



# BUSHFIRES NT | 2019

## GENERAL ORDERS

and

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES







## General Orders

Page No.	GO No.	Description	Applies to			
			Brigade	Wardens	BFNT Staff	All
2	1	Principles of Incident Management	*	*	*	*
4	2	Situation Reports (SitReps)	*	*	*	*
5	3	Operational Briefings (SMEACS)	*	*	*	*
7	4	Major Injury Reporting	*	*	*	*
9	5	Reporting the Death	*	*	*	*
10	6	Radio Distress Call Mayday	*	*	*	*
12	7	Driving BFNT Vehicles	*	*	*	*
15	8	Emergency Response Driving	*	*	*	*
18	9	Safety on Roads	*	*	*	*
19	10	Alcohol and Drugs	*	*	*	*
21	11	Appliance and Crew Protection at Bushfires	*	*	*	*
22	12	Red Flag Warnings (Safety Messages)	*	*	*	*
23	13	Avoiding Fire Entrapment - LACES	*	*	*	*
25	14	NT Duty Officer Responsibilities			*	
27	15	Fire Warden Operational Responsibilities		*		
28	16	Brigade Captain Operational Responsibilities	*	*		
30	17	Authorised Bushfire Volunteer Operational Responsibilities	*			

Brigade                    All Bushfires NT Volunteer Bushfire Brigade members  
 Wardens                All Bushfires NT appointed Fire Wardens  
 BFNT Staff            All Bushfires NT staff  
 All                        All Bushfires NT Stakeholders and Contractors



## Standard Operating Procedures

Page No.	SOP No.	Description	Brigade	Wardens	BFNT Staff	All
<b>Chain of Command</b>						
32	1.1	Chain of Command	*	*	*	*
33	1.2	Incident Classification	*	*	*	*
36	1.3	Appointment of Incident Controller	*	*	*	*
37	1.4	Establishing an Incident Management Structure	*	*	*	*
38	1.5	Transfer of Control	*	*	*	*
39	1.6	Arrival and Departure Notification at an incident	*	*	*	*
<b>Response</b>						
40	2.1	Task Force Deployment	*		*	
42	2.2	Responding NT Police		*	*	
<b>Incident Reporting/Notification</b>						
43	3.1	Initial Incident Reporting	*	*	*	*
44	3.2	Incident Status Types	*	*	*	*
45	3.3	Maintaining Incident Management Logs	*	*	*	*
46	3.4	BFNT Preliminary Wildfire Investigation Report	*	*	*	*
47	3.5	Release of Incident Information	*	*	*	*
48	3.6	Operational Debriefing	*	*	*	*
<b>Procedures for Incident Types</b>						
50	4.1	Hazardous Materials	*	*	*	*
51	4.2	Motor Vehicle Accident	*	*	*	*
52	4.3	Planned/Prescribed Burning	*	*	*	*
54	4.4	Response to Wildfires at Rubbish Tips	*	*	*	*
55	4.5	Structural Fires	*	*	*	*
56	4.6	Other Major Incidents (Natural Disasters)	*	*	*	*



# Standard Operating Procedures

Page No.	SOP No.	Description	Brigade	Wardens	BFNT Staff	All
<b>Bushfire Management</b>						
57	5.1	BFNT Bushfire Information and Bushfire Warning Systems	*	*	*	*
61	5.2	Evacuation			*	
62	5.3	Suspicious Bushfires	*	*	*	*
<b>Fire Investigation</b>						
63	6.1	Fire Cause Investigation	*	*	*	*
<b>Mutual Aid</b>						
64	7.1	Dual Response with NTFRS		*	*	
<b>Operational responsibilities</b>						
65	8.1	On Call Operations Officer responsibilities			*	
<b>Forecast Extreme Fire Weather</b>						
67	9.1	Notification of Forecasted Severe - Catastrophic Fire Weather			*	
68	9.2	Declaration Of Fire Ban Period	*	*	*	*
69	9.3	Incident Weather Forecasts			*	
<b>Communications</b>						
70	10.1	Radio Channel Use	*	*	*	*
73	10.2	Remote Travel - Satellite Communications			*	
74	10.3	Call Sign Allocation	*	*	*	*
<b>Air Operations</b>						
75	11.1	Aerial Firefighting Response	*		*	*
77	11.2	Safety on the Fireground during Aerial Operations	*	*	*	*
78	11.3	Aerial Firefighting from Darwin Airport and other controlled airspace			*	
80	11.4	Aircrew Fatigue Management			*	



## Standard Operating Procedures

Page No.	SOP No.	Description	Brigade	Wardens	BFNT Staff	All
<b>Media</b>						
81	12.1	Managing the Media			*	
<b>Welfare / WH&amp;S</b>						
82	13.1	Managing Fatigue – Work Hours	*	*	*	*
85	13.2	Trauma Counselling	*	*	*	*
86	13.3	Personal Injuries	*	*	*	*
87	13.4	Brigade Members - Workers Compensation	*		*	
<b>Operational Equipment Safety</b>						
88	14.1	Chainsaw Operation	*	*	*	*
89	14.2	Personal Protective Equipment	*	*	*	*
90	14.3	Hazard Flagging	*	*	*	*
<b>Appendix</b>						
91		Abbreviation List	*	*	*	*



# Bushfires NT General Orders

The following pages detail Bushfires NT General Orders 2019.

As Executive Director Bushfires NT, with reference to section 15 of the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016), I make the following General Orders and declare that they will be in force from 31 March 2019. These General Orders 2019 apply to all Bushfires NT Members (staff, volunteers and contractors) when taking part in Bushfires NT incidents, functions or other events. This version of the Bushfires NT General Orders supersedes all previous versions (including previous Chief Fire Control Officer's Standing Orders).

This booklet provides information, guidance and advice for Bushfires NT Members when undertaking their duties.

Authorised by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Collene', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right. Below the signature is a dotted line.

Collene Bremner  
Executive Director  
Bushfires NT



# Principles of Incident Management GO 1

**Aim**

To provide a consistent structure for the management of all incidents.

**Scope**

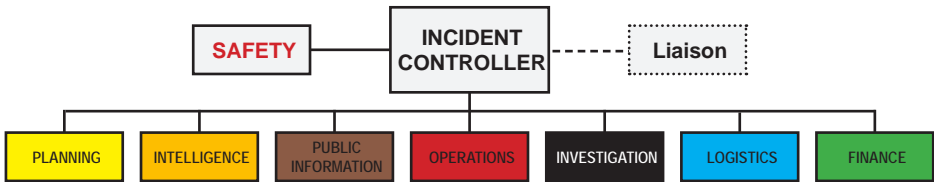
Applies to all BFNT Members.

**Procedure**

All incidents are to be managed in accordance with the principles of the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS). The Incident Controller shall have overall management of the incident and overall responsibility for the management of resources allocated to that incident. There shall only be one Incident Controller.

The Incident Management structure and process will be based on eight (8) core functions:

- Control;
- Planning;
- Operations;
- Logistics;
- Intelligence;
- Public Information;
- Investigation; and
- Finance.



The key responsibilities that must be undertaken for all incidents include:

- taking charge and exercising leadership;
- setting and achieving incident objectives;
- establishing procedures to identify and manage all risks;
- developing and approving the incident action plan;
- ensuring a safe working environment and safe systems of work;
- continually assessing the situation, identifying risks and sharing information with all involved;
- ensuring effective allocation and use of available resources; and
- keeping all relevant people, including those in affected organisations or communities, informed about the incident's status and potential.





The key concepts to be considered for all incidents are:

- flexibility;
- management by objectives;
- functional management;
- unity of command; and
- span of control.

It is essential that all Members involved in an incident are aware of the identity of the Incident Controller and other key personnel. Changes to personnel undertaking key roles during an incident must be made known to all Members involved in the incident.



## Situation Reports (SitReps)

GO 2

### **Aim**

To provide guidelines for the contents of Situation Reports (SitReps).

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members required to provide or log SitReps. SitReps are provided on a regular basis throughout an incident. The Incident Controller will request regular SitReps from Operations.

### **Procedure**

SitReps will include the following elements:

#### **Situation** - Where is it now?

- confirm location of incident;
- condition of the incident (fuel type, spotting activity, flame heights, changing fuel types);
- status of incident;
- approximate size;
- prognosis/prediction for outcome (Incident Objective, percentage of success); and
- contact details for further information.

#### **Impacts** - Where is it going? What are the consequences? What is it going to impact on?

- direction of travel; and
- exposures/assets at risk.

#### **Tactics** - What are you doing?

- current and planned; and
- 'Fall Back' strategy.

#### **Resources** - What is on scene and what is required?

- resources committed;
- additional resources required;
- access for additional appliances to approach the incident; and
- location of assembly/staging areas.

#### **External Agencies** - Other agencies involved; NTFRS, NT Police, St. John Ambulance, private units.

#### **Problems** - What problems exist or may arise?

#### **Safety** - How you are maintaining individual and team safety?



## Operational Briefings

**GO 3**

### **Aim**

To provide standard content and order for operational briefings and the transfer of appropriate information.

### **Scope**

Applies to all operational briefings at all levels.

### **Procedure**

Operational briefings will be given at the commencement of all shifts and all changeovers of Members.

Briefings should be given utilising the SMEACS (Situation, Mission, Execution, Action, Communications, Safety) format.

An effective briefing must be concise; it must be brief but should not omit any essential points.

### **SMEACS Briefing Format**

#### **Situation**

Precise overview of the current situation. Where is it now? Where is it going? What is happening? What resources are committed and available? What is it going to impact on? (i.e. provide a SitRep). If available, precise overview of the current situation using maps.

The factors that should be considered to provide a guide to the current situation include:

- incident status, location, size, perimeter, behaviour, direction and speed of travel, intensity and areas of concern;
- topography of general area, access, water points, terrain and density of vegetation;
- weather current, forecast and significant features;
- exposures/assets at risk;
- known damage to area burnt, losses, stock, fencing; and
- current resources; Members, appliances, plant and equipment, specialist equipment, aircraft, and external resources.

#### **Mission**

A concise single purpose statement of the overall Incident Objective, i.e. who, what, where, when, why. The statement must use the SMARTA principles (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound and Agreed).



## Execution

What strategies, tactics and tasks will be implemented?

Clear commander's intent, concept of operations and support arrangements.

## Administration and Logistics

Sufficient details to enable the provision of administration, logistics and welfare to be clearly identified, including:

- location of control points, assembly/staging areas;
- appliances and equipment available;
- food and drinking water preparation and delivery;
- re-supply of fuel, food, water, foam, etc.;
- arrangements for relocation of Members and resources;
- record keeping;
- shift changeovers - time, place and arrangements;
- specialist resources method of dispatch;
- equipment maintenance; and
- accommodation arrangements.

## Command and Communication

The command structure and communications procedure, including:

- Incident Management Team structure, Chain of Command;
- sectors, staging areas, air base, location of key Members;
- reporting requirements;
- radio channel allocation;
- call signs;
- telephone location, numbers and access;
- aircraft communications;
- Inter-Agency communications; and
- media and public information strategies.

## Safety

Safety and welfare for all Members must take priority at all times. The safety messages conveyed to Members must include:

- predicted weather changes;
- known and anticipated hazards and risks;
- anchor points/safe zones and escape routes;
- personal protective equipment requirements;
- location of first aid/medical facilities; and
- public safety issues, deaths, injuries.

## Questions

- ask for questions in an open forum;
- ask questions to ensure that key points are known and understood.



## Major Injury Reporting

**GO 4**

### Aim

To provide Members with procedures in the event of an Immediate Notifiable Injury or Notifiable Dangerous Occurrence involving BFNT Members.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

**Immediate Notifiable Injuries** are work-related injuries to BFNT Members during BFNT activities and operations and include:

- an injury that causes death;
- an injury that has acute symptoms associated with exposure to a substance at work, e.g. smoke inhalation or a chemical exposure that required treatment at a hospital or doctor's surgery; and
- an injury that requires treatment as an in-patient in a hospital immediately after the injury (disregarding time taken for emergency treatment or to transport the injured person to hospital).

**Notifiable Dangerous Occurrences** include:

- damage or malfunction of plant and equipment;
- unexpected/unintended total or partial collapse of buildings, structures or the floor, wall or ceiling of a workplace;
- unexpected/uncontrolled explosion, fire or hazardous substances, steam or escape of any gas;
- unexpected/unintentional ignition or explosion of explosives;
- electrical malfunction, explosion or short circuit;
- unintended event involving a flood of water, rock burst, rock fall or any collapse of ground;
- any other unintended incident or event arising from operations carried on at a workplace.

**Notifiable Dangerous Occurrences must be reported even if no person has been injured.**

**Radio transmissions must not be used for this notification where phone coverage is available. Where there is no phone coverage, request immediate attendance of Senior Fire Control Officer (SFCO) or nominee to a serious incident.**

**Notification must be immediately made via the Chain of Command.**

In the case of an Immediate Notifiable Injury and/or a Notifiable Dangerous Occurrence the following shall occur:



- the Incident Controller shall ensure the site is secured and that the necessary steps, as listed below are met;
- if the incident occurs outside business hours, the Incident Controller shall immediately notify the CFCO or the NT Duty Officer;
- the CFCO or NTDO shall notify NT Worksafe (1800 019 115 - 24 hours) as soon as practicable; and
- the Incident Controller (or nominee) shall complete the online incident report as a matter of urgency.

The SFCO (or nominee) shall offer involved personnel access to counselling and notify the CFCO that they have done so.

BFNT Members at the site of the injury must not, without the permission of NT Worksafe or NT Police:

- alter the site where injury has occurred; and/or
- reuse, repair or remove any equipment, substance, scaffolding, crane, hoist shoring or apparatus connected with the injury or occurrence.

Where possible without risk to personal safety, and with the permission of NT Worksafe, BFNT Members shall take necessary action to:

- rescue an injured person;
- protect the health and/or safety of any person may be in the vicinity of the site; and
- prevent undue damage to property.

An accident investigation will be co-ordinated by WH&S officers, and a report must be forwarded to BFNT WH&S Committee and the DENR WH&S Officer.



## Reporting the Death of a BFNT Member

**GO 5**

### Aim

To provide Members with notification procedures in the event of the death during BFNT operations or activities.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

In the case of death at an incident, the following shall occur:

- Radio transmissions must not be used for this notification where phone coverage is available.
- The Incident Controller shall immediately notify the CFCO; and ensure the site is secured and the necessary procedures are followed. The CFCO (or nominee) shall immediately notify the following as soon as practicable (by telephone only):
  - NT Police
  - NT Worksafe (1800 019 115 - 24 hours).
- The CFCO shall notify the BFNT Executive Director, DENR Chief Executive and DENR HR Director as soon as practicable.
- BFNT Members shall, where personal safety is not at risk, take necessary steps pending NT Police permission to:
  - protect the health and/or safety of any person who may be in the vicinity of the site; and
  - prevent undue damage to property.
- The Incident Controller, or any other BFNT Member at the site of the incident, must not, without the permission of NT Police:
  - alter the site where the incident has occurred; and
  - reuse, repair or remove any plant or substance connected with the occurrence of the death.
- BFNT shall offer involved Members and, on request, arrange counselling and notify the CFCO that they have done so.
- **A Notice of Death shall only be conveyed to the family by NT Police.**



## Radio Distress Call Mayday

GO 6

### Aim

Radio procedures to be used when human life is in immediate danger.

### Scope

Applies to any BFNT personnel attending fires and incidents.

### Procedure

**Note: The message “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday” must be transmitted immediately by a BFNT Member who believes they or others are in a situation of grave and/or life threatening danger.**

Initiate a Mayday message by immediately transmitting the following:

- MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY;
- your call sign;
- your location;
- a summary of the situation you are in; and
- what assistance you require.

On hearing a Mayday call, all other radio traffic shall cease and resources within the immediate vicinity shall render assistance at the direction of the Incident Controller. All other crews shall continue to combat the fire or incident.

The Incident Management Team (IMT) will:

- acknowledge and record the message and direct all other resources to ‘stand by’. Where the IMT does not acknowledge, nearby appliances will relay the Mayday message to the IMT.
- advise the Incident Controller through the Chain of Command of the message and follow all instructions of the Incident Controller to support those in distress including the dispatch of emergency services to the control/operations point.

The Incident Controller will:

- take responsibility for managing the Mayday call;
- plan the response to the Mayday call by:
  - confirming the details provided by the caller;
  - committing resources to the rescue;
  - establishing a rescue sector (as determined by the Incident Controller);
- allocating appropriate radio channels to the rescue, and to the rest of the fire or incident, issuing a general message, or, if appropriate, a red flag warning, to the fire/incident ground;





- secure the area and appoint appropriate resources; and
- once the rescue is complete, conclude the Mayday call. This shall be communicated on all incident channels.

### **Notifications**

The Incident Controller shall ensure the CFCO, or NTDO is notified of all radio distress calls.



## Driving BFNT Vehicles

GO 7

### **Aim**

To outline the conditions for BFNT Members driving BFNT vehicles.

### **Scope**

Applies to any person who drives BFNT vehicles/appliances.

### **Procedure**

The safety of the crew, passengers and the community is the paramount consideration at all times. BFNT Members must always drive safely, with due care, attention and consideration for their crew/passengers, other road users and pedestrians.

Use of visual and audible warning devices is a privilege afforded to emergency vehicles and does not mean that BFNT Members can force right of way.

### **Definition**

“Emergency vehicle”, for the purpose of the Australian Road Rules, means any vehicle driven by a person who is:

- an emergency worker (e.g. a FCO or an Authorised Bushfire Volunteer (ABV), and
- driving the vehicle in the course of his or her duties as an emergency worker.

A BFNT vehicle is defined as any vehicle or appliance involved in fire management operations or activities.

### **Training**

Brigade Captains are responsible for ensuring that all drivers of vehicles are appropriately trained and licensed.

Brigade Captains are to sight the motor vehicle licence of all Members approved to drive vehicles. Brigade Members must inform the brigade Captain of any changes that occur to their licence.

Brigade Captains are to ensure that the performance of all licensed and approved drivers is regularly reviewed to maintain sound driving skills and the application to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) where appropriate; and that the Member is informed where their performance as a driver is deemed inappropriate or unsatisfactory.

### **Licensing**

Applicants must hold a current, valid driver’s licence of the class necessary to operate the type of BFNT vehicle or appliance being used.



Drivers must carry their licence when driving any vehicle.

Drivers with a probationary licence (“P plates”) of the appropriate class may drive a BFNT vehicle to or from an emergency incident under Priority 2 conditions, but may not undertake Priority 1 driving.

### **Australian Road Rules**

The Rules contain clauses and exemptions, which specifically apply to BFNT Members:

- Rule 306 defines officers, employees and Members of BFNT as emergency workers for the purposes of the Rules;
- Rule 268(5) exempts a person travelling in or on an emergency vehicle from having to keep all parts of their body inside the vehicle;
- Rule 300 states that the driver of a vehicle (except an emergency vehicle or police vehicle) must not use a hand-held mobile phone while the vehicle is moving, or is stationary but not parked, unless the driver is exempt from this rule under another law of the jurisdiction. Under this Rule ‘mobile phone’ does not include CB radio or any other two-way radio;
- Rule 306 provides an exemption from any of the Australian Road Rules for the driver of an emergency vehicle if in the circumstances the driver is taking reasonable care and it is reasonable that the rule should not apply and the vehicle is displaying a red and blue flashing light or sounding an alarm;
- Rules 307 and 308 provide similar exemptions from the Rules dealing with restrictions on emergency workers on foot and stopping and parking for emergency vehicles.

### **Driver’s Responsibilities**

#### **Seating and Seatbelts**

BFNT Members will not ride, stand or sit upon the rear trays of moving BFNT vehicles irrespective of whether the vehicle is on a public road or off road.

Drivers and all passengers travelling in a BFNT vehicle must wear seat belts at all times irrespective of whether the vehicle is on a public road or off road, except when involved in a fire management operation.

#### **Log Sheets and Log Books**

A vehicle log book shall be maintained for all BFNT vehicles.

#### **Alcohol**

The driver of a BFNT appliance must not exceed the legal Blood Alcohol Concentration limit whilst in control of that appliance. When driving a vehicle



under 4.5t GVM the limit is 0.05 BAC, for a vehicle over 4.5t GVM the limit is 0.00 BAC.

**Authority to operate under exemptions to the Australian Road Rules, as identified elsewhere in this General Order, is conditional on the driver not exceeding 0.00 BAC, i.e. no alcohol present in his or her blood.**

### **Accident Reporting Requirements**

The driver of a BFNT vehicle that is involved in an accident must:

- notify BFNT as soon as practicable, providing details of the events that occurred and damage sustained, using the format provided in the BFNT Accident Report form. The driver **MUST NOT MAKE ANY ADMISSION AS TO LIABILITY.**
- if possible, render assistance to any injured person and call 000.
- report details of the accident to the nearest Police Station; the police report number is to be included in the Accident Report Form.
- exchange name, address and licence details with the driver/s of any other vehicle/s involved in the accident.
- note carefully where the accident occurred and record details of street names and names and addresses of any witnesses.
- ensure that all accident forms and information is provided to BFNT as soon as practical after the accident.
- where an appliance is damaged during fire operations, ensure that the appliance is not to be removed from the fireground until inspected by the Incident Controller or delegate; an appliance can be moved only if it is in danger of sustaining further damage.

### **Pre-Operations Check procedure**

Before operating a BFNT vehicle or appliance, the driver must:

- conduct a visual inspection noting any significant faults or damage.
- check that vehicle has adequate oil, water, fuel, fluids, and that tyres are the correct pressure (including spare).
- ensure firefighting equipment is in good working order and vehicle is equipped to undertake operational activities.

### **Use of Mobile Telephones in BFNT Vehicles**

A mobile telephone can only be used by the driver of a vehicle if the vehicle is equipped with 'hands free' mobile telephone capacity.



## Emergency Response Driving

**GO 8**

### Aim

To provide procedures for responding vehicles/appliances to incidents and defines Priority One and Priority Two driving conditions.

### Scope

Applies to Members dispatching and driving BFNT vehicles.

### Procedure

#### Priority One Driving

Priority One driving conditions apply **only when responding to emergency incidents which require urgent response**. The requirement for an urgent response is determined by the Incident Controller or the NT Duty Officer (NTDO). An urgent response may be determined to be necessary when:

- an incident is not under control or is in an unknown condition;
- a life-threatening situation may reasonably be expected to exist; and/or
- the CFCO, NTDO or the Incident Controller determine that an urgent response is required given the available information.

Priority One driving requires compliance with Australian Road Rule 306 (b); the vehicle must be displaying a blue or red flashing light or sounding an alarm.

When undertaking Priority One driving, drivers must consider the capabilities of the vehicle being driven, environmental factors and their own limitations.

No BFNT Member performing Priority One driving is to deliberately breach any provision of the NT Traffic Act and Traffic Regulations unless that driver considers it safe to do so at the time. Drivers are required to comply with the following directions:

#### Traffic Signals and Stop Signs

The driver of a vehicle driven under Priority One shall:

- approach a red traffic signal or stop sign with both visual and audible warning devices operating;
- stop at the stop line with warning devices still operating;
- ensure that the intersection or junction is clear and that all other drivers are giving way;
- only proceed when it is safe to do so;
- if there is any doubt whatsoever, do not proceed;
- if it is safe to do so, proceed through the intersection at a maximum vehicle speed of 20 km/h.



The driver of a vehicle driven under Priority One shall not force traffic into a controlled intersection while a red traffic signal is displayed and there is no clear lane for the emergency vehicle to proceed through. In this circumstance the driver must:

- deactivate all visual and audible warning devices operating;
- reactivate all visual and audible warning devices after the traffic signal has cycled to green and traffic begins to flow; and
- proceed vehicle through the intersection at the permissible speed limit.

### **Railway Crossings**

Drivers shall not proceed over a railway crossing when:

- warning signals are operating; or
- when directed not to by an employee of a rail operating system organisation.

### **Safety and Speed Limits**

Drivers of BFNT vehicles being driven under Priority One conditions must take into account:

- the vehicle's specific characteristics (particularly stopping distance, weight, centre of gravity);
- road and traffic conditions;
- weather conditions and visibility;
- image portrayed to the public;
- a BFNT vehicle may exceed the permissible speed limit only if the driver considers it safe to do so;
- vehicles requiring a class HR or MR license (vehicles which are over 4,500kg GVM) must not be driven over the permissible speed limit; and
- when towing a trailer, a vehicle shall not exceed the permissible speed limit at any time.

### **School Crossings and Road Works**

A vehicle shall not exceed the posted speed limit at an operating school crossing, past an off-loading school bus, or when road works are in progress and warning signs or lights are displayed.

Drivers must be able to stop and give way to any pedestrians using the crossing.

**Safety of the community and of BFNT Members, including the driver and occupants of the vehicle, are the primary consideration at all times.**

### **Flashing Lights (Emergency Warning Lights)**

Flashing lights are safety equipment, which may be used to maximise the safety of BFNT Members and the public when they may be at risk. Flashing



lights shall only be utilised where safety of Members and/or the public is at risk and/or while attending emergency incidents.

The Incident Controller shall direct the used flashing lights on deployed vehicles:

- when attending an emergency incident Priority One;
- in any roadside situation where the Incident Controller deems there is a threat to the safety of Members or the public (including the location of appliance); and
- at any time that they may provide improved safety for BFNT Members or Members of the public;

**The use of red or blue flashing lights on private vehicles is not permitted;** the use of red or blue flashing lights on privately sourced brigade vehicles can be approved by the CFCO.

The driver of a BFNT vehicle utilising Priority One driving authorisation shall not exceed the posted speed limit by more than 20 km/hr.

### **Priority Two Driving**

For non-urgent travel, sirens and flashing lights are not to be used until present at a fire management operation.

Non-urgent travel includes travel to:

- provide secondary, non-urgent assistance to controlled incidents;
- attend a planned burns;
- change stations or quarters;
- attend a meal break location;
- attend training activities; or
- for repairs, maintenance and administrative reasons.

Australian Road Rule 78 states: *A driver must not move into the path of an approaching police or emergency vehicle that is displaying a flashing blue or red light (whether or not it is displaying other lights) or sounding an alarm.*

Australian Road Rule 79 states:

- a. *A driver must give way to a Police or Emergency Vehicle that is displaying a flashing blue or red light (whether or not it is displaying other lights) or sounding an alarm.*
- b. *This rule applies to the driver despite any other rule that would otherwise require the driver of a Police or Emergency Vehicle to give way to the driver.*

**The driver of any BFNT vehicle is not exempt from driving without due care and must not drive a vehicle negligently or recklessly or in a manner dangerous to the public.**



## Safety on Roads

GO 9

### Aim

To ensure the safety of BFNT Members conducting activities and/or attending incidents on roads.

### Scope

All BFNT Members are responsible for using safe working practices and maintaining a safe workplace. Members operating on the fireground are responsible for working in a manner to ensure their own safety and the safety of others. This General Order applies to Members working in and around appliances on or near roadways.

### Procedure

During a Bushfires NT incident:

- a safe working environment must be maintained when appliances, equipment and Members are deployed on or near a roadway;
- appliances must be clearly visible to oncoming traffic with emergency lighting activated and parked in a defensive ‘fend off’ position to provide protection for Members;
- Members operating on or near roads must wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) with night/day visibility (i.e. reflective striping);
- where there is any doubt as to the safety of Members operating on or near a roadway, the Incident Controller shall consider the use of Section 47 of the *Bushfires Management Act*, which allows the closing of any road or public place to traffic and the movement of persons;
- where a smoke hazard exists, available smoke hazard warning signs must be in place;
- where deemed necessary by the Incident Controller, Police or a traffic management contractor attendance should be requested to assist with traffic management.





## Alcohol and Drugs

**GO 10**

### **Aim**

To provide BFNT Members with guidelines regarding alcohol and other drugs whilst engaged in BFNT activities.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

The blood alcohol level of a BFNT Member who responds to an incident or participates in any BFNT fire management operation must not exceed the maximum Blood Alcohol Concentration level allowed while driving a vehicle in the Northern Territory.

A BFNT Member shall not respond to an incident or participate in any BFNT fire management function if affected by drugs that may impair their judgement or capacity to act safely and perform their duties.

A BFNT Member is responsible to ensure that they are not affected by drugs and/or alcohol which may endanger their own or others' safety.

A BFNT Members must not consume alcohol and/or any non-prescription drug whilst undertaking any task or function authorised by the *Bushfires Management Act 2016*.

A BFNT Member must not consume alcohol and/or any non-prescription drug whilst engaged in formal training activities.

Turnout crews are to be selected from individuals not affected by alcohol or drug(s). Individuals shall declare themselves unavailable to respond if they are affected. Crew rosters and similar contingencies should be established for brigades where this may restrict crew availability.

A BFNT Member must not operate a BFNT vehicle or appliance if their Blood Alcohol Concentration exceeds the maximum Blood Alcohol Concentration level allowed while driving a vehicle in the Northern Territory (see GO 7).

### **For BFNT Members involved in aerial firefighting activities including ground support.**

Aircrew and ground support Members operating from a certified aerodrome or a registered aerodrome are required to comply with Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) Regulation 99 – Drug and Alcohol Management Plans. This regulation stipulates that Members who perform activities airside at a certified or registered aerodrome are subject to random alcohol and other drug (AOD) testing. For alcohol, the permitted level is a concentration of less than 0.02



grams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood (or a concentration of less than 0.02 grams of alcohol in 210 litres of breath).

Members undertaking the role of Air Attack Supervisor, Air Observer or Incendiary Bombardier may be deemed by the CASA to be performing the role of crew of an aircrew and as such must comply with CASA Regulation 99 – Drug and Alcohol Management Plans. As per above the permitted level is a concentration of less than 0.02 grams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood.



## Appliance and Crew Protection at Bushfires GO 11

### Aim

To provide BFNT Members with guidelines regarding appliance and crew protection at bushfires.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

Safety is the major consideration whilst firefighting and only authorised and correctly attired Members are permitted to crew BFNT appliances.

If Members become trapped by fire, it will be necessary to position the appliance to provide shelter from intense radiant heat. There is a range of factors that may impact on survival. The following guidelines are designed to minimise risk in this situation:

- initiate a mayday radio distress call and inform the Incident Controller that a burn over is about to take place;
- find a clearing away from dense bush and high fuel loads;
- if possible minimise exposure to radiant heat by parking behind natural barriers;
- park vehicle off the roadway to avoid collisions in poor visibility;
- park away from other vehicles;
- get down below the window level and shelter under woollen blankets (where available) or deploy in cabin heat shields (where fitted);
- maintain communications and Sit Reps throughout the emergency;
- the Incident Controller may task aerial assistance if available;
- close all doors, windows and vents and leave the appliance engine on fast idle (if possible); and
- turn on headlights and air conditioning (using recirculation air flow if available).

### Safety Warning

**Do not hose down crew members before fire front has passed as this may cause steam burns. After the fire has passed and it is safe to exit the appliance everything will be very hot. Take caution when exiting the appliance.**

**Leave the appliance only if the atmosphere within becomes toxic, or the fire has passed and is safe to do so. Toxic fumes are a result of the heating/burning of materials used in the appliance construction.**



## Red Flag Warnings (Safety Messages)

GO 12

### **Aim**

To ensure all BFNT Members are notified of hazards that may affect their safety during operations.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

Red Flag Warnings are given when information is received that may adversely affect the safety of Members during operations.

Red Flag Warnings may include:

- changes to actual or forecast conditions which may adversely affect safety;
- unexpected events or conditions e.g. explosion, hazardous substances; or
- emergency withdrawal.

When BFNT Members believe a Red Flag Warning is necessary:

- notification must be via the Chain of Command immediately;
- at all levels, Red Flag Warnings will be acknowledged on receipt and this acknowledgment will be passed up the Chain of Command;
- Red Flag Warnings must be brief and precise and must convey the critical information;
- Red Flag Warning must be passed to every individual at the incident, including those from other agencies and non-agency participants;
- all Red Flag Warnings will be preceded by the words “Red Flag Warning”;
- when conveyed by radio, Red Flag Warning transmissions will take priority over all traffic other than “Mayday” transmissions;
- SMS messaging is not acceptable as a primary method of conveying safety messages. SMS messaging should only be used as a backup or when Members believe information is confidential.

BFNT Members must take all necessary steps (without putting themselves at risk) to

- protect the health and/or safety of any person that may be in the vicinity of the site; and/or
- prevent undue damage to property



## Avoiding fire entrapment – LACES

**GO 13**

**L**ookouts-**A**wareness-**C**ommunications-**E**scape routes-**S**afety zones

### **Aim**

To increase firefighter safety during wildfire operations by providing a simple way for BFNT Members to remember the key elements to survival and to avoid entrapment situations.

### **Scope**

To provide BFNT Members with a simplified memory aide for fire survival.

### **Procedure**

#### **LOOKOUTS - Establish Lookouts & Brief/Task all Members to be Alert**

Members operating on a fire ground must continually evaluate their situation, and ensure that any change that threatens safety is immediately communicated to all crews. Members must:

- keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts;
- know what your fire is doing at all times. Observe personally; use scouts;
- base all action on current and expected fire behaviour of the fire;
- post a Lookout when there is possible danger; and
- Stay alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.

#### **AWARENESS - Establish and Maintain Situational Awareness**

Members must maintain situational awareness, paying particular attention to changes in conditions, fire behaviour, crew Members and other firefighters. Members must:

- keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts;
- know what your fire is doing at all times. Observe personally; use scouts;
- identify escape routes and safety zones, make them known;
- post a Lookout when there is possible danger;
- maintain communications with your team, your supervisor, adjoining teams.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS - Establish and Maintain Clear Lines of Communication**

It is essential that a communications plan is established, understood by all, and maintained throughout the incident. Team leaders must:

- maintain communications within the team, with supervisors, and with adjoining teams;
- give clear instructions and ensure they are understood;
- maintain command of the team at all times.



**ESCAPE ROUTES - Identify Escape Routes & Make Them Known**

Ensure all team members are aware of the escape routes.

**SAFETY ZONES - Identify Safety Zones & Make Them Known**

Ensure all team members are aware of the safety zones and the escape routes to be used to move to safety. Members must:

- identify escape routes and safety zones, make them known.
- stay alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.
- maintain communications with your team, your supervisor, adjoining teams.



## NT Duty Officer Responsibilities

**GO 14**

### **Aim**

To ensure arrangements are in place to receive, triage and respond to emergency incidents.

### **Scope**

Applies to any BFNT staff Member who performs the role of NT Duty Officer.

### **Responsibilities**

The rostered NT Duty Officer (NTDO) is responsible for all readiness and initial response activities within the Northern Territory, except when an Incident Management Team has been established for a particular area. NTDO rostering arrangements will be determined by the CFCO. The NTDO is the primary contact for all fire and related matters, both for BFNT Members and for the Joint Emergency Services Communications Centre (JESCC).

The NTDO will:

- provide a contact point for all incident related enquiries for BFNT response areas, including enquires from other fire and emergency response agencies across the Northern Territory;
- monitor on a daily basis, and modify as necessary in collaboration with the CFCO, the level of bushfire readiness within the Northern Territory;
- upon notification from the CFCO, ensure the dissemination of declared Fire Ban period notification to relevant stakeholders;
- upon notification of an incident, initiate relevant response;
- record details of the incident and regularly update incident details within the Bushfire Emergency Management System (BEMS);
- ensure an Incident Controller is appointed, or appoint one where needed, or act as the initial Incident Controller as required;
- where necessary, delegate tasks and responsibilities of the NTDO to the rostered OCOO;
- where no other Incident Controller has been appointed, determine the need to issue Public Information Messaging; for incidents where there is no IMT established it will be the responsibility of the NTDO to prepare and disseminate public information messaging including the possible use of social media; for all other times this function will be delegated to the Public Information Officer;
- as an incident escalates, consider the need to establish an IMT and transfer control to an appointed Incident Controller within an IMT;
- ensure that the CFCO is notified of escalating risks relating to incidents;



- during declared Fire Ban Periods the NTDO will perform the role of Incident Controller until an IMT is established;
- report to the JESCC all fire related incidents that have been reported to BFNT either directly or through a volunteer bushfire brigade, and inform the JESCC of the current incident status; and
- during a rostered period of duty, regularly review the online NT Fire Incident Map; ensure that incident status displayed is accurate; when necessary make changes by advising the JESCC or updating BEMS with changed incident status.





## Fire Warden Operational Responsibilities GO 15

### **Aim**

To inform Fire Wardens of their operational responsibilities.

### **Scope**

Applies to a current Fire Warden appointed under the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016).

### **Procedure**

A Fire Warden can appointed under the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016) by the Executive Director BFNT. Fire Warden powers are defined in sections 46 & 47 of the Act.

Within a brigade area, the VBB Captain and/or other nominated brigade members may be appointed as Fire Wardens.

A Fire Warden may be appointed to the role of Incident Controller in the event of a wildfire.

### **Principal Responsibilities**

Without limiting the powers of a Fire Warden to control fires under Section 47 of the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016), a Fire Warden must use BFNT systems and comply with BFNT Standard Operating Procedures when assuming the responsibilities of Incident Controller where delegated, or when issuing a permit to burn.

A Fire Warden must notify holders of permits issued by that warden when a Fire Ban Period is declared across the permit area.

A Fire Warden may not issue a permit to burn to themselves, to their own brigade or for any land that they own or manage.



## Brigade Captain Operational Responsibilities GO 16

### **Aim**

To inform VBB Captains of their operational responsibilities.

### **Scope**

Applies to all VBB Captains

### **Procedure**

The brigade Captain is the elected by members of a volunteer brigade; the Captain's responsibilities within the brigade are largely dictated by the brigade constitution.

The position of Captain, of itself, does not provide powers or authority under the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016). These powers and authorities are only provided through appointment as a Fire Warden or as an Authorised Bushfire Volunteer.

### **Principal Responsibilities**

Notify brigade members when a Fire Ban Period is declared within their brigade response area and ascertain the availability of brigade resources, reporting the availability to BFNT regional office.

Ensure brigade operational readiness. During periods of forecast Very High to Catastrophic fire weather ensure all brigade appliances have operators available and notify BFNT regional office of any local issues.

Will use BFNT systems, SOPs, BFNTGOs and policies when fulfilling their duties.

During a fire within the brigade area a Captain who is appointed as a Fire Warden, or the Captain's delegate, will :

- coordinate the management of brigade resources and assume the role of Incident Controller for that fire until notified otherwise by a FCO or the NTDO;
- assist in allocating the facilities and resources of the brigade under the direction of Incident Controller as required;
- establish and maintain effective communications and liaison with BFNT, brigade members and land managers to ensure prompt response and recovery;
- ensure that brigade members have established correct organisational structures and have assigned available resources to deal with fire operations;
- maintain liaison with and advise brigade members and the Incident Controller regarding strategy, tactics and predicted resource requirements;



- ensure Fire Incident Reports are completed;
- where possible, preserve evidence for fire investigations.
- provide accurate fire information (Sitrep) to the FCO or Incident Controller as required;
- ensure that all vehicles, plant and equipment used by the brigade during fire operations are operated and maintained in accordance with BFNT policy and standards; and
- ensure that all tasks undertaken by brigade members during fires are carried out in the safest possible manner.



## Authorised Bushfire Volunteer Operational Responsibilities

GO 17

### Aim

To inform Authorised Bushfire Volunteers (ABVs) of their operational responsibilities.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT ABVs.

### Procedure

An Authorised Bushfire Volunteer can be appointed under the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016) by the Executive Director BFNT.

Only a recognised member of a volunteer bushfire brigade who has been appointed as an ABV (or Fire Warden) may attend a fireground for the purpose of participating in a bushfire mitigation or suppression operation.

The *Bushfires Management Act* (2016) authorises an ABV to exercise a power in responding to a bushfire incident only when directed to do so by a Fire Warden, a FCO (including a SFCO or the CFCO), or Executive Director Bushfires NT.

### Principal Responsibilities

The functions of an ABV are:

- to assist and participate during a bushfire response as directed through the Chain of Command;
- to undertake tasks during mitigation activity as authorised by the landowner, brigade Captain or Fire Warden;
- to establish and maintain effective communications with the brigade Captain, FCO, brigade members and landowners in order to ensure prompt response and recovery at all fires;
- to provide accurate fire information to the brigade Captain, Fire Warden, FCO or Incident Controller as required;
- to operate vehicles, plant and equipment used by the brigade during mitigation and suppression operations in accordance with BFNT policy and standards; and
- to ensuring a safe working environment and safe systems of work are in place before undertaking operational activities.



# Bushfires NT Standard Operating Procedures

The following pages detail Bushfires NT Standard Operating Procedures 2019.

As the Chief Fire Control Officer and delegate, with reference to sections 15(1) and 15(2(a)) of the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016), I authorise the following Standard Operating Procedures and declare that they will be in place from the 31 March 2019. These Standard Operating Procedures apply to all Bushfires NT Members (staff, volunteers and contractors) when taking part in Bushfires NT incidents or events. This version of the Standard Operating Procedures supersedes all previous versions.

This booklet provides useful information, guidance and advice for BFNT Members when undertaking their duties.

Authorised by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Turner', with a horizontal dotted line underneath it.

Andrew Turner

Chief Fire Control Officer

Bushfires NT



## Chain of Command

## SOP 1.1

### Aim

The Chain of Command ensures that all duties, responsibilities and delegations associated within the Chain of Command roles are clearly defined.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members. BFNT recognises and uses the 2017 Australian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS 2017) principles when managing incidents.

### Procedure

To ensure that a common standard is effective across all BFNT jurisdiction.

Chain of command in response to bushfire incidents

Section 89(1) of the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016) establishes the chain of command in responding to a bushfire incident. The chain of command descends from the Chief Fire Control Officer through Senior Fire Control Officers, Fire Control Officers, Fire Wardens and Authorised Bushfire Volunteers. The Act also provides that:

- a person responding to, or in attendance at, a bushfire is not required to take command at the bushfire merely because the person is of higher rank than another person participating in the chain of command (s.89(2)).
- a Fire Control Officer or Fire Warden of lower rank than another person participating in the chain of command at a bushfire may only exercise a power in accordance with the directions of the other person (s.89(3)).
- An ABV only has power to take action in responding to a bushfire incident if directed to do that thing by a person who has that power (s.89(4)).
- An ABV may only exercise a power mentioned in s.89(4) in accordance with the directions given (s.89(5)).

### Incident Controller

The Incident Controller is normally the highest ranked officer, that being (1) Fire Control Officer (FCO) in attendance at the fire, (2) Highest ranked officer from a brigade, or (3) the land manager. In all situations it is desirable that the Incident Controller has powers under the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016).

Where an Officer of higher rank assumes control of an incident, he/she must notify the previous Incident Controller and all Members participating in the incident that this has occurred. The presence at an incident of a higher ranked officer will lead to a change of incident control only if the higher ranked officer chooses to assume control and advises all Members involved in the incident.



# Incident Classification

# SOP 1.2

### Aim

To describe the classification for incidents managed by BFNT.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

BFNT management of incidents is based on the AIIMS 2017 principles. Determining the classification of an incident is the responsibility of BFNT and the Incident Controller. BFNT incidents should be classified according to the following criteria.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Split Incident
Declaration of Level (legislative requirement)			Level 3 incident is declared	
Authorisation of Incident Controller			Level 3 incident controller is appointed	
Delegation	Incident Controller responsible for all functions	Some functions delegated or sectors created	Most functional sections activated or divisions created	Divisions exceed span of control limits
Incident Action Plan (IAP)	No written plan required	Unwritten or pre-prepared or written (outline)	Written (outline) or written (detailed)	More than 1 required
Complexity	Not complex - can be managed by local resources	Growing complexity	Most complex	Complexity requires further delegation of most functions
Consequence	Localised consequences only.	Consequences extend beyond incident area of operations	Actual or potential consequences, extend across communities	Extent of actual or potential consequences requires further delegation of most functions



	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Split Incident
Number of resources	Initial responders (ABVs and/or staff) and local resources	Additional neighbouring resources	Regional or NT resources	Span of control or logistical limited exceeded
Number of agencies	First response agencies (BFNT, NTFRS)	Routine multi agency	Agencies from across government	
Type of resources	Initial responders (ABVs and /or staff) and local resources (e.g. contracted plant)	Specialised resources (e.g. aircraft)	Multiple resource types	Resource types can or need to be separated
Type of response	First attack (suppression)	Escalated response (asset protection)	Campaign response	
Duration	One shift or less	Extended time or multiple shifts	Extended time or multiple days	
Boundaries	Within one area or locale (FPZ or ERA)	Within one area or locale (FPZ or ERA)	Across area boundaries (FPZ or ERA)	Across area boundaries (FPZ or ERA)
Size	Small	Medium / developing	Large	Large / multiple fronts
Potential impacts	Routine and expected	Moderate	High	
Values at risk - People	Potential for serious injuries	Potential for loss of life	Potential for multiple loss of life	
Values at risk - Economy	Disruptions at business level	Cases of business disruption	Significant disruption to a sector	
Values at risk - Infrastructure	Short term failures	Mid-term failures	Severe impacts to infrastructure	





	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Split Incident
Values at risk - Social	Reduced services	Ongoing reduced services	Reduced quality of life	
Values at risk - Administration	Regional media coverage	Territory media coverage	National media coverage	
Values at risk - Environment	Isolated cases of damage	Significant cases requiring recovery actions	Severe impairment of landscapes	

The classification of an incident as Level 1, 2, or 3, must be communicated effectively to all responders and support agencies.

**Splitting an incident**

Incidents that are extremely large, complex, or protracted, may be managed more effectively by splitting the management of that incident between two or more Incident Management Teams. An incident could be split geographically or functionally depending on the circumstances.

For example: a complex incident that involves multiple hazards or multiple impacts could be split between different control authorities.

An incident that is having environmental and human health impacts could be split to align control with the expertise required to manage those impacts.

Regardless of the trigger for splitting an incident, tactical decision making must be retained at the local level.



## Appointment of Incident Controller

SOP 1.3

### **Aim**

To describe the process of appointment of Incident Controller at BFNT incidents.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

#### **BFNT Incidents**

BFNT management of incidents is based on the AIIMS 2017 principles. BFNT management of incidents shall be led by an Incident Controller appointed by the CFCO or delegate. The initial Incident Controller shall be identified by the NTDO. The process of identification, appointment, and transfer of the Incident Controller shall be clearly recorded and announced when that decision is made.

The CFCO has the responsibility to transfer control of the incident to another person when factors such as escalation or decline of the scale of the incident, change in risk, or significant change in the potential impact of the incident.

#### **Other Incidents**

In situations where incidents are being managed outside of the area of jurisdiction of BFNT, or have the potential to significantly impact on those areas, such as within a gazetted NTFRS Emergency Response Area (ERA) or State/Territory boundary, the decision to transfer control of that incident shall be based on liaison between the CFCO and the officer delegated with relevant responsibilities for that area.

In general terms, if an incident was being managed in a BFNT Fire Management Zone, and it became obvious to the Incident Controller that the incident was likely to significantly impact an NTFRS ERA, the existing IMT would remain in control, until a transfer to another Incident Management Team, or appointment of an Incident Controller was affected.



# Incident Management Structure SOP 1.4

**Aim**

To describe the process of ‘standing up’ a BFNT Incident Management Team.

**Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

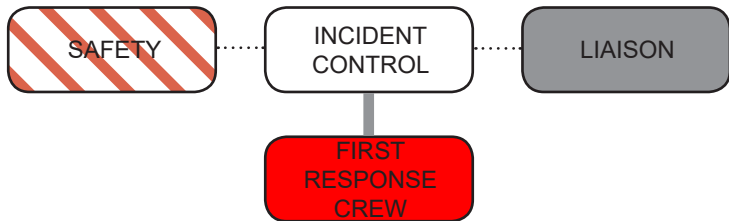
**Procedure**

To effectively manage an incident, the Incident Controller will establish a management structure designed to deliver the functions of control, planning, intelligence, public information, operations, investigation, logistics, and finance.

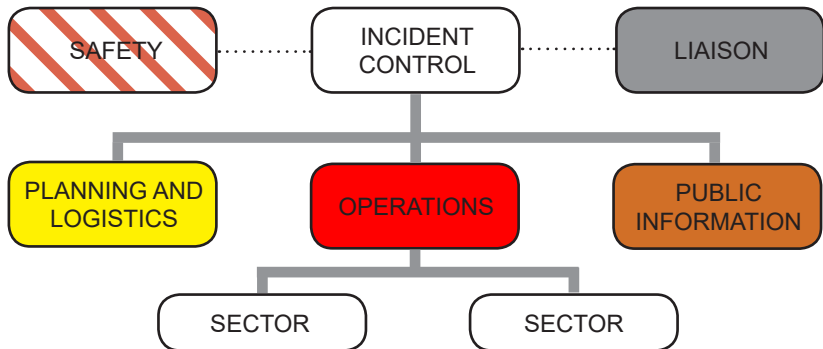
By delegating functions to others, the Incident Controller creates an Incident Management Team (IMT). The person delegating retains accountability, but is no longer responsible for undertaking the actual task.

In all circumstances, the incident should determine the size and nature of that structure, and the structure should be adapted to the circumstances being dealt with, and reflect the complexity and scale of the incident.

*An example of a typical Level 1 Incident Management Structure:*



*An example of a typical Level 2 Incident Management Structure:*





## Transfer of Control

## SOP 1.5

### Aim

To provide a process for the transfer of control at a fire or incident from one Incident Controller to another. This SOP also applies to the transfer of control from the fireground to an IMT.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members who are involved in the management of fires and incidents where BFNT is the control agency.

### Procedure

Control of an incident can be transferred from one Incident Controller to another where:

- the Incident Controller determines for any reason that another person should act as the Incident Controller; or
- a more senior or more experienced person assumes control, with the Incident Controller's agreement; or
- there is a directive from the NT Duty Officer, a Senior Fire Control Officer or the Chief Fire Control Officer; or
- the fire is more appropriately managed from a central location within an IMT.

Where control is transferred for any of the above reasons the following applies:

- the outgoing Incident Controller should agree to transfer control of the fire;
- the outgoing Incident Controller, in accordance with GO 3 Operational Briefings, will give the incoming Incident Controller a briefing using the SMEACS format;
- advice of the change is to be provided to all responding BFNT Members, the IMT and any other relevant personnel that control has been transferred;
- control shall only be transferred to a person who is competent and qualified for the role, and who holds the delegations required to perform the role.



## Arrival and Departure Notification

## SOP 1.6

### **Aim**

To effectively monitor safety and incident control during an incident, and to ensure that all BFNT Members attending an incident are accounted for.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members and contractors.

### **Procedure**

An arrival message is the information required to be passed up the chain of command, to initially evaluate an incident's potential and resource requirements.

The first responding Member at an incident will give an arrival message and a SITREP via radio as soon as practical, and await further direction.

Each Member requested to respond to the incident will give notification when enroute to the incident.

When attending an incident each Member will give notification of arrival at the incident via the nominated fireground radio channel.

After release from an incident by the Incident Controller, each Member will give notification of departure from the incident via the nominated fireground radio channel.



## Taskforce Deployment

## SOP 2.1

### Aim

To provide BFNT Members with guidelines regarding qualifications and experience required when volunteering for deployment on a Taskforce.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

When deployed in BFNT appliances, a minimum of two BFNT Members will crew each appliance.

Crews may be deployed into locations and situations where they may have had little experience. In these cases crews may be mixed to ensure Members experienced in this particular type of incident are in every crew. This means that crews may be separated and individual crew members' roles changed to suit operational requirements.

Members selected for deployment will be endorsed by a Taskforce leader and approved by the CFCO.

When preparing a taskforce, a Member's experience, qualifications, availability, health and the Taskforce leader's strategy for team composition will be considered.

Pre-requisite qualifications and service experience for BFNT Members are:

- BFNT staff member or Authorised Bushfire Volunteer;
- Provide First Aid qualification is desirable;
- Suppress Wildfire is desirable for attending bushfire deployments;
- Demonstrated firefighting experience (where required);
- Formal AIIMS training.

Approved Movement Requisitions are required for all Members prior to deployment.

### Health and Physical fitness

- pre-existing illness or injury that may affect performance must be declared and may require a medical clearance; crews are responsible for their own health and have a responsibility to prevent injury and illness at the incident;
- crews may be required to work at strenuous levels for long periods of time. Members should be fit and prepared to operate in difficult terrain in potentially inhospitable conditions (hot, dry, dusty);
- specific fitness criteria may be stipulated for particular roles and for specific assignments;



- all injuries should be reported up the Chain of Command immediately;
- all Members are responsible for their own health and safety and should report all experiences of heat stress, fatigue, injury or illness immediately; this includes any requests for welfare or other support;
- while “off shift” crews remain under the care and direction of the Taskforce Leader; “off shift” crews are expected to be resting and remain together unless authorised by Taskforce leader; and
- as a representative of BFNT, a professional attitude and behaviour will be demonstrated at all times; the relevant Code of Conduct applies at all times.



## Responding NT Police

## SOP 2.2

### **Aim**

To provide a consistent process for initiating contact and liaising with NT Police in a timely manner. It is vital that NT Police are contacted appropriately and as early as possible so that they can commence gathering information and/or evidence to assist. This may include suspicious person(s), vehicle(s), or item(s) in or around the scene shortly after the fire has started.

### **Scope**

Applies to BFNT Incident Controllers where NT Police attendance is requested.

### **Procedure**

When BFNT or VBB receive a call for a reported vehicle accident, structure fire, HAZMAT incident or other emergency, NT Police must be contacted through the JESCC. This SOP relates to vehicle accidents, miscellaneous fire types (including structure fires, rubbish dumps, vehicle fires, brush, fence fires), explosions, HAZMAT incidents, significant loss of any property (including structures) and significant bushfires or rural fires where SOP 5.2. (Evacuation) applies.

### **BFNT Members**

- in the case of a non-bushfire incident, BFNT Members will respond by making contact with the JESCC through the NT Duty Officer or nominee; all known details must be passed on to NT Police and if further information becomes available after the initial call, NT Police must be provided with the additional information;
- should a situation develop during a bushfire incident where NT Police attendance is deemed necessary, the Incident Controller or NTDO should make arrangements for NT Police attendance through the JESCC;
- if NT Police are called to an incident it shall be reported to the SFCO or CFCO as soon as is practical; and
- NT Police attendance at an incident shall be recorded on the BEMS.





## Initial Incident Reporting

## SOP 3.1

### **Aim**

To provide guidelines for the contents and use of Initial Incident Reports.

### **Scope**

Applies to any BFNT Members required to provide or record Initial Incident Reports (IIRs).

### **Procedure**

Initial Incident Reports will be completed by NTDO or FCOs at the time of notifying staff and brigades of incidents. BFNT staff will populate these reports in a timely manner.

Initial Incident Reports must include

- callers name and contact details;
- type of incident;
- location of incident (street/road name and town/suburb, or map name and grid reference – this information is critical and care should be taken to ensure accuracy);
- time and date of call taken;
- delegation recorded;
- responding Members name;
- time of notification; and
- notification times to other units, brigades or agencies.

Initial Incident Reports will be recorded in the BFNT Incident Management Log Book and Bushfire Emergency Management System (BEMS). Initial Incident Reports may also be recorded in an official notebook.



## Incident Status Types

## SOP 3.2

### Aim

To describe the incident status types used to describe incidents managed by BFNT.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

BFNT management of incidents is based on the AIIMS 2017 principles. Determining the status of an incident is the responsibility of BFNT and the Incident Controller. There are 4 categories which will be used to describe the status of an incident.

BFNT incidents should be classified according to the following criteria.

Incident Status	Description
Going	A fire which is spreading on one or more fronts. Effective containment strategies are not in place for the entire perimeter
Being Controlled	Effective strategies are in operation or planned for the entire perimeter.
Under Control	The fire is at a stage where firefighting resources are only required for patrol purposes and major re-ignition is unlikely.
Planned Burn Underway	Planned burns are carried out as part of a program to reduce bushfire risk to communities.



## Maintaining Incident Management Logs SOP 3.3

### **Aim**

To ensure BFNT complies with the legislative requirement to produce and retain appropriate incident information records.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

Incident management records may form part of a coronial or other statutory investigation and must therefore be accurate and legible.

All BFNT Members responding to an incident will record in their incident management log book details of critical decisions and directions made to ABVs.

Entries shall be maintained in BFNT incident management logs and/or official notebooks for all operational or health and safety incidents.

Communication logs shall be maintained at BFNT offices.

Incident logs can also capture a record of decision support information and decisions during an incident.

At the completion of shift, scanned copies of the incident logs are to be attached to the fire incident on BEMS.

All completed logbooks, will be returned to the BFNT regional office for filing. This includes those logbooks not completed but no longer required.

All records remain the property of the Northern Territory Government and will be stored as per the Northern Territory Government Records Management standards.



## Preliminary Wildfire Investigation Report SOP 3.4

### **Aim**

To provide information to BFNT Members undertaking a Preliminary Wildfire Investigation.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

The Incident Controller may request that a preliminary wildfire investigation be undertaken to determine whether further investigation is necessary.

The requirement for a Preliminary Wildfire Investigation Report will be determined by the Incident Controller or CFCO. The format for the preliminary investigation shall be on the BFNT Preliminary Wildfire Investigation Report form.

A Member undertaking preliminary investigation must have powers to do so as described in section 48 of the *Bushfires Management Act (2016)*. A FCO, a SFCO or the CFCO are authorised to investigate the cause of a bushfire. A Fire Warden is authorised to investigate the cause of a bushfire only when so directed by a person who has that power.

A copy of the Preliminary Wildfire Investigation Report should be sent to the BFNT Manager of Compliance and Enforcement.



## Release of Incident Information

## SOP 3.5

### **Aim**

To provide guidelines for the types of information that may be released and the process for its release.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

Information, of any type, is not to be released without the approval of the Executive Director BFNT (ED) or delegate.

The only exception to the above is where the information is subpoenaed or where a written request is made for it, quoting the legislation that requires the disclosure.

With the approval of the ED or delegate, limited incident information may be disclosed to third parties where a BFNT Member deems that the person has a valid reason for the information to be released. This information may include:

- date of incident;
- time of incident;
- location of incident;
- type of activity at incident.

BFNT Member must keep a record of incident information released to third parties including

- date released;
- to whom information was released;
- what information was released; and
- who authorised the release of the information.

A Fire Incident Report may only be released where it is requested in writing and approved by the ED.

Requests for information other than information contained in a Fire Incident report, (e.g. hand-written notes in logbooks or investigation reports) must be made in writing to the DENR's Information Officer as a Freedom of Information application.

A record of all incident information released will be retained in DENR's electronic records management system.



## Operational Debriefing

## SOP 3.6

### Aim

To provide standard content and order for operational debriefings and to ensure the transfer of appropriate information.

### Scope

Applies to all operational debriefing at brigade, regional and Territory levels.

### Procedure

#### Hot Debriefs

A “Hot Debrief” is a simple, short discussion at the end of an incident enabling those involved in the incident to provide feedback.

A Hot Debrief may be conducted by any Fire Control Officer (FCO), Fire Warden or ABV or person appointed to do so.

During a Hot Debrief, Members should consider if there is a need to arrange a more formal Operational Debrief.

A “Hot Debrief” should identify issues which need to be discussed, and may include:

- call out;
- initial response;
- appointment of the Incident Controller;
- operational response;
- achievement of the incident objective;
- communication;
- logistical support;
- liaison with other services;
- saves and losses;
- success and challenges;
- occupational health, safety and welfare considerations; and
- requirements for other debriefs.

#### Formal Operational Debrief

A Formal Operational Debrief may be undertaken when there is:

- a major commitment of Members and resources;
- an unusual or complicating circumstance;
- community impact/interest in the incident;
- a request from an external agency.

Attendance at a Formal Operational Debrief may include:



- brigades/BFNT staff/private individuals involved;
- other Emergency Services/Agencies; and/or
- community representatives or other relevant groups.

Minutes (including agreed actions) will be taken for Formal Operational Debrief and forwarded to the Chief Fire Control Officer (CFCO).

Recommended agenda items for use in Formal Operational Debriefs are:

- Introduction (Chair)  
Welcome, attendance list, apologies and objectives of the Debrief.
- History of the Incident (Incident Controller)  
Map indicating development of incident and final control lines, initial detection and reporting, dispatch of crew and other resource response, initial strategy, major events, major losses and saves, Incident Action Plan strategies, resources committed, and organisations involved.
- Review of Operations (Chair)  
Preparedness, receipt of call, dispatch, Initial attack, and response.
- Escalation  
Initial command structure and incident development.
- Incident Control  
Adequacy of final command structure, location of Incident Control Centre.
- Planning  
Adequacy of strategies, reliability of fireground reports, adequacy of weather information, co-ordinated arrangements, out of area support, shift changes and administrative support.
- Logistics  
Adequacy of communications, transport, equipment, catering and accommodation.
- Operations  
Adequacy of location and timeliness of sectorisation forward command point, staging area and aircraft effectiveness.
- Health & Safety  
Accidents/injuries, sanitary facilities and first aid/medical support.
- Community Safety  
Public warnings, public and media relations, community feedback.
- Conclusion  
Summary of key resolutions, processes for dealing with resolutions, expressions of appreciation for attendance at debrief and for the efforts at the incident.

To maximise outcomes from a Debrief, each topic should capture “Successes and Challenges”.



## Hazardous Materials

## SOP 4.1

### **Aim**

To provide procedures for Incident Controllers and other BFNT Members responding to Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) incidents following a request from an appropriate agency.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members. BFNT Members would only act in support of the control agency.

### **Procedure**

Ensure the safety of yourself and others.

### **Alert Phase**

On receiving a request for assistance to an incident, dispatch appropriate response and notify appropriate agencies.

### **Immediate Response Phase**

The first arriving appliance will, from a safe distance, endeavour to identify the substance(s) by:

- identifying the trade name, chemical name, or UN number, ask the occupant or carrier for manifest, documentation or other information;
- recording information from Hazmat information board;
- determining and decoding the HAZCHEM code; and
- transmitting all relevant information to the Incident Controller.

Supporting BFNT Members should:

- stay clear until Hazmat personnel establish the decontamination zone and institute decontamination procedures; and
- only take any action at the request of Hazmat personnel.

### **Remedial Response**

Support the appropriate responding authority:

- record near misses and work site injury events;
- immediately notify any possible exposures to the Incident Controller;
- record in Incident Management Log all Members who have been exposed to the substance and undergone decontamination procedures;
- ensure all attending Members are recorded on the BEMS; and
- transmit SitReps to the controlling BFNT office as the incident progresses or the situation changes.

### **Follow up**

Conduct an operational debrief to evaluate the response.





## Attending a Motor Vehicle Accident

## SOP 4.2

### Aim

To coordinate BFNT resources to effectively assist with motor vehicle accident responses.

### Scope

Applies to BFNT Members requested by NT Police to assist with a motor vehicle accident.

### Procedure

The role of BFNT Members who are at the scene of a motor vehicle accident is to support NT Police, NTFRS and St. John Ambulance. BFNT Members will cooperate with other agencies and remain mindful that the incident scene may be classified as a crime scene.

BFNT Members should ensure NTFRS, NT Police and Ambulance have been notified that a motor vehicle accident has occurred through 000 (JESCC). Members should also ensure the safety of themselves and others by taking action to secure and preserve the scene:

- park the appliance in a “fend off position” which will protect the incident area;
- establish and secure the incident zone;
- liaise with other emergency services and NT Police;
- establish a charged line, dry powder and foam extinguishers for fire cover (where available);
- restrict access to site until controlling authority arrives; and
- if fire escapes into neighbouring land, this will take priority, respond as for a bushfire.

Members should evaluate the situation, making an assessment of the incident including:

- number of casualties;
- type of rescue required; and
- provide appropriate SitReps to the Incident Controller or NTDO.

Members should ensure the accident site is made safe.



## Planned / Prescribed Burning

## SOP 4.3

### **Aim**

To ensure that BFNT Members involved with planned burns are aware of what is required of them prior, throughout and post planned burns.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

#### **On Private Land**

Volunteer Bushfire Brigades undertaking Planned Burn activities on private land shall:

- use BEMS to upload associated details regarding planned burn details, risk assessment and debrief;
- obtain a completed “Agreement for Controlled Burn Off - Volunteer Bushfire Brigade” form signed by the owner/occupier in possession of the land and authorised by the brigade;
- obtain a Permit to Burn from a FCO or from a Fire Warden who is not from the brigade;
- appoint a suitably experienced BFNT Member to manage the activity; and
- comply with all requirements of the Permit to Burn.

Volunteer Bushfire Brigades assisting a landholder to undertake Fuel Hazard Reduction activities on private land shall:

- use BEMS to upload planned burn details, risk assessment and any operational debrief notes;
- obtain a completed “Agreement for Controlled Burn Off - Volunteer Bushfire Brigade” form signed by the owner/occupier in possession of the land and authorised by the brigade;
- ensure that the landholder has obtained a valid Permit to Burn from a FCO or from a Fire Warden; and
- ensure that the landholder has complied with all requirements of the Permit to Burn.

#### **Northern Territory Government Land**

Volunteer Bushfire Brigades undertaking Planned Burn activities on Northern Territory Government land shall comply with the following requirements:

- use BEMS to upload planned burn details, risk assessment and debrief
- ensure that written permission for the activity has been obtained (Bushfires NT responsibility);



- obtain a Permit to Burn from a FCO;
- appoint a suitably experienced BFNT Member to manage the activity;
- comply with all requirements of the Permit to Burn.

### **Pre-Operations**

Brigades undertaking hazard reduction burning operations shall:

- use BEMS to upload planned burn location and plan prior to the proposed date of burning;
- establish a plan of action and conduct a pre-operations brief including identifying the person in charge;
- obtain current and forecast weather conditions for the expected duration of the operation;
- undertake an assessment of the resources required to ensure that the prescribed burn can be undertaken safely. This assessment will be documented in writing;
- ensure sufficient resources are available, including standby resources, to conduct the prescribed burn consistent with the assessment as with above; and
- complete a ‘Planned Burn Risk Assessment’ using BEMS.

A BFNT Member managing a planned burn shall keep a log of the following:

- weather conditions;
- Members and resources in attendance;
- start and finish (time and place) of operations;
- other relevant events during operations; and
- any issues with equipment/planning etc.

These details must also be recorded on the Bushfire Emergency Management System (BEMS)

### **Operations**

BFNT Member managing the activity should advise standby resources of the commencement of operations.

The burn must be conducted in accordance with the terms of an authorised ‘Permit to Burn’.

### **Post Operations**

A BFNT Member managing a planned burn will advise standby resources at the completion of operations. The Member should then ensure that mop-up and patrol of the burnt area is conducted, followed by post-operations debrief.

At completion of the post-operations debrief details of the debrief should be recorded in the BEMS debrief record, including details of personnel and equipment used and any issues reported.



## Response to Rubbish Tip Fires

## SOP 4.4

### **Aim**

To provide BFNT Members with guidelines for responding to fires at rubbish tips.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

While BFNT are not the Hazard Management Authority or Controlling Agency for rubbish tip fires in the Northern Territory, BFNT Members may still be requested to assist in response to a rubbish tip fire or be exposed to a rubbish tip fire as a result of a wildfire. Response to rubbish tip fires presents particular dangers, as BFNT Members are not trained or equipped to deal with hazardous fumes or exploding items. Rubbish tip fires may place the BFNT firefighter at considerable risk of injury or death.

### **Procedure**

Where the fire is within a rubbish site boundary, but not within any waste stored within the dump (which includes garden waste), Members' response should be as for a bushfire with emphasis on ensuring the Member's safety and the safety of others.

Where the fire is in, or near, the waste dump and waste materials, including garden waste:

- report the incident to the appropriate Local Government Council or landowner;
- report the incident to BFNT or the NTDO, who will advise NTFRS via the JESCC and request their attendance at the incident;
- observe the fire from a safe distance;
- stay upwind of smoke;
- restrict access to site until controlling authority arrives; and
- if fire escapes into neighbouring land, respond as for a bushfire.



## Structure Fires

## SOP 4.5

### Aim

To provide BFNT Members with guidelines for responding to and reporting of structural fires.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

While BFNT are not the Hazard Management Authority or Controlling Agency for structure fires in the Northern Territory, BFNT Members may still be requested to assist in response to a structure fire, or may be exposed to a structure fire as a result of a wildfire. Response to structure fires presents particular dangers, as BFNT Members are not trained or equipped for direct interior attack of fires within structures. Entry into a structure involved in fire for the purpose of rescue or aggressive interior attack may place the BFNT firefighter at considerable risk of injury or death.

### Procedure

Ensure NTFRS, NT Police and Ambulance have been notified.

Any request for BFNT attendance regarding a structure fire is made from the JESCC.

Members' first priority is to ensure the safety of themselves and others.

**BFNT Members must not enter a structure whilst it is burning.** Structure firefighting operations by BFNT Members are limited to preventing the fire from spreading to surrounding areas. If the fire escapes into neighbouring land, respond as for a bushfire.

Where a structure is burning as a direct result of a wildfire the following is to occur:

- the incident must be reported to the Incident Controller or NTDO;
- the Incident Controller or NTDO must advise and request attendance of NTFRS and NT Police via the JESCC;
- the Incident Controller or NTDO must notify the CFCO, the CFCO must notify BFNT ED and DENR CEO
- BFNT Members present must stay upwind of smoke; and
- where practicable, access should be restricted and the site secured until the control agency arrives or until advised otherwise by the CFCO/NTDO.



## Other Major Incidents

## SOP 4.6

### **Aim**

To provide procedures for Incident Controllers and other BFNT Members when responding to major incidents at the request of other agencies.

### **Scope**

Applies to BFNT Members.

While BFNT are not the Hazard Management Authority or control agency for non-bushfire incidents in the Northern Territory, BFNT Members may be requested to respond or assist in response to major incidents. Response to major incidents presents particular dangers, as BFNT Members are not trained or equipped for response to such incidents.

Any BFNT participation in response to major incidents should be limited to the reasonable and safe use of existing skills and resources, and only following a formal request from the Hazard Management Authority or control agency.

### **Procedure**

All requests for assistance received by BFNT Members, other than those received from the controlling authority, should be referred to 000 (JESCC).

Requests for BFNT assistance received from the JESCC will be authorised by the NTDO or the CFCO.

BFNT will operate in a collaborative manner with other agencies, to ensure timely and appropriate response and management of resources to meet community needs. In these circumstances, each agency retains responsibility for their own communication plans, products, activities and stakeholder liaison.

It may be appropriate for assistance arrangements to be activated during the preparation phase, the response and/or the recovery phases of an incident.

Factors that will influence that decision include:

- size, severity and nature of the incident;
- threat or perceived threat to public safety;
- contribution of multiple agencies or jurisdictions; and
- impact on critical infrastructure and industry.



## Public Information and Warnings

## SOP 5.1

### Aim





To provide guidance on issuing public safety information in relation to bushfires or planned burns that may pose a threat to public safety.

### Scope

This procedure applies to all BFNT Incident Controllers and Incident Management Teams (IMTs). The BFNT Bushfire Information and Bushfire Warning System has been established to ensure the provision of timely and accurate information and warnings to the public. Timely and accurate information enables the public to make informed decisions in response to bushfires that may threaten their safety. The key objective is to provide information and warnings to the public as quickly and effectively as possible via multiple communication channels.

### Procedure

The provision of timely and accurate information and warnings is fundamental to ensure community and firefighter safety. The table below describes four types of messaging that will be used to inform the public of the status of fire incidents and planned burns. Each type of messaging reflects the threat and impact on public safety.

<p>Bushfires Information Advice</p> 	<p>A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.</p> <p>An Emergency Alert would not be used at this level. Can also be used as a notification that activity in the area has subsided and is no longer a danger.</p>
<p>Watch and Act</p> 	<p>There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.</p>
<p>Emergency Warning</p> 	<p>An Emergency Warning is the highest level of Bush Fire Alert. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.</p>
<p>Planned Burn Advice</p> 	<p>A planned burn is currently underway. Firefighters are managing the burn but flames and smoke may be visible.</p>



## **Criteria for issuing public information**

The intent is that public information will be issued on a regular basis for bushfires that have a localised threat to property or public safety and meet all of the following criteria:

- a bushfire is threatening or has the potential to pose a threat to public safety in the immediate area of the fire; or
- the immediate area of the fire includes homes, businesses, infrastructure or heavy traffic; or
- a bushfire is producing an undesirable effect (e.g. smoke) in an area that may cause concern to the public; or
- the NTDO, a SFCO, or the CFCO determine that it is necessary to advise the public of a specific incident; or
- BFNT Members have direct involvement at an incident; or
- availability of mobile phone and/or public radio broadcasts make it possible to provide information to people who may be affected by the incident.

## **Issuing a Bushfire Information Advice (BIA)**

The intent is that a BIA will be issued on a regular basis for bushfires that have a localised threat to property or public safety and meet any of the following criteria:

- a bushfire is threatening or has the potential to pose a threat to public safety in the immediate area of the fire; or
- a bushfire is producing an undesirable effect (e.g. smoke) in an area that may cause concern to the public; or
- the NTDO, a SFCO, or the CFCO determine that it is necessary to advise the public of a specific event.

## **Issuing a Watch and Act message**

A Watch and Act message will be issued when the Incident Controller identifies the need for members of the public to initiate their personal fire action plan.

## **Issuing an Emergency Warning**

An Emergency Warning is the highest level of bushfire warning to the public, and will generally be issued to a wider area of possible impact.

An Emergency Warning will be issued when:

- all of the following conditions are met:
  - A bushfire is “going” under very high to extreme weather conditions; and
  - The risk of loss of life or threat to properties is almost certain or has occurred; and
  - BFNT is primarily undertaking defensive strategies to protect lives and property.





or

- in response to a special circumstance, the BFNT ED or CFCO may determine that conditions warrant a specific warning to be issued to ensure community safety; an example of such a circumstance is the forecast of extreme or catastrophic fire weather conditions

### **Issuing a Planned Burn advice message**

Planned Burn advice messages should be issued on a regular basis for planned burns that have a localised impact on property or public safety and meet any of the following criteria:

- a planned burn has the potential to pose a threat to public safety in the immediate area of the fire; or
- a planned burn is producing an undesirable effect (e.g. smoke) in an area that may cause concern to the public; or
- the NTDO, a SFCO, or the CFCO wish to advise the public of a specific event.

### **Authorisation and distribution**

#### **Bushfire Information Advice**

A BIA can be authorised and distributed by the Incident Controller, NTDO or SFCO (where applicable).

While there is no expectation that broadcast media outlets will immediately break into their programming to broadcast BIAs, they should be broadcast verbatim as soon as is practical and then at regular intervals thereafter until the message is either updated or it expires.

#### **Watch and Act message**

A Watch and Act message can be authorised by the Incident Controller, the NTDO or a SFCO in consultation with the CFCO.

A Watch and Act message is designed to be easily understood and to communicate the most important information in the shortest time.

The Watch and Act message template is available in BEMS and, when completed, may be distributed via email and social media.

ABC Radio will broadcast the wording of a Watch and Act message exactly as provided by BFNT.

BFNT will advise broadcast media outlets when warnings are to be either continued beyond the designated broadcast time, or ceased.

Where a warning is to be cancelled, or it expires, a reduced threat message will be issued by BFNT as a cancellation of the warning message.



### **Emergency Warning**

On days of catastrophic fire weather (GFDI >150) or at other times determined by the BFNT ED or CFCO (or delegate), an Emergency Warning may be issued.

### **Emergency Alert / SMS Message**

The BFNT ED or CFCO may also determine that a telephone alert message should be disseminated to support the issue of an Emergency Warning message. In this circumstance, the CFCO will contact the JESCC Duty Superintendent and follow the approved BFNT Protocol for activating an Emergency Alert message.

### **Emergency Warning Public Radio Message (SEWS)**

Emergency Warning messages will be broadcast verbatim by the ABC (and other participating media outlets) at 15 minute intervals until the message expires or is superseded with another message related to the specific fire.

### **Planned Burn Advice Messages**

A Planned Burn Advice Message can be authorised and distributed by the Incident Controller, the NTDO or a SFCO.



## Evacuation

## SOP 5.2

### **Aim**

To advise BFNT Members of the Evacuation procedures.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

Evacuation is a statutory responsibility of the NT Police Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES). However, it is expected that the Police will seek advice from the Incident Controller of any fire incident before evacuating an area.

The Incident Controller will provide advice to the Controlling Agency regarding the appropriateness of evacuation upon request.

BFNT will only evacuate people on behalf of NT Police when instructed by NT Police to do so.



## Reporting Suspicious Bushfires

## SOP 5.3

### Aim

To outline the reporting mechanism for bushfire incidents that appear to have occurred in suspicious circumstances, and to ensure protection of the area of origin to allow effective investigation of fire cause.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

To enable NT Police, NTFRS and BFNT Members to determine if a bushfire has been deliberately lit, as much information as possible needs to be obtained. Information is obtained through observations, reports from witnesses and preservation of evidence.

For any bushfire incident, Members should make observations and record details while responding to the incident.

Where it appears that a bushfire may have been deliberately lit, Members should:

- where possible, take measures to protect the area of origin by undertaking the following actions:
  - identify the possible area of origin. (It may be sufficient to identify block/property from which the fire came and apply flagging);
  - in order not to destroy possible evidence, conduct minimal fire suppression activities within the suspected area of origin;
  - do not allow vehicles to drive over the area;
  - do not allow entry into the area by any person until an authorised officer is informed;
  - do not allow any person to touch or remove any item within the area or any other suspicious item found in the vicinity of the fire scene.
  - where an item is touched or removed, details of the item and the person should be recorded; and
  - preserve tracks and unusual items at or near the fire scene.
- record information from witnesses (including identity of witnesses) regarding who and what they saw or heard which may be connected to the cause of the fire; this information should then be passed on to the relevant investigating authorities;
- record observations by writing the time, date and place; do not rely on memory;
- use date and time stamped photography if available; and
- ensure that the recorded information is subsequently transcribed into the Incident Management Log or official notebook.



## Fire Cause Investigation

## SOP 6.1

### **Aim**

To ensure that fires requiring investigation to determine cause are completed in an appropriate manner.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

#### **Incident Controller**

The BFNT Incident Controller for any incident may undertake preliminary enquiries and request an investigation be undertaken to attempt to determine the cause of the fire. The CFCO and/or the Manager of Compliance and Enforcement will determine whether a Bushfire Investigation may be required.

The Incident Controller shall notify the CFCO or the Manager of Compliance and Enforcement in the following circumstances:

- where the circumstances of a fire are suspicious; or
- where responded BFNT crews are unable to determine the cause; or
- where a repeated pattern of wildfires has occurred; or
- where significant loss or damage to property has occurred, or
- at the request of NT Police; or
- where there has been a fatality or serious injury which could result in death - in these circumstances BFNT assistance will be at the direction of NT Police/Worksafe NT.

#### **Fire Scene Preservation**

The Incident Controller may issue instructions to ensure a fire scene is preserved to determine accurate origin/cause.



## Dual Response with NTFRS

## SOP 7.1

### Aim

To outline procedures for cooperation between BFNT and NTFRS members in operations to ensure timely and appropriate response of firefighting resources to meet Northern Territory community needs.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

In a BFNT area of operations, the NTFRS can be requested to support BFNT responses; in these circumstances NTFRS resources will work under the direction of BFNT according to the requirements of the *Bushfires Management Act* (2016). In an NTFRS area of operations, BFNT can be requested to support a NTFRS response; in these circumstances BFNT resources will work under the direction of NTFRS according to the requirements of the *Fire and Emergency Act*.

Any Incident Controller (BFNT or NTFRS) can request assistance from the other Service via the JESCC. For BFNT, all requests for assistance need to be authorised by the NTDO or CFCO (or delegate).

Where BFNT resources have been deployed to assist NTFRS, a BFNT operational staff member should be deployed to the incident and appointed as a BFNT Liaison Officer.

If the NTFRS has requested the use of BFNT contracted fixed winged or rotary winged aircraft within an ERA, a BFNT staff member will be deployed as a Liaison Officer to the Incident Controller or operations point.

At incidents where a BFNT operational staff member is not attached for liaison, the local SFCO is responsible for welfare of BFNT resources.



## On Call Operations Officer Responsibilities SOP 8.1

### **Aim**

To define standard processes, procedures and responsibilities of BFNT staff that are rostered on as the On Call Operations Officer (OCOO), as well as outlining the OCOO duties when responding to after hours emergency incidents.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT staff, rostered to be the OCOO for a Fire Management Zone.

Rostering arrangements for the OCOO for each Fire Management Zone will be determined by the CFCO (or delegate).

### **On Call Operations Officer Definition**

The OCOO is a BFNT employee rostered to be available to respond to an incident at any time outside normal working hours when authorised by the NT Duty Officer (NTDO). The OCOO will provide on-ground command and coordination function in support of responding brigades and landowners in order to safely contain an incident.

### **Procedure**

It is the rostered OCOO's responsibility to be available and ready to respond outside of normal working hours. This includes responding to wildfires and other incidents at the direction of the NTDO.

The OCOO may be required to undertake the task of contacting and deploying volunteer bushfire brigades and ABVs, contract machinery, aircraft and other BFNT staff to attend incidents, always ensuring that adequate prior approval has been sought from NTDO or other authorised financial delegates. The NTDO may delegate to the OCOO any other task or responsibility of the NTDO when required.

If the OCOO is tasked with monitoring the response of an incident, or has responded on ground to provide command and coordination at an incident, the OCOO must provide timely SITREPs and notify the NTDO when the incident has been contained.

If ABVs call directly to the rostered OCOO either by phone or BFNT radio for assistance and attendance at an incident, the OCOO must seek prior approval from the NTDO before deploying themselves or other BFNT staff members or resources.

The OCOO must maintain an incident management log and detail critical decisions made and other important information relating to an incident or task.



At completion of duty the OCOO must contact the NTDO and notify the NTDO that the OCOO has completed the allocated task and has ceased duty.

If the OCOO is for some reason unable to perform their rostered duties, they must inform the NTDO immediately to arrange a replacement.

**Important Advice**

**The OCOO must not deploy machinery or aircraft without prior approval.**

**and**

**The OCOO must not commence duty or deploy other staff without prior approval.**





## Notification of Forecast Severe, Extreme or Catastrophic Fire Weather SOP 9.1

### **Aim**

To ensure effective advice to stakeholders of forecast Severe to Catastrophic Fire Weather.

### **Scope**

Outlines the notification of forecast Severe, Extreme or Catastrophic Fire Weather from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) through to regional BFNT offices and stakeholders.

### **Procedure**

The CFCO (or delegate) shall notify all BFNT staff that a Fire Ban Period is/ will be declared for one or more BOM fire weather forecast area/s or within a particular Fire Protection Zone or Fire Management Zone.

SFCO (or delegate) shall:

- notify brigade Captains when a Fire Ban Period is declared in their brigade response area, and ascertain the availability of resources from the brigade;
- where fire weather conditions are forecast to change significantly, notify affected brigades of that forecast.; and
- ensure Fire Ban Period indicator signage is updated.

BFNT staff shall:

- notify all Fire Wardens in the affected zone.
- notify contractors (aerial support, earth moving) of the impending Fire Ban Period and inform them of required level of response.

A fire weather forecast and any Fire Ban declaration will be broadcast via BFNT radio network in the relevant Fire Management Zone.

The rostered NTDO (or Incident Controller where an IMT has been activated) shall ensure declaration is disseminated via appropriate media.

When a Fire Ban Period is declared, the CFCO (or delegate) will notify the Chief Fire Officer, Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service, all BFNT staff, the DENR CEO, the DENR Communications and Media unit, JESCC and the DCM Director of Security and Emergency Recovery.

Where extreme to catastrophic fire weather is been forecast, the DENR CEO (or delegate) shall notify the Territory Controller and members of the Territory Emergency Management Council (TEMC).



## Declaration of Fire Ban Period

SOP 9.2

### **Aim**

To ensure all BFNT Members are aware of considerations leading to the declaration of a Fire Ban Period, to enhance BFNT Members' preparedness, and to ensure public notice of declared Fire Ban Periods.

### **Scope**

Outlines the decision making and dissemination processes associated with declaring a Fire Ban Period in the Northern Territory.

### **Procedure**

The CFCO (or delegate), upon notification of forecast fire weather from the BOM, shall:

- consider any advice from the Severe Weather Section of the BOM concerning the issuing of a fire weather warning;
- consider levels of BFNT preparedness and availability of resources to respond;
- consider the likely impact of any forecast weather;
- advise the BOM of any decision to declare a Fire Ban Period;
- notify all BFNT staff, the DENR CEO, the DENR Communications and Media unit, JESCC, the DCM Director of Security and Emergency Recovery, and NTFRS of any Fire Ban Period decision; and
- ensure that BFNT staff have enacted stand by procedures.



## Incident Weather Forecasts

## SOP 9.3

### Aim

To define the standard process for BFNT staff to use to obtain Incident Weather Forecasts from the BOM.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT staff or IMT members.

### Procedure

Incident Weather Forecasts are provided on request to BFNT Members to assist with management of planned burns or wildfires. An Incident Weather Forecast may be requested at any time by the NTDO, the Incident Controller or the SFCO by using the online Incident Forecast Request System (IFRS) via the BOM registered users website <http://reg.bom.gov.au/reguser/?ref=ftf>

Further assistance can be requested by calling the Fire Weather Desk at the Northern Territory BOM Forecasting Centre on (08) 8920 3815.

When requesting an Incident Weather Forecast, it is beneficial to the Fire Weather forecaster that the following information is also provided:

- incident name;
- forecast location (latitude/longitude);
- elevation (Above Sea Level if known);
- current weather conditions at location (if known);
- required validity and commencement time; and
- BFNT Member contact name and number.

Where an incident weather forecast is been requested for a planned burn, these requests should be made 24 hours in advanced where possible.

Incident Weather Forecasts will be emailed to all Bushfires NT offices and will also appear on the NT Fire Agency registered user web page once provided.



## Radio Channel Use

## SOP 10.1

### Aim

To provide definitions for channel types and the allocation of channel numbers for effective coordination and management of incidents and other BFNT activities.

### Scope

Applies to all users of BFNT radios.

### Procedure

#### VHF

To be used for primary fireground communications as specified by the Incident Controller.

#### UHF

To be used where VHF is not available or as determined by the Incident Controller.

### Cell Call

Some BFNT VHF radios are programmed with a unique cell call number. This number allows BFNT staff to contact individual vehicles when required at major incidents for safety and logistics reasons and to identify/locate available appliances.

### BFNT VHF radio channel list and coverage by Fire Management Zone

VERNON ARAFURA FIRE MANAGEMENT ZONE		
Channel	Located	Coverage
1, 9	SIMPLEX	Local
2	Middle Arm	Berry Springs, Livingstone, Elizabeth Valley, Darwin River, Labasheeda Park, Lambells Lagoon, Acacia Hills, Manton, Cox Peninsular VBB
3	Mt Carr	BART, Darwin River, Manton VBB
4	Mt Bundy	Acacia Hills, Beatrice Hill, Lambells Lagoon, Point Stuart VBB
5	Mt Alaric & Melaleuca Stn.	Douglas Daly, Dundee, Milne, Point Stuart VBB
6	Fountain Head	Daly River, Douglas Daly VBB, Dorisvale Stn.
7	Dorisvale, Dundee and Window of the Wetlands	Acacia Hills, Lambells Lagoon, Beatrice Hill, Elizabeth Valley, Dundee, Milne, Douglas Daly VBB and Dorisvale Stn.



<b>VERNON ARAFURA FIRE MANAGEMENT ZONE</b>		
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Located</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
8	Manton & Daly River	Manton, Darwin River, Livingstone, Labasheeda Park, Acacia Hills, Daly River VBB
12	Manton	Air Ops - Hughes
13	Mt Carr	Air Ops - Batchelor
14	Mt Bundy	Air Ops - Mt Bundy
15	Howard Springs	Air Ops - Howard Springs

<b>SAVANNA FIRE MANAGEMENT ZONE</b>		
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Located</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
1	SIMPLEX	Local
2	Manbulloo Station	South Katherine FPZ
3	Mataranka Station	Mataranka area
4	Beasley's Pillar	North Katherine FPZ and Edith Farms VBB
5	Mount Peckham	East Katherine FPZ and Nitmuluk NP
5	Gilnockie Station	Gilnockie Station and surrounds
6	Gorrie	Mataranka, Larrimah and surrounds
7	Tarlee Station	Tarlee Station and surrounds
8	Dry River Station	Manbulloo, Gilnockie and Dry River Stations
15	Scott Creek Station	Scott Creek & Aroona Stations and surrounds

<b>BARKLY FIRE MANAGEMENT ZONE</b>		
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Located</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
1	SIMPLEX	Local
2	Tennant Creek	Tennant Creek FPZ



<b>ALICE SPRINGS FIRE MANAGEMENT ZONE</b>		
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Located</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
1	SIMPLEX	Local
2	Mt Undoolya	Alice Springs FPZ, Undoolya & Deepwell stations, West MacDonell NP
4	Mt Grevillea	Orange Creek, Owen springs, Delny Stations
4	Mt Brassey	Ambalindum, Mt Riddock, Mt Swan & Huckita Stns
5	Mt Hay	Hamilton Downs & Amburla Stations
6	Mt Zeil	Derwent & Narwietooma Stations
7	Mt Pfitzner	Yambah & Aileron Stations
8	Mt Laughlan	The Gardens, Ambalindum, Mt Riddock Station
62	Mt Undoolya	Air Ops – Alice Springs
63	Mt Grevillea	Air Ops – South
64	Mt Brassey	Air Ops – North East
65	Mt Hay	Air Ops – North West
66	Mt Zeil	Air Ops – Ormiston
67	Mt Pfitzner	Air Ops – Plenty Hwy
68	Mt Laughlan	Air Ops – Arltunga



## Remote Travel - Satellite Communications SOP 10.2

### **Aim**

To provide guidelines for use of BFNT equipment that utilises Satellites.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members using BFNT satellite equipment undertaking remote travel in accordance with BFNT remote travel policy.

### **Procedure**

#### **Satellite Phones**

Satellite Phones will be used by BFNT Members in remote areas for general work/incident related phone calls and communication.

All BFNT Members using satellite equipment are expected to read the manual and be familiar with the equipment prior to travelling.

As a minimum these resources must be tested regularly for both incoming and outgoing calls.

All Members will comply with a check-in protocol (0800hrs, 1200hrs and 1600hrs) when outside mobile phone or VHF range. This requires Members to contact the relevant Fire Management Zone office, SFCO or NTDO (where necessary) by satellite phone to notify them of their whereabouts and actions.

#### **Satellite Personal Tracker (SPOT)**

Satellite Personal Trackers (SPOT) have three core functions to be utilised by BFNT Staff:

- safety tracking during remote work, including checking in function;
- locating personnel in a non-emergency situation, including requesting assistance; and
- locating personnel in an emergency or life threatening situation, including requesting help.

The SPOT sends and saves the GPS location and allows tracking of progress using Web Based program TracerTrak, incorporating a map function.

All users must have undertaken instruction on use of the device from an appropriate person before using the device.

SPOT Gen3 provides location-based messaging and emergency notification technology that allows communication from remote locations. It allows for custom tracking interval options, motion-activated tracking and several off-the-grid communication methods including rescue, check-in and track progress.



## Call Sign Allocation

## SOP 10.3

### **Aim**

To provide each Member involved in BFNT operations with a call sign that is standard across all incidents.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

BFNT utilises a call sign system which allocates an individual call sign to each staff member, ABV or contractor. That call sign is to be used by the Member when attending any BFNT incident or planned burn. Call signs are allocated to individuals rather than appliances.

Each ABV will be allocated a call sign by BFNT in consultation with the brigade Captain.

To ensure a consistency across the Northern Territory, the following standard should be implemented across brigades:

Brigade Captain call signs are the brigade name followed by the number 7.

Brigade Deputy Captain call signs are the brigade name followed by the number 8.

e.g. Tennant Creek 7 or Lambells Lagoon 8

Contract plant and equipment services will generally use their company name as the call sign.

Contracted Aircraft will be allocated call signs as approved by the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC).

BFNT will maintain a register of all allocated call signs within the Bushfire Emergency Management System (BEMS).





## Aerial Firefighting Response

## SOP 11.1

### Aim

To provide Incident Controllers and ground crews information on the use of aircraft for aerial firefighting.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

#### Primary Response Zone

The Primary Response Zone is an area including areas of approximately 25km radius from the Batchelor and Hughes airfields in the Darwin rural area.

A Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) is declared for a designated airstrip within the Primary Response Zone. A NOTAM is automatically activated for each active fireground within the Northern Territory.

NOTAM requires all aircraft that are not coordinated through BFNT, or engaged in aerial fire suppression operations, to remain clear of observed fires for a distance of five (5) nautical miles and an altitude of 3000ft above ground level.

Fixed Wing Aircraft used for aerial firefighting may be dispatched for a bushfire incident within the Primary Response Zone.

Rotary Winged Aircraft may be dispatched for any bushfire incident at the discretion of the CFCO (or delegate).

#### Dispatch of aircraft within Primary Response Zone

Within the Primary Response Zone, aircraft are retained on standby when a Fire Ban Period has been declared. During these conditions aircraft may be dispatched to the fireground by the Incident Controller.

#### Dispatch of aircraft outside Primary Response Zone

Outside the Primary Response Zone, the Incident Controller may request the provision of aircraft to fires. All requests for aircraft shall be from the Incident Controller to the CFCO (or delegate).

A request for an aircraft does not guarantee that an aircraft will be provided. When considering the release of aerial firefighting aircraft outside of the primary response zone, the CFCO (or delegate) will consider the following:

- is the decision to use aircraft based on risk assessment?
- will aircraft be effective in achieving the mission?
- what is the risk of leaving the Primary Response Zone without aircraft?



- forecast weather conditions;
- resource and cost estimates for response (is use of aircraft the most efficient use of resources?)
- will firefighter safety be compromised without aerial support?
- the locality and likelihood for the fire to cause significant community or environmental damage or economic loss;
- is logistical support available?
- will the decision to use or not use aircraft be seen as reasonable?
- projected time for a mission against time available;
- flight time limits for pilots and aircraft;
- aircraft configuration; and
- other priorities as determined by the CFCO (or delegate).



## Safety on the Fireground during Aerial Operations

SOP 11.2

### Aim

To ensure ground crews operate appropriately and safely in the vicinity of aerial firefighting activities.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

#### **Safety on the fireground during Water Bombing Operations**

Crews should always be alert to the possibility of aircraft working in the area. Where an aircraft is mobile to an incident the pilot (or Air Attack Supervisor) will contact the Incident Controller or Operations Officer on the air ops channel.

Once the Incident Controller or Operations Officer becomes aware of the presence of aircraft they shall alert the crews and ask them to clear the identified drop zone.

Firefighting aircraft will give a call five (5) nautical miles out from the incident. Firefighting aircraft shall use warning sirens and emergency strobe lights as a visual and audible aid.

When crews are caught in the drop zone, the following actions should be undertaken:

- where possible, shelter in vehicles;
- move away from the fire line;
- watch out for falling branches and debris;
- place hand tools well clear of people;
- hold onto helmet or protect head with arms;
- watch footing; and
- identify escape paths.

If Members are exposed to foam or retardant, wash the affected areas with cold water. Clothing should be washed as soon as practicable. Seek medical attention if required and refer to MSDS for further information.

The designated VHF Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) for use by BFNT contracted aircraft is 128.3 MHz.

The VHF channels for use by BFNT Members in the Top End Primary Response Zone, ground to air, are channels 12, 13, 14, & 15.



## Aerial Firefighting from Darwin Airport SOP 11.3 and other controlled airspace

### **Aim**

To provide Members participating in aerial operations the correct procedures when operating from the Darwin Airport and other controlled airspace.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members and BFNT contractors managing and or supporting aircraft operating from the Darwin Airport or within other controlled airspace.

### **Procedure**

All Members including pilots and ground crew must have an ASIC Identification card to carry out operations from Darwin Airport.

### **Despatch of aircraft into Darwin Airport controlled airspace**

Aircraft are on standby for immediate deployment when a fire ban day has been declared. If a fire occurs during these conditions, and NTFRS formally request aerial support, BFNT may conduct operations from Darwin Airport dependant on incident location and Darwin Airport Operations.

### **Air Attack Supervisor and Pilots**

The BFNT Air Attack Supervisor is to contact Darwin Airbase Command Post on 8923 8888, Airport Operations Duty Manager on 0401 005 977 the Tower on 8924 2358, and Air Services Australia Darwin Airport Fire Control Centre on 8920 4810 to advise of imminent operation.

Inbound aircraft must contact Darwin Clearance delivery on approach on VHF 126.8, identifying with aircraft registration and NAFC Call Sign. They must advise area of operation and working height.

### **Ground Crew must:**

- muster at Gate India off Pedersen Rd, Marrara;
- contact Airport Duty Manager 0401 005 977 for escort to staging area civilian airside;
- report to Air Services Australia Darwin Airport Station Officer and provide SITREP;
- set up within designated areas and as close as possible to hydrants;
- any foam spillage must be reported to Airport Operations Duty Manager on 0401 005 977 and passed on to the Environment Manager;
- report any incidents or requests to the Incident Controller immediately for advice on what action is required.



At other airports, BFNT Air Attack Supervisor to contact relevant Airport control, pilots to call Air Traffic Clearance on approach.

Batchelor pilots use VHF 126.7 MHz.

Emkaytee (Noonamah) pilots use VHF 127.1 MHz.

Robertson Barracks pilots use VHF 126.6 MHz.

Tindal clearance to use VHF 128.1 MHz.

Air Traffic Control RAAF Base Tindal 1800 089 115.

Tennant Creek pilots to use VHF 126.7 MHz (Identification required).

Tennant Creek Incident Controller to phone (08) 8962 2894.

Alice Springs Tower pilots to use VHF 118.3 MHz (Identification required).

Alice Springs Incident Controller to phone (08) 8951 1211.



## Aircrew Fatigue Management

## SOP 11.4

### **Aim**

To ensure the safety, wellbeing and performance of BFNT aircrew are not adversely affected by fatigue.

### **Scope**

To provide BFNT Members with information on and procedures for fatigue management. BFNT aircrew include functional roles of air observer, air attack supervisor, air base manager, and air support crew. Contracted aircrew are subject to their company's Fatigue Management Policy.

### **Procedure**

Prior to commencing duty, aircrew must be free from fatigue, illness, injury, medication, alcohol or drugs which could prevent them from safely undertaking their duties. Duty includes flight time, standby and ground duty of any kind associated with aerial operations.

Aircrew shall not be rostered for duty periods of more than 14 hours.

Aircrew must have a minimum of 8 consecutive hours of rest (off duty) following any duty period which lasted 10 hours or less.

Aircrew shall have a continuous period of at least 36 hours in any 14 consecutive days free from any duties associated with aerial firefighting activities.

Prior to and during duty, aircrew must ensure adequate sustenance is taken for physical wellbeing.

Aircrew must not exceed a maximum of 44 hours of duty in any 3 consecutive days.

Aircrew must not exceed a maximum of 98 hours of duty in any 7 consecutive days.

Aircrew must report immediately to the Incident Controller if they believe they are suffering from fatigue or any other illness during the duty period.



## Managing the Media

## SOP 12.1

### Aim

To ensure BFNT Members follow correct procedures when there is media presence at an incident or where media have requested comment from BFNT of an incident.

### Scope

Sets out procedures for BFNT Members who interact with media at an incident.

### Procedure

It is possible that media personnel may be present at the scene of an incident. The following guidelines describe procedures for dealing with the media if they are present at an incident:

- all media personnel will be directed to the Incident Controller;
- BFNT Members, other than the Incident Controller or delegated officer, shall not make any comments, or provide any information to the media during a fire event.

The Incident Controller shall limit the information provided to the media to matters pertaining to fire control operations only and will:

- use correct terminology i.e. going, being controlled, under control, contained, safe;
- indicate the approximate size in hectares;
- define the type of fire i.e. bush, grass, car, building, etc.;
- provide the name of the attending brigade/s;
- give numbers of fire fighters, fire appliances and fire appliance types;
- outline of hazards and risks to buildings, traffic, people etc.;
- advice of notable saves i.e. people, exposures and stock; and
- include any public information or warnings i.e. hazards present, actions to be taken by members of the public, fire weather warnings etc.

If a BFNT Incident Controller has not been appointed, all enquiries from media should be forwarded to the CFCO or Executive Director (or delegate).

All media enquiries of a non-operational nature should be addressed to the DENR Media Manager, Corporate Services Division.

BFNT Members must advise the DENR Media Manager via email at [Media.DENR@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DENR@nt.gov.au) prior to, or as soon as practical following, media interaction. The CFCO or Executive Director should be copied in also.



## Managing Fatigue – Work Hours

## SOP 13.1

### **Aim**

To provide BFNT Members with guidelines for managing fatigue by prescribing work hours and shift lengths during firefighting operations.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

A BFNT staff member or Incident Management Team member responsible for arranging rosters or deployments must ensure that each Member is provided with adequate rest periods/sleep opportunities between shifts and after shifts. They must ensure that a Member is not working excessive hours with insufficient rest.

Individual Members have a responsibility to advise a supervisor and remove themselves from duty if they are excessively fatigued and do not feel that they are able to carry out their duties safely.

It is recognised that a fire is an emergency situation and sound management requires ongoing assessment to ensure the safety of all involved. In some situations, more frequent rest breaks and shorter shifts may be required. In other situations, longer shifts may be required where life and property is at immediate risk. All risks must be monitored and managed.

It is the responsibility of the Incident Controller, in consultation with the Operations Officer on the fireground, to monitor and manage risk factors on an ongoing basis.

When assessing the suitability of individuals to undertake firefighting work and when considering shift arrangements to manage fatigue, the following factors should be considered:

- heavy physical work (e.g. rake hoe work, carrying/moving equipment);
- activity requiring high levels of concentration;
- driving, especially at night or when dips in alertness are likely to occur (between midnight and 0600 and 1400-1700);
- operating hazardous equipment or plant/heavy machinery;
- working in rough terrain;
- working in extreme weather or atmospheric conditions (e.g. smoke, heat, high winds, humidity); and
- any other relevant factors, including personal factors that may impact on fatigue.





## Shifts

- the first shift, including normal work hours, may be up to 24 hours, inclusive of travel time;
- after the first shift, shifts should be no longer than 14 hours, inclusive of travel time;
- a 10 hour rest period between shifts should be provided;
- a 30 minute break after every 4 hours of work should be provided. Shorter, more frequent breaks may be more suitable in some situations; and
- longer rest periods during night shifts should be taken if possible.

## Deployments

This part is valid for Northern Territory deployments, interstate deployments will be at subject to host agency procedures.

- no more than 7 consecutive day shifts of firefighting may be completed (one cycle);
- no more than 4 consecutive night shifts of firefighting may be completed (one cycle);
- a 10 hour rest period between shifts should be provided;
- a 24 hour rest period should be provided after the maximum number of consecutive shifts (7 day or 4 night);
- A 48 hour rest period should be provided after 2 cycles of maximum consecutive shifts;
- a maximum of 14 continuous shifts of work in a row may be completed followed by a 48 hour rest period. For example; (5 usual work shifts followed by a weekend fire roster and then 7 firefighting shifts followed by a 48 hour rest period);
- a 72 hour break should be taken following 4 consecutive full length shift cycles.
- in a campaign situation, planners should consider a 5 day - 1 rest - 5 day shift pattern for the third and fourth cycles;
- swing shifts (overlapping shifts bridging between day and night shifts) should be planned for campaign fires to further reduce fatigue issues; and
- the same rules apply for both IMT roles and firefighting in the field.

## Travel

- transport must be provided for all workers after 24 hours of continuous duty so that they are not required to drive back home or to base;
- alternative transport to self-driving and/or alternative accommodation should be considered for workers required to travel more than 5 hours to home base;
- travel between midnight and 6am should be avoided for self-drive travel;
- a 10 hour break should be taken following completion of a shift before



driving home from an out of area deployment; workers may travel via air, bus, taxi etc. after a maximum shift length without a mandatory 10 hour break; where such alternative travel arrangements are used, the 10 hour break commences at the end of the journey;

- workers may travel following a shift if their total day shift, including travel, does not exceed 14 hours; after 14 hours, a 10 hour break at supplied accommodation en route is required before completing the journey;
- a 10 hour break must be taken following night shifts before self-drive travel; and
- risk factors relevant to each incident response should be taken into consideration when arrangements are made for transport - additional controls may be required depending on the site, location, individual workers etc.



## Trauma Counselling

## SOP 13.2

### **Aim**

To inform BFNT Members of the resources available to Members suffering from trauma.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

Firefighting is by nature a dangerous and stressful job. Persons involved in multiple incidents which have led to an accumulation of stress, or incidents which have resulted in loss of property serious or multiple injuries or death may become traumatised. In such cases, trauma counselling may assist Members to resolve associated trauma.

Any BFNT Member may advise a FCO or the Incident Controller of any need for counselling. Strict confidentiality shall be observed when dealing with counselling requests.

BFNT Members have available to them professional counselling services.

A BFNT Member can contact the confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at any time on free call 1800 193 123.

EAP has offices in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs, and visiting offices in Jabiru, Palmerston & Tennant Creek.



## Personal Injuries

## SOP 13.3

### Aim

To provide information about support for BFNT Members who are injured.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

Authorised Bushfire Volunteers and Fire Wardens are, while performing official duties, considered under the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act* to be a worker who is employed by the Territory. As such, in the event of an injury or illness resulting from brigade-related activities, the brigade member is entitled to claim worker's compensation and/or support for rehabilitation. To make a claim, a brigade member must:

- report the injury/illness to BFNT as soon as possible;
- complete and return an BFNT WH&S Initial Incident Report Card within 12 hours; and
- complete and return a Workers Compensation Claim Form (provided by BFNT) if claiming compensation.

BFNT staff are, while undertaking employment duties, afforded protection under the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act*. As such, in the event of an injury or illness to a BFNT staff member resulting from work related activities, the staff member is entitled to claim worker's compensation and/or support for rehabilitation. To make a claim, a staff member must:

- report the injury/illness to the Incident Controller, NTDO or SFCO as soon as possible;
- complete and return an DENR online incident report form within 12 hours; and
- complete and return a Workers Compensation Claim Form if claiming compensation.

BFNT Members should be aware that they will be responsible for any costs incurred until such time as the claim has been accepted by DENR. This cannot occur until the necessary paperwork has been received and processed.

BFNT Members shall keep copies of all receipts and relevant paperwork provided to in relation to their injury.



## Brigade Members - Workers Compensation SOP 13.4

### **Aim**

To provide brigade members with direction on their responsibilities while they are claiming workers compensation unrelated to their brigade activities.

### **Scope**

Applies to all brigade members who are workers compensation claimants.

### **Procedure**

Any brigade member who claims workers compensation, regardless of which employer is the subject of that claim, shall advise the brigade Captain of this claim. The member shall not, without the express written permission of the CFCO (or delegate),:

- attend any BFNT incident;
- travel in any BFNT appliance or use any BFNT or brigade owned equipment; and/or
- participate in any BFNT or brigade training exercise or brigade activity.

The brigade Captain shall advise the CFCO of the name of any brigade member who is a workers compensation claimant.

The restrictions on a brigade member who is a workers compensation claimant will apply until the CFCO (or delegate) has received an authority signed by a recognised medical practitioner and by the workers compensation insurer.



## Chainsaw Operation

## SOP 14.1

### **Aim**

To ensure safe working practices and procedures are followed, and that the risk of injury is minimised, during operation of chainsaws by BFNT Members.

### **Scope**

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### **Procedure**

A BFNT Member must not operate a chainsaw unless appropriately trained and accredited to do so.

### **Training**

BFNT will recognise current appropriate qualifications in chainsaw operations provided by a Registered Training Organisation.

A BFNT Member must provide evidence of their chainsaw operation qualifications to the SFCO before that Member may undertake any chainsaw operations.

### **Safety**

The operator shall wear and use the recommended protective equipment as described in the Australian Standard 4453-1997. This includes PPE, safety helmets, hearing protection, eye protection, safety boots (hardened toe), safety gloves and chainsaw chaps.

### **Operations**

Safe working procedures shall be maintained at all times.

Under no circumstances is the felling of any standing timber to be carried out by a BFNT Member unless qualified to do so. All chainsaw operations will be limited to cross cut of fallen timber unless approved by the Incident Controller for the felling of standing timber.



## Personal Protective Equipment

## SOP 14.2

### Aim

To advise BFNT Members of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is required to be worn during firefighting or other operations.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

#### Equipment Issued

On commencement, ABVs shall be issued the following PPE (minimum Wildland Fire Standard):

- leather boots;
- turnout coat and trousers;
- Cotton T-shirt;
- leather gloves and goggles; and
- helmet.

BFNT is responsible for replacement of worn or damaged turnout coats and trousers, cotton T-shirts and helmets.

The brigade is responsible for replacement of worn, or damaged leather boots, gloves and goggles. This includes the recovery of PPE from ceased and non-active Members.

When an ABV has been issued with PPE it shall be worn at all fire management operations.

Members other than ABVs involved in support of fire management operations should be dressed appropriately for the task delegated.

ABVs turning out to fires without the minimum requirement are to be instructed to leave the fire, or given a non-firefighting task.

#### Personal Responsibility:

- all reasonable care is to be taken of personal items;
- all Members are responsible for the availability, condition, care and cleanliness of their own PPE;
- only appropriately attired Members shall be allowed to crew BFNT appliances;
- the appearance and conduct of brigade members is to be such that it will not cause any criticism of the organisation; and
- all issued PPE must be returned upon resignation or leaving the brigade.



## Hazard Flagging

## SOP 14.3

### Aim

To provide BFNT Members with procedures and a standard for the use of hazard flagging.

### Scope

Applies to all BFNT Members.

### Procedure

Classification of flagging and hazard tapes:

- **Fluorescent Green** – flagging tape for marking safety related items and features such as direction markers, indicating entrances, safety zones and escape routes.
- **Fluorescent Yellow** – flagging tape for marking other non-specific items such as water points.
- **Fluorescent Pink** – flagging tape for marking fire related ‘hot spot’.
- **Fluorescent Orange** – flagging tape for marking or cordoning an area for bushfire investigation.
- **Yellow & Black striped** – hazard tape to indicate a specific object or area containing a hazard such as bee hives.
- **Red & White striped (75mm)** – hazard tape for scene management such as protecting the area of origin, crowd control at fire or traffic control

Members using flagging tape should provide sufficient tape to enable it to be distinctive from other possible users. Long lengths of at least 1 meter should be used for all tapes.

Flagging tape or Cyalume sticks are to be tied or placed in a prominent area as close as possible to the feature being identified.

Any hazard marked on the fireground must be reported up the Chain of Command and communicated to all Members on the fireground.

When hot spots have been declared cold, flagging tape is to be removed to avoid confusion.

At the completion of an incident, all flagging tape and Cyalume sticks are to be removed and disposed of properly.





## ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ABV	Authorised Bushfire Volunteer
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AIIMS	Australian Inter-service Incident Management System
ASIC	Aviation Security Identification Card
BAC	Blood Alcohol Concentration
BEMS	Bushfire Emergency Management System
BFNT	Bushfires NT
BFNT staff	any paid NTG staff Member attached to Bushfires NT
BFNT Member	any BFNT staff member or VBB member
BIA	Bushfire Information Advice
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFCO	Chief Fire Control Officer
CTAF	Common Traffic Advisory Frequency
DCM	Department of the Chief Minister
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ED	Executive Director BFNT
FGP	Fire Ground Practices
FCO	Fire Control Officer
GFU	Grass Fire Unit
GO	General Order
HAZCHEM	Hazardous Chemicals
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
HR	Human Resources
IAP	Incident Action Plan



IC	Incident Controller
IFRS	Incident Forecast Request System
IIR	Initial Incident Report
IML	Incident Management Log
IMT	Incident Management Team
JESCC	Joint Emergency Services Communication Centre
LACES	Lookouts, Awareness, Communications, Escape Routes and Safety Zones
MHz	Megahertz
NM	Nautical Miles
NT	Northern Territory
NAFC	National Aerial Firefighting Centre
NOTAM	Notice to Airman
NTDO	NT Duty Officer
NTFRS	Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTPFES	Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services
OCOO	On Call Operations Officer
PLB	Personal Locating Beacons
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
SDS	Safety Data Sheet
SEWS	Standard Emergency Warning Systems
SFCO	Senior Fire Control Officer
Sit-Rep	Situation Report
SMEACS	Situation, Mission, Execution, Action, Communications, Safety
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TEMC	Territory Emergency Management Council



TRM	Total Records Management
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
VBB	Volunteer Bushfire Brigade
VHF	Very High Frequency
WH&S	Work Health & Safety



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