



Use of Fireground Shirt

The ACT Rural Fire Service Chief Officer has issued this standard operating procedure (SOP) under Section 38(1) of the *Emergency Act 2004* – A Chief Officer may determine standards and protocols.

Purpose

This SOP is to inform RFS firefighters when the fireground shirt can be worn without the bushfire outer jacket when on a fire ground.

Scope

This SOP is applicable to all personnel from the ACT Rural Fire Service brigades, as defined in the *Emergencies Act 2004*, engaging in mop-up or patrol operations within the ACT or cross border.

Background

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011, (Section 44 (4)), a person conducting a business or undertaking who directs the carrying out of work must provide workers with information, training and instruction in the proper use and wearing of personal protective equipment.

Full Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) must be used when an active fire is present or when working on fire suppression activities.

A fireground shirt is a polo style long sleeved shirt issued by the agency. It is made of fire-resistant material and designed to be worn to reduce heat fatigue when no active fire is present.

One of the contributing factors in elevated heat stress levels can be the use of PPC which may prevent the body dissipating heat through evaporation of sweat.

Protective clothing and accessories should always be used in conjunction with safe work practices. 'Dressing down' to the agency-issued fireground shirt may assist with firefighter comfort, reducing retained body heat and fatigue.

Responsibilities

Members	<p>Must follow instructions on use of full PPC.</p> <p>May only conduct operations without the outer protective jacket when approved by crew leader and/or incident controller.</p> <p>Must wear the approved agency-issued shirt only as directed, with sleeves down at all times.</p>
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Crew Leader / Incident Controller	<p>Conduct risk assessment, approve and monitor use of approved fireground shirt without the outer protective jacket only when no active fire is present.</p> <p>Ensure full PPC is used for all active fires and fire suppression activities.</p>
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Applicability of this SOP

The ACTRFS Chief Officer has the responsibility for providing the appropriate PPC to assist the comfort of brigade members in circumstances when full PPC is not required for safety.

Operating procedure

The following rules apply for the use of the agency-issued fireground shirt by ACT Rural Fire Service members to improve firefighter comfort when on the fire ground:

- The agency-issued outer protective jacket must be worn for all fire suppression, when active fire is present or when working on roads.
- The Crew Leader (CL) must conduct a risk assessment on the use of the agency-issued fireground shirt without a bushfire Jacket.
- Approval to remove the outer PPC jacket is at the discretion of the CL) in consultation with the Incident Controller (IC). This applies to all fires within the ACT or cross border.
- At any time during an incident, based on the outcomes of a risk assessment, the CL or IC can instruct members to put their outer jackets back on.
- The outer fire jacket may be removed when on a fire ground conducting mop up and patrol, non-fire training and operations, or when representing the ACTRFS on community engagement taskings.
- The agency-issued fireground shirt is the only garment approved by the ACTRFS for 'dressing down' on the fire ground.
- Dressing down to the fireground shirt can only occur during daylight hours as it has no reflective stripes. Safe operating daylight hours are 30 mins after first light and 30mins prior to last light.
- The sleeves of the fireground shirt must be worn down and not rolled up for all activities.

Note: It is not recommended that personnel wear the fireground shirt under other PPC in hot conditions. It is intended that personnel take the fireground shirt with them to change into when applicable.

Additional agency involvement


ACTRFS members operating in cross border operations will need the interstate agency IC to approve the enacting of this SOP. The interstate organisation's operating procedures may override this SOP.

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Rohan Scott	1.0 Draft	10/03/2020	Reviewed and updated
Chris Condon	2.0 Final	04/06/2021	Administrative Review

Approved by

Name	Title/Role	Signature	Date
Rohan Scott	CO ACT RFS		23-07-21

Document Owner

Position	Section
Director	Operations

Next review due: 04/06/2023

Related documents

Document name
2.2.4 Managing Fatigue Standard Operating Procedure
2.3.1 Managing Heat Stress Guideline
Work Health Safety Act 2011
Work Health Safety Regulation 2011
1.2.1 Using Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing Standard Operating Procedure
1.3.1 Issuing Uniforms, PPE and PPC Guideline

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.

SOP 1.2.3 Use of Fireground Shirt

Page 3 of 3
last reviewed 04/06/2021

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