

RFS Membership

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

Purpose

This service standard is to establish a clear and consistent approach within the ACT Rural Fire Service (ACT RFS) and provide guidance on determining a person's membership category.

The categories of membership are:

- Active Firefighter
- Operational Support
- Brigade Support
- Junior Member
- Reserve.

Applicability

This service standard is applicable to all ACT RFS volunteer members and RFS staff.

Background

Allocation into a membership category will be dependent on the member:

- achieving an appropriate level of training and maintaining the currency of skills required to fulfil the duties under their chosen membership category
- achieving and maintaining the level of physical fitness required under their chosen membership category, in accordance with all requirements specified in the ACT RFS Service Standard 3.1.3 Work Capacity Test.

Brigade presidents and captains play a key role in determining a member's operational status. However, ACT RFS maintains oversight of the training, fitness and other related records to ensure training qualifications and years of experience requirements are met.

The regular attendance of operational members at brigade training activities is critical to maintaining currency of skills and membership category. The Training Officer Group will participate in developing a common training framework from an appropriate analysis of brigade training needs aligned with service capability requirements. The needs of all members are considered to ensure each membership category is actively engaged.

Members must build their knowledge of ACT RFS policies and procedures and should develop awareness of the skill levels and limitations of other members of the brigade.

Responsibilities

Members	<p>Undertake training activities relevant to their membership category.</p> <p>Comply with all RFS SOPs, policies and procedures.</p> <p>Regularly participate in brigade training activities to maintain currency of skills and operational status.</p> <p>Actively participate in community engagement activities and other station duties.</p> <p>Advise brigade captain or president of a change in status.</p> <p>Return all ACT RFS issued equipment to the brigade captain on resignation, including ID card.</p>
Brigade Captain/Brigade President	<p>Review and determine membership category placement and fitness level of members at the start of each bushfire season and advise the RFS Membership Support Officer.</p> <p>Advise RFS Membership Support Officer of any changes to brigade membership.</p> <p>Contact members who have not maintained membership to initiate return of ACT RFS property.</p> <p>Return surrendered ID cards to RFS Membership Support Officer.</p>
ACT RFS Membership Support Officer	<p>Process and administer all new member applications.</p> <p>Maintain Membership Master Register to ensure currency of personal information and training records.</p> <p>Ensure any returned ID cards are destroyed.</p>

Membership service standard

The ACT RFS Chief Officer has the responsibility for ensuring brigade members are appropriately trained, equipped and physically capable of performing the tasks they undertake. This responsibility is delegated to captains and officers although all brigade members are responsible for maintaining their own service skills and capability.

Membership standards

The following table describes the required standards for each type of membership category.

For competencies required to achieve qualifications, see the ACT RFS Training Information Book.

Type of activities	Minimum competencies required	Functions performed	Non-operational activities
Active Firefighter	Brigade members who undertake fire suppression activities and other operational duties.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigade training • RFS operations including stand up, call outs and hazard reduction burns • Assist other agencies • Community engagement and education activities • Station duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT RFS Bush Firefighter (BF) • Moderate or arduous fitness test (depending on task) • Asbestos Awareness • Working with Vulnerable People card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire suppression • Fireground scribe • Assist other government agencies • Control, planning, operations, or logistics roles to support operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected to attend regular brigade training sessions and maintain currency of skills • Actively participate in community engagement/education activities
Operational Support	Brigade members who provide support to brigade or frontline operations but are not active participants in direct firefighting activities. These members would not be expected to perform roles forward of staging areas. Examples include vehicle movements or ground support at a staging area and Incident Management Team (IMT) personnel.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFS operations support • Assist other agencies • Brigade training • Community activities • Station duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT RFS Wildfire Awareness Course • Asbestos Awareness • Light or moderate fitness as determined by the role • Working with Vulnerable People card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational / brigade administrative tasks • Support operations within the staging area • Assist other government agencies • Transport support - but not on the fireground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend brigade management / committee meetings • Attend brigade training • Provide operations support during events • Actively participate in brigade community engagement/education activities

Type of activities	Minimum competencies required	Functions performed	Non-operational activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other training, where available, specific to the function being performed 		
Brigade Support	Brigade members who provide support at a brigade level and undertake administrative functions <u>only</u> . They do not take part in any fire suppression activities or other ESA operations, for example: brigade secretaries.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brigade administrative positions Community engagement/education activities Station Duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Vulnerable People card. Other training, where available, specific to the function being performed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-operational administrative tasks, such as Brigade Secretary or Treasurer. IMT support Scribes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at brigade management /committee meetings, brigade training, or providing administrative support to members during operations. No fitness level required.
Junior Member	<p>Junior members are brigade members between 16 and 18 years of age, who undertake fire suppression and other operational or support roles. Junior members require 2:1 supervision at all times and participation exclusions apply.</p> <p>Junior members may perform support roles if they or the brigade executive deem them to be suitable but must comply with all restrictions specified under 'Junior membership' in this service standard.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brigade training RFS operations including stand up and call outs Assist other agencies Community engagement and education activities Station duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT RFS Bush Firefighter (BF) Moderate fitness test Asbestos Awareness Working with Vulnerable People card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire suppression Fire ground scribe Assist other government agencies Control, planning, operations, or logistics roles to support operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrictions as outlined below. Expected to attend regular brigade training sessions and participate in brigade activities

Type of activities	Minimum competencies required	Functions performed	Non-operational activities
Reserve	Members who have chosen to take a break from active service but intend to return within a two-year period. Extensions past two years may be approved on a case by case basis by the Manager Membership or Chief Officer, following a written request from the brigade's executive. (<i>Examples include members posted overseas or members taking time out for family commitments</i>).		
Nil	N/A	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserve members must ensure they meet the current membership category requirements prior to returning to active roles. • Absences beyond two years will require a new membership application process to be conducted.

Reporting

Brigade executives should record the current category placement and fitness level of their members before the start of the fire season each year and provide this information to the RFS Membership Support Officer. This includes providing all documentation required under this Service Standard and 3.1.3 Work Capacity Test.

The ACT RFS Membership Support Officer must update the current membership category placement of all brigade members on the Membership Master Register.

Changing membership category

Brigade members must advise the brigade president or captain if they intend to change their membership status and complete and submit a Brigade/Membership Category Transfer form, which can be obtained from the ACT RFS Membership Support Officer.

If a member makes no contact with the brigade over a 12-month period, that member will be deemed a Reserve Member. The brigade executive will contact that member in writing, with copy to the ACT RFS Membership Support Officer, to confirm they have resigned and initiate the process for return of equipment.

Obligation to return equipment

Any member who resigns from the service must, within 14 days of their resignation, return all equipment issued to them by the ESA Resource Centre, the ACT RFS or the brigade. All equipment, including ID cards, is to be returned to the Equipment Officer of their brigade in

accordance with Section 197, of the *Emergencies Act 2004*. The Equipment Officer will forward the ID card to the Membership Support Officer within 21 days of the resignation, for destruction.

Agreeing to accept junior membership

The decision to accept junior members (16-18 years old) is a brigade decision and must be reflected in the brigade's constitution. If a brigade elects to accept junior members, the following additional requirements apply:

- The brigade's constitution must be formally amended to reflect the acceptance of junior members before any junior member is accepted.
- Brigades must appoint a Junior Member Coordinator, who is an adult member of the brigade with responsibility for the development and welfare of junior members.
- Brigades must appoint at least one Deputy Junior Member Coordinator, who is an adult brigade member with responsibility to assist the Junior Member Coordinator.

Applying for junior membership

The following additional conditions apply to a junior membership application:

- A Junior Member Application contains a declaration which must be signed by the consenting adult (parent or adult guardian), which acknowledges the inherent risks associated with the nature of the work undertaken by ACT RFS. This may include exposure to trauma or death. The consenting adult also agrees to the junior member participating in limited activities of the brigade, including undertaking appropriate training and fire suppression activities.
- All candidates for junior membership must pass the same training requirements, fitness standards, and safety and security checks as adult candidates.
- In accordance with brigade practice for all new members, a junior member must be deemed ready for operational fire suppression duties by the supervising brigade officer.

Operational considerations for junior members

When considering junior membership and when selecting junior members, brigades should consider a number of operational factors as well as the restrictions described in the next section:

- The additional duty of care required from both the brigade and ACT RFS.
- The 2:1 adult supervision requirement to ensure that junior members are supervised at all times.
- Appropriate risk assessment in relation to the fire season and level of danger – a lack of life experience and situational awareness may impose additional risk to the junior member and the crew.

Restrictions on junior members

Junior members may take part in brigade activities including training and fire suppression activities where there is parent or adult guardian consent with the following restrictions:

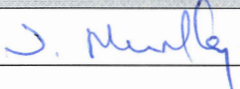
- Junior members will only be permitted onto a fireground as a member of a five-person tanker crew. This practice allows for the increased supervision requirements and appropriate mentoring for junior members.
- For days with a forecast FDI of 50 or higher, junior members must not engage in firefighting, but may be assigned to support duties.
- Junior members are not eligible to participate in:
 - Interstate task forces or strike teams, or undertake activities of any kind which involve an overnight stay
 - Stand-up on days with a forecast FDI of 50 or higher, however they may participate in a support capacity on these days.
 - RAFT operations.

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Joe Murphy	1.0	02/01/2019	Version 1.0
Stephen Carter	2.0	20/02/2020	Reviewed and updated to include junior membership

Approved by

Name	Title/Role	Signature	Date
Joe Murphy	CO ACT RFS		20-02-2020

Document Owner

Position	Section
Manager	Membership

Next review due: 20/02/2022

Related documents

Document name
3.1.5 Appointment and Duties of Group Officers Service Standard
3.1.6 Powers of Members Service Standard
ACT RFS Training Information Book
3.1.3 Work Capacity Test Service Standard
Emergencies Act 2004
1.1.4 Alcohol and Drug Consumption and RFS Activities Service Standard

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.