

The NSW Fire Brigades Sports Association (previously the NSWFB Sports Council) is responsible for coordinating the activities of all Fire and Rescue NSW sporting bodies and for recommending 'official' sporting activities to the Commissioner so that recognition may be given to teams. All sporting bodies within Fire and Rescue NSW should register with the Sports Association. The conditions for a member of staff participating in an event as an employee are:

1. an application to participate has been made to the NSW Fire Brigades' Sports Association nominating the employees seeking coverage for the specific event and the total time involved; and
2. the Sports Association has recommended approval of the application; and
3. the sporting event is sponsored by Fire and Rescue NSW and the employees are officially representing Fire and Rescue NSW at the event; and
4. the application is accepted by Fire and Rescue NSW's insurers as an event where the employees are covered for workers compensation during the event;
5. the application is approved by the Commissioner.

The Sports Association's address is Secretary, NSW Fire Brigades Sports Association Inc, c/- 1 City of Sydney Fire Station, 213 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

*Contact Officer: Injury Management Coordinator (Claims Management), (02) 9265 2807*

*File Reference: CHO/00715*

*In Orders 1998/16, with amendments*

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

### **Injury management and workers' compensation**

#### **1 Introduction**

This instruction covers the requirements for injury reporting and workers' compensation under the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers' Compensation Act 1998*.

#### **2 What is injury management?**

Injury management covers all activities associated with ensuring the early return to work of an injured worker following a workplace injury. Fire and Rescue NSW is committed to:

- preventing work related injuries,
- providing prompt treatment of injuries,
- managing injuries effectively and proactively, and
- providing the necessary medical and vocational rehabilitation in order to assist injured workers and help them return to work as soon as possible.

#### **3 What is workers' compensation?**

All employers are required by law to compensate employees for injuries and illnesses that occur during, or arise out of, the course of their employment and, in some circumstances, journey claims. Employees are compensated for:

- loss of earnings,
- reasonable medical and hospital expenses, and
- reasonable miscellaneous expenses arising from the injury.

#### **4 What does the Workers' Compensation Section do?**

The Workers' Compensation Section:

- provides advice on making workers' compensation claims,
- answers inquiries from injured employees on the progress of their claims,
- liaises with Allianz,
- provides advice to the Health and Safety Branch on injury patterns and prevention measures, and
- ensures that employees on workers' compensation leave are paid their entitlements.

The Workers' Compensation Section is located in the Health and Safety Branch in Head Office:

Workers Compensation Section  
Level 8, 227 Elizabeth Street  
PO Box A249  
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1232

Ph: (02) 9265 2800  
Fax: (02) 9265 2887

## 5 What to do when a work related injury, illness, exposure or near miss occurs

Step	Who is responsible	Action
1	<p>Employee or (if the employee is incapable of completing the form) the Supervisor.</p> <p><i>Supervisor definition:</i></p> <p><i>A supervisor is the person the employee directly reports to (eg Station Commander, Duty Commander, Team Leader)</i></p>	<p>Start a new <a href="#">Notification of injury, illness, exposure or near miss (NIIENM)</a>, available on Station Portal.</p> <p>Select the <b>Enter New Incident</b> icon in the middle of the screen (known as the dashboard) and complete all required fields. Click the <b>Next</b> button to proceed and the <b>Submit</b> button at the bottom of the form after you are satisfied with the information provided.</p> <p>If you are interrupted while working on the NIIENM form, save the incomplete form by clicking the <b>Save as Draft</b> button at the bottom of the screen. A listing will be generated and displayed under <b>Incomplete Incident Reports</b> on your dashboard as a reminder that the saved form needs to be completed.</p> <p>Your Supervisor will now be notified of the incident by an email with a hyperlink to the NIIENM form.</p>
2	<p>Supervisor</p> <p><i>Manager definition:</i></p> <p><i>A manager is the person a supervisor directly reports to (eg Duty Commander, Zone Commander Section Manager)</i></p>	<p>Within 24 hours of the incident, complete the <b>Preventative Actions</b> section of the NIIENM form.</p> <p>Your Manager will now be notified of the incident by an email with a hyperlink to the NIIENM form.</p>
3	<p>Manager</p>	<p>Within 7 days, review the NIIENM form to ensure the risk control measures detailed by the Supervisor are appropriate and have been commenced and/or completed.</p> <p>If the preventative actions are appropriate select the <b>Yes</b> button. No further action is required.</p> <p>If the preventative actions are insufficient or incomplete, select either the <b>No</b> or <b>Partial</b> buttons and a further action description screen is displayed to enter further action required. The person responsible* for completing the action will receive a notification email.</p> <p>Once the preventative actions have been accepted and the actions completed, the incident can be closed off.</p> <p><i>* The person responsible is the employee tasked by a Manager to implement the preventative action</i></p>

Step	Who is responsible	Action
4	Employee	<p>An injured employee must consult a doctor if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• medical treatment is required, or</li> <li>• time loss is incurred</li> </ul> <p>and obtain a WorkCover medical certificate.</p> <p>Fax the medical certificate to the Workers' Compensation Section, Health and Safety Branch, on (02) 9265 2887 as soon as practicable.</p>
5	Health and Safety Branch	<p>The Health and Safety Branch will be notified by the system of all NIIENM form entries.</p> <p>An officer from the Health and Safety Branch may contact the injured/affected employee depending on the circumstances of the incident and if medical treatment is required or time loss incurred.</p>
6	Managers	<p>Should maintain regular contact with an injured employee regarding the ongoing management of the injury and the return to work plan.</p>

## 6 Implementing risk control measures

The Supervisor of the employee involved must make a thorough investigation into the circumstances of the incident and then complete the **Preventative Actions** section of the NIIENM form.

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* it is the responsibility of the Supervisor to ensure that risk control measures have been implemented to prevent the injury/near miss from recurring.

The implementation of appropriate control measures in a timely manner has proven to be the most effective strategy to minimise work place incidents.

Upon implementation of the preventative actions the Supervisor must ensure the **Date Completed** is entered in the **Preventative Actions** section of the NIIENM form.

## 7 Monitoring risk control measures

Managers are responsible for monitoring the implementation of preventative measures following consultation with the Supervisor, to ensure the measures are working appropriately.

If the preventative actions nominated by the Supervisor are insufficient or incomplete, the Manager should nominate further actions and monitor their implementation and effectiveness.

[Duty Commander/supervisor follow-up procedures](#) for notification of injury, illness, exposure and near misses are available on Station Portal.

## 8 Register of injuries

Completion of the online NIIENM form meets the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* to record all workplace related injuries, illnesses, exposures or near misses. There is no need to keep a copy at the station or workplace.

The NIIENM form system constitutes Fire and Rescue NSW's *Register of Injuries* and must be kept for 30 years. Old *Register of Injuries* books must also be kept for 30 years in the workplace or archived. The information contained in the NIIENM system is confidential and only accessed by authorised personnel

## 9 WorkCover requirements

Notify WorkCover in accordance with [Management and investigation of safety incidents policy and procedures](#) on page 178.

## 10 Making a workers' compensation claim

If your injury results in time lost from work or medical expenses, then you need to complete a workers' compensation claim as well completing the [Notification of injury, illness, exposure and near miss form](#).

The procedure for making a claim is as follows:

Step	Who is responsible	Action
1.	Employee	Completes Allianz TMF <a href="#">Employee's Workers' Compensation Claim form</a> as soon as possible after the incident.
2.	Employee	Attaches WorkCover Medical Certificate (see section 11 below), <a href="#">Witness Statement forms</a> (see section 13 below) and receipts for expenses.
3.	Employee	Gives all the paperwork to their supervisor as soon as possible.
4.	Supervisor	Signs and dates the back of the <i>Claim form</i> .
5.	Supervisor	Fills in Allianz TMF <a href="#">Employer's Report of Injury Form</a> (see section 12 below).
6.	Supervisor	Within 24 hours, sends all the paperwork via Australia Post to the Workers' Compensation Section at Head Office.

## 11 WorkCover Medical Certificates

A *WorkCover Medical Certificate* must accompany all claims for workers' compensation.

The *WorkCover Medical Certificate* will be provided by your medical practitioner. You should inform your medical practitioner that Fire and Rescue NSW has an established rehabilitation program and is willing to offer suitable duties for employees who are partially incapacitated.

## 12 Employer's Report of Injury form

Supervisors have to complete an [Employer's Report of Injury form](#) to accompany each [Employee's Workers' Compensation Claim form](#) submitted. For the purpose of this form, the 'employer' is the supervisor.

Once the supervisor has completed this form, the claim is regarded as being in the hands of the employer and must be presented to the insurer within seven days of receipt to meet the requirements of the Act.

Supervisors are therefore required to send all paperwork via Australia Post to the Workers' Compensation Section in Head Office within 24 hours.

### **13 Statement of Witness to an Injury forms**

All identified witnesses must complete a [Witness Statement form](#). The forms must either be submitted with the claim form or later forwarded by the supervisor to the Workers' Compensation Section without delay.

If there are no witnesses to an incident, the supervisor should indicate any information they have on the condition of the worker before the incident on the [Employer's Report](#).

### **14 Acceptance of claims**

You should not assume that a claim will be accepted. Until your claim has been accepted, any leave will be debited from your sick leave. Once sick leave has been exhausted, your salary may cease. If the claim is accepted, the sick leave which is debited will be recredited and any salary loss will be reimbursed.

If you want to inquire about the status of your claim, contact the Workers' Compensation Section on (02) 9265 2800.

### **15 Absence from work**

#### **15.1 Permanent Firefighters**

Supervisors must record on timesheets and leave returns any absences because of work-related injuries. They must also clearly mark on the timesheets and leave returns when the firefighter resumes duty.

#### **15.2 Retained Firefighters, Administrative and Trades staff**

Retained Firefighters, Administrative and Trades staff must submit an *Application for Leave form* as well as the [Workers' Compensation Claim form](#) if they are unable to attend work due to a work-related injury. A form must be submitted for each period of absence accompanied by a medical certificate.

The *Application for Leave form* should state that the leave sought is 'sick leave pending workers' compensation leave'.

Retained Firefighters should send their forms through the chain of command to the Zone Office. Administrative and Trades staff should give their forms to their supervisor for forwarding to the Employee Services Branch in Head Office.

### **16 Short absences from work**

If you need to undertake medical treatment for a work-related injury during working hours, the time absent from work must be recorded on timesheets, flexsheets and leave returns.

You must also send a report to the Workers' Compensation Section advising of the time lost and giving the name of the medical practitioner or specialist. You should get a note from the medical practitioner or specialist verifying the appointment time and attach it to the report.

### **17 Contact details**

If you are on workers' compensation but you cannot be contacted by Fire and Rescue NSW or its insurer workers' compensation benefits may cease.

If your address or telephone number changes from that given on the claim form, you must immediately advise the Workers' Compensation Section on (02) 9625 2800.



## 18 Medical examinations

If you have an appointment with an insurer-initiated medical provider, you are required to attend on the appointed day whether you are on duty or not. Not attending the appointment may affect your claim.

## 19 Insurance assessors

Independent assessors may be involved in the management of claims. Assessors have to get permission from the Assistant Director Operational Personnel before entering fire stations. The Operational Personnel Section will contact the Station Commander and inform them of:

- the name of the assessor,
- the approximate time of their arrival, and
- the names of the people they want to speak to or obtain statements from.

Employees are asked to cooperate with authorised assessors.

## 20 Recurrence of work-related injuries

If you have a recurrence of a work-related injury, you should report this to your supervisor without delay. You will then need to complete an Allianz TMF [Employees' Workers' Compensation Claim form](#) and attach a report which:

- describes the original injury,
- gives the date of recurrence, and
- outlines the circumstances surrounding the recurrence.

Your supervisor must then sign the form and send all the paperwork to the Workers' Compensation Section in Head Office within 24 hours.

Unless requested by the Workers' Compensation Section, your supervisor does not need to complete the *Employer's Report of Injury Form*.

## 21 Recurrence of an injury while on leave

If you have a recurrence of a work-related injury while on leave, you must contact your supervisor without delay and give them the following details:

- a description of the recurrence,
- the details of any medical certificates issued,
- the extent and expected duration of incapacity, and
- a telephone number and address where you may be contacted.

Your supervisor must then telephone or fax the Workers' Compensation Section in Head Office and give them this information. The Workers' Compensation Section will contact you and advise you of the necessary steps to take.

## 22 Rehabilitation

If you are not totally incapacitated, you must contact the Rehabilitation Section on (02) 9265 2800 as soon as reasonably practicable, and ask them to find you suitable work. This will fulfil your legal obligations under the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998* to request your employer to provide suitable employment. See also the [Return to work program for injured employees](#) on page 196.

## 23 Contacts for further information

If you need any more information or advice about any aspect of workers' compensation or injury management please contact the Workers' Compensation Section:

Workers' Compensation Section  
Health and Safety Branch  
Level 8, 227 Elizabeth Street  
PO Box A249  
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1232

Ph: (02) 9265 2800  
Fax: (02) 9265 2887

*Contact Officer: Injury Management Coordinator (Claims Management), (02) 9265 2800*  
*File Reference: CHO/01949, CHO/00054, and NFB/02160 In Orders 1998/25 as amended by*  
*In Orders 2010/14 and Commissioner's Orders 2012/22, with amendments*

### Supplementary benefits for Retained Firefighters

If a Retained Firefighter receives an injury in the course of Fire and Rescue NSW duties, and provided that the resultant claim is accepted by the insurer as a compensable injury, it is Fire and Rescue NSW's policy that where the benefit assessed by the insurer falls short of the member's ordinary week earnings, a supplementary benefit may be paid by Fire and Rescue NSW. The effect of this policy is that an injured Retained Firefighter receives a benefit made up of the following components:

- a. ordinary weekly earnings from civil occupation, plus permanent allowances;
- b. the continued payment of the retainer; and
- c. a weekly amount for retained firefighting duties based on the member's average weekly earnings (excluding retainer) over a twelve month period immediately preceding the injury.

Supplementary benefits will only be paid where it is established that the member has suffered a loss of income as a result of the incapacity for work, and will be limited by a ceiling which will be varied from time to time, in keeping with movements in average weekly earnings as determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

In determining ordinary weekly earnings, regard will be had to wage components paid on a permanent basis. Payments relating to shift work, overtime, travelling expenses and payments of a like nature will not be considered.

The payment of supplementary benefits by Fire and Rescue NSW will be limited in all cases to a period of 12 months.

### Procedure when lodging claim for workers' compensation and supplementary benefits

#### 1 Retained Firefighters who are employees/employed under contracts of employment

Fire and Rescue NSW requires the following documents to be submitted directly to Fire and Rescue NSW's Injury Management Coordinator (Claims Management) as soon as possible:

- a. Application for supplementation (if applicable)
- b. A statement from the employer under the employer's letterhead certifying:
  - position or classification occupied by the claimant immediately prior to the injury;

- the number of hours normally worked per week excluding overtime (eg award base period);
  - gross weekly wage, excluding overtime and allowances;
  - weekly work pattern - days of attendance (eg Monday to Friday); and
  - the award under which the claimant is employed.
- c. The completed Allianz TMF claim form with rank and station and employee number inserted under claimant's signature on back of form.
- d. The completed [Employer's Report of Injury form](#).
- e. Medical certificates commencing on the date of injury and covering the full period of incapacity, not merely rostered work days (originals only).
- f. Receipts for all medical expenses incurred as the result of the injury (originals only).
- g. *Witness Statement* completed by each witness.

## 2 Self employed retained firefighters

Fire and Rescue NSW requires the following documents to be submitted directly to Fire and Rescue NSW's Workers' Compensation Section as soon as possible:

- a. The completed Allianz TMF claim form with rank and station and employee number written immediately under the signature.
- b. The completed [Employer's Report of Injury form](#).
- c. A *Statutory Declaration* stating:
- nature of occupation
  - number of hours worked per week
  - work pattern - days of week usually worked
  - gross income per week

If there is any difficulty in establishing a weekly figure, supply details of average income over the preceding twelve months (eg. supply last financial year's income tax assessment notice).

The [Statutory Declaration](#) must be signed by the claimant and his or her signature witnessed by a Justice of the Peace.

- d. *Medical Certificates* commencing on the date of injury and covering the total period of incapacity for work and not merely the days on which the member would normally have worked (originals only).
- e. Receipts for all medical expenses (originals only).
- f. [Witness Statement](#) completed by each witness.

*In Orders 1986/11, with amendments*

## RETURN TO WORK

### Return to work program for injured employees

#### Policy

Fire and Rescue NSW is committed to:

- preventing injury and illness and maintaining standards consistent with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*.
- ensuring that the injury management process commences as soon as possible after a work related injury, in a manner consistent with medical advice.
- ensuring that return to work as soon as possible after an injury is a normal practice and expectation for all employees.
- providing suitable duties, where practicable, for an injured employee, as an integral part of the injury management process.
- consulting with employees and, where requested, their union to ensure that the injury management process operates effectively.
- ensuring that participation in the Return To Work program will not, in itself, disadvantage an injured employee.
- co-operating with the Injury Management Plans established by the workers' compensation insurer for injured employees.
- complying with WorkCover Guidelines if and when issued.

#### Procedures

##### 1 When an injury occurs in the workplace

The employee must notify the supervisor immediately after an injury occurs. Appropriate first aid/ medical treatment must be arranged as soon as possible. The [\*Notification of injury, illness, exposure and near miss form\*](#) must be completed within 24 hours. The Return to Work Section will contact employees with significant injuries as soon as practicable to ensure that appropriate medical attention has been received and to prepare the injured employee for a safe and timely return to work consistent with medical advice.

##### 2 Nominating a treating doctor

The injured employee must nominate a treating doctor who will be responsible for medical management of the injury; provision of WorkCover medical certificates; and co-operation with the development and implementation of the Return To Work plan.

##### 3 Involving an external rehabilitation provider

Rehabilitation providers are teams of health professionals accredited by WorkCover NSW to provide specialist occupational rehabilitation services to employees with serious injuries. Where specialist rehabilitation services are required, the Return to Work Section will discuss accredited providers with the injured employee and refer the employee to the provider of his/her choice.

#### 4 Finding suitable duties

The Return to Work Section will consult with the nominated treating doctor to ensure that individual return to work strategies are developed for the injured employee. Suitable duties for partially incapacitated employees will be meaningful, productive and consistent with the employee's capabilities.

#### 5 Consultation

The Return to Work Section will consult with the injured employee (and where requested any union representative) prior to any arrangement for the return of an injured employee on suitable duties.

#### 6 Disputes

The Return to Work Section will try to resolve disputes by consulting with the employee, supervisor, treating medical practitioners, insurer and, where applicable, the rehabilitation provider and the relevant union.

*Contact Officer: Manager Return to Work (02) 9265 2800*

*File Reference: CHO/00061*

*In Orders 2000/19, with amendments*

See also [Travelling entitlements while on rehabilitation](#) on page 508.

#### Suitable duties for Permanent Firefighters

Fire and Rescue NSW has a responsibility under the [Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998](#) (WIMAWC Act) to provide suitable duties to workers who sustain a work related injury if they are able to carry out suitable duties in accordance with their medical restrictions, and it is reasonably practicable to do so.

The provisions of the WIMAWC Act only apply in cases where the injury relates to 'a personal injury arising out of or in the course of employment.' The full definition of 'injury' is contained in Section 4, [Definitions](#), of the WIMAWC Act.

Fire and Rescue NSW has additional responsibilities in terms of the [Crown Employees \(NSW Fire Brigades Firefighting Staff Death and Disability\) Award 2009](#) (D&D Award). Unlike the WIMAWC Act, the D&D Award contains provisions relating to 'on duty' and also 'off duty' injuries. Definitions of both are contained in Clause 3, [Definitions](#), of the D&D Award.

In order to more fully meet its obligations under both the WIMAWC Act and the D&D Award, Fire and Rescue NSW will be enhancing the range of suitable duties opportunities throughout the organisation. The initial focus will be on station based suitable duties and, except where impractical, suitable duties will be made available at every station. However, the enhancement will also be in all areas where support activities are, or become, available. While, at any given time, suitable duties work may be available, its applicability must be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with medical restrictions.

All enquiries regarding this policy should be directed to Health and Safety on (02) 9265 2800 or 1800 425 282.

*Contact Officer: Assistant Director Health and Safety, (02) 9265 2642*

*File Reference: NFB/01698*

*In Orders 2009/19, with amendments*

## Provision of suitable duties for injured retained firefighters

### 1 Scope and application

This policy applies to retained firefighters who have suffered an injury, either on-duty covered by workers' compensation or off-duty, and who are not permanently incapacitated. Retained firefighters who are permanently incapacitated are instead subject to, and treated in accordance with, the provisions of the *Crown Employees (NSW Fire Brigades Firefighting Staff Death And Disability) Award 2006*.

This policy details the availability of suitable duties for injured retained firefighters pending their return to full firefighting duties, the types of duties that may be worked and the responsibility of managers and the Health and Safety Branch to monitor these arrangements.

Retained firefighters who sustain an injury while off-duty or in the course of their primary employment are not covered by any workers compensation provision impacting on Fire and Rescue NSW as the retained firefighter's secondary employer, but are still encouraged to undertake suitable duties.

### 2 Suitable duties

Fire and Rescue NSW has a responsibility under the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998* to provide suitable duties to injured workers if they are deemed to be able to carry out suitable duties by their nominated treating doctor and it is reasonably practicable to do so, taking into account the injured firefighters' individual circumstances including, but not limited to, their primary employment.

Fire and Rescue NSW classifies suitable duties as meaningful work provided to injured workers in accordance with their medical restrictions and agreed return to work plan if it is reasonably practicable to do so. For retained firefighters this work may be undertaken at their fire station or, if agreed with the worker, an alternative fire station, zone office or other Fire and Rescue NSW facility.

### 3 Calculation of the number of hours available for suitable duties

The normal number of hours of suitable duties available to these firefighters in each pay period will be calculated by the Administrative Services Coordinator based on the total time the firefighter has spent at drills, attending incidents and undertaking authorised duties averaged over the previous 12 months. Where this calculation results in the average time being less than two hours per week, at least two hours per week will be available to the injured worker.

In situations where injured firefighters are unable to access suitable duties at their primary workplace, it may be possible for additional suitable duties to be provided by Fire and Rescue NSW. This will be determined in consultation with the zone management team and the Health and Safety Branch.

Suitable duties performed by injured firefighters will not count towards a station's monthly allocation of hours for the performance of authorised duties and attendance at meetings.

### 4 Types of suitable duties

Subject to the provisions of the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998*, in particular [Section 49](#), the duties that an injured retained firefighter may perform are dependent on the limitations that are contained in the worker's WorkCover medical certificate and return to work plan. The duties that a retained firefighter who sustains an off-duty injury may perform are dependent on availability as well as the capabilities and restrictions contained in their medical certificate. Suitable duties include, but are not limited to:

- attending the station during fire calls to monitor radios and complete the Occurrence Book and BART
- participating in drills or attending the station while drills are carried out
- assisting with station duties including cleaning and maintaining equipment
- participation in selection committees
- assisting with the completion of pre-incident plans
- participating in the preparation and delivery of community safety programs, and
- undertaking other duties at the request of the Station, Duty or Zone Commander.

The actual duties performed should be determined through consultation between the injured firefighter, nominated treating doctor, Return to Work Coordinator and line management.

## **5 Responsibility for managing suitable duties**

It is the responsibility of the Station Commander, in conjunction with the Return To Work Coordinator, to assist the injured firefighter in undertaking suitable duties at the fire station, for example by ensuring access to the fire station computer if this is required.

It is the responsibility of the zone management team to monitor the work being undertaken by the injured firefighter to ensure that appropriate and meaningful suitable duties are being worked at the fire station.

It is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Branch to establish, monitor and update the injured firefighter's return to work plan to ensure that the suitable duties being performed are appropriate. The Health and Safety Branch should also continue to liaise with the injured firefighter's primary employer and Fire and Rescue NSW's Workers' Compensation insurer to assist them where possible to facilitate and maintain a durable return to work in the primary workplace.

It is the responsibility of the Administrative Services Coordinator to calculate the normal number of hours of suitable duties available to each injured firefighter and to communicate this to the zone management team and the Health and Safety Branch.

*Contact Officer:* Assistant Director Health and Safety, (02) 9265 2642

*File Reference:* CHO/09359, NFB/01695 and NFB/01698 In Orders 2008/14, with amendments

