



Service Standard 2.1.13

NSW Rural Fire Service

Community Fire Units

Date of Issue 27 August 2011

Version Number 1.0

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Rural Fire Brigades provide the highest standards of protection from the impact of fire in the community by mitigating and suppressing fires and by influencing prevention and protection measures in local communities across the state.
- 1.2 The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) supports the commitment of members of Rural Fire Brigades by providing equipment facilities, training and support to enhance their ability to comprehensively treat local risks, thereby increasing the community's preparedness and resilience to the threats posed by bush fire.
- 1.3 The NSW RFS encourages full membership but recognises that not all volunteers can provide levels of commitment required for all roles within Brigades and is therefore committed to providing a more flexible approach to roles and functions.
- 1.4 NSW RFS Community Fire Units (CFU's) provide the Brigade with another resource to assist in bush fire education, preparedness and protection measures under this flexible approach to membership.
- 1.5 The purpose of this service standard and supporting SOPs is to ensure that NSW RFS CFUs operate from a common base of safety, efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Policy

- 2.1 NSW RFS CFUs support and assist Rural Fire Brigades in their role of providing for the prevention, mitigation and suppression of bush fires.
- 2.2 CFUs operate under the direct management and control of either an existing Rural Fire Brigade or under a District Support Brigade.

- 2.3 Each CFU operates within a designated area of operation as determined by the District Manager.
- 2.4 CFUs are required to operate in accordance with the membership, training, operations and equipment maintenance procedures outlined in the attached Standard Operating Procedures.
- 2.5 Members qualified at a higher level than CFU Operator, who activate as part of a CFU, must only undertake activities in line with this Service Standard and Standard Operating Procedures
- 2.6 Members of CFUs are required to comply with SS 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics and support the values of the NSW RFS and the laws of NSW.

3. Links

- SOP 2.1.13 -1 Community Fire Unit Membership
- SOP 2.1.13 - 2 Community Fire Unit Training
- SOP 2.1.13 – 3 Community Fire Unit Equipment Maintenance
- SOP 2.1.13 – 4 Community Fire Unit Designated Area of Operation
- SOP 2.1.13 – 5 Community Fire Unit Operations
- [SS 1.1.2 Discipline](#)
- [SS 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)
- [SS 2.1.6 Joining the NSW RFS as a Volunteer Member](#)
- [SS 5.1.5 Protective Clothing and Accessories](#)
- [SS 5.3.1 Equipment Maintenance](#)
- [SS 6.1.2 Qualifications for NSW RFS Members](#)
- [SS 6.1.3 Training General](#)
- NSW RFS www.rfs.nsw.gov.au
- [RTA booklet: Towing Trailers — Things you Should Know](#)

4. Who is responsible for implementing the Service Standard?

Director Regional Services

5. Amendments

- Initial Release 27 August 2011



SOP 2.1.13 - 1

NSW RFS Community Fire Unit Membership

This SOP forms part of ▪ Service Standard 2.1.13 NSW RFS Community Fire Units

Related Forms ▪ NSW RFS Membership Application Form

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP provides guidance to the District Office and Brigades on the membership process for NSW RFS members attached to Community Fire Units (CFU's).
- 1.2 This SOP provides information on the flexibility available to existing members and the opportunity for community members seeking an alternative to existing roles within the NSW RFS.

2. Procedures

Eligibility to apply for CFU membership

- 2.1 Eligibility for membership of a CFU is to be in accordance with the Brigade's Constitution, where applicable.
- 2.2 Any person who is 16 years or older may apply to become a CFU member providing they reside within a designated CFU area of operation.
- 2.3 At the completion of the probationary period CFU members are ordinary members however, due to the nature and role of CFU's, as CFU members they:
 - (a) do not regularly participate in Brigade activities;
 - (b) are not available to attend fire calls, and
 - (c) are not entitled to vote in the election of field officers
- 2.4 Existing members are encouraged to form CFUs through their Rural Fire Brigade. Existing members may operate as a member of a CFU.
- 2.5 Members qualified at a higher level than CFU Operator, who activate as part of a CFU must only undertake activities in line with the CFU Standard Operating Procedures

Membership process

- 2.6 New CFU members will join the Rural Fire Brigade that surrounds that member's CFU designated area of operation.
- 2.7 In cases where it is not suitable for a CFU to be attached to a local Brigade, a District Manager may form a CFU District Support Brigade for the purpose of establishing CFU designated areas of operation.
- 2.8 The Brigade and District Office will follow the membership application process as specified by Service Standard 2.1.6 Joining the NSW RFS as a Volunteer Member and the Brigade Constitution.
- 2.9 All CFU members must operate under the authority of the appointed Incident Controller, Field Officers or instruction of the District Manager or the authorised activity leader.

Variation to membership process

- 2.7 A District Manager may apply to the Director of Membership and Strategic Services requesting a variation to the membership process specified in Service Standard 2.1.6 Joining the NSW RFS as a Volunteer Member.

CFU Structure

- 2.8 Each CFU must have a minimum of six members.
- 2.9 Each CFU is comprised of a leader, deputy leader and CFU members.
 - (a) **CFU leader and deputy:** The appointed CFU leader complies with all CFU requirements and is the primary point of contact between the CFU, the District Office, and the Brigade. The leader plays a leadership role during CFU activities and promotes training and equipment maintenance. The deputy leader assists the CFU leader and undertakes this role in the leader's absence.

Note, role statements are available for leader and deputy leader.
 - (b) **CFU member:** A CFU member is someone who has been accepted into the NSW RFS through the membership application process and has successfully completed the CFU training course and any required refresher training. They may take part in all CFU activities and are required to comply with any lawful direction issued by a leader, deputy leader or NSW RFS officer.
- 2.10 The District Manager and Brigade captain will call for nominations for leader and deputy leaders of the CFU.

- 2.11** Successful nominations will be determined by the District Manager and Brigade captain, where applicable.
- 2.12** Length of tenure of CFU leader and deputy leader will be determined by the District manager and Brigade captain where one exists, but is not to exceed three years.
- 2.13** Nothing in this Service Standard will preclude a leader or deputy leader renominating for these positions.

CFU member conduct

- 2.14** All NSW RFS CFU members must abide by Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics, other NSW RFS service standards, and all Federal and State laws.
- 2.15** If it is found that a member has deliberately acted or behaved in a way that breaches the NSW RFS Code of Conduct, other NSW RFS policy and/or the law, disciplinary action may be taken.



SOP 2.1.13 - 2

NSW RFS Community Fire Unit Member Training

This SOP forms part of ▪ SS 2.1.13 NSW RFS Community Fire Units

Related forms ▪ None

1. Purpose

1.1 This SOP provides guidance on the training provided to NSW RFS Community Fire Unit (CFU) members and the requirements for CFU members to complete initial and refresher training.

2. Procedures

2.1 All CFU members must undertake an initial training course provided by the NSW RFS.

2.2 The NSW RFS will provide training to CFU members.

2.3 CFU members must successfully complete the required training before commencing activities with a CFU.

2.4 In certain circumstances a higher understanding of fire behaviour may be required therefore CFU leaders and deputy leaders may be required to be BF qualified if the District Manager and Brigade Captain deem it appropriate.

Training

2.5 Initial CFU training consists of a training session that includes the following topics:

- (a) Introduction to the NSW RFS and the role of CFUs within the NSW RFS structure,
- (b) Fire Danger Ratings and the Bush Fire Survival Plan,
- (c) Working safely
- (d) Bush fire behaviour
- (e) CFU equipment and processes
- (f) Managing ember attack and spot fires
- (g) Preparing and protecting properties
- (h) Mopping up activities after an incident.

Practice sessions

- 2.6 CFU members are encouraged to conduct practice sessions to ensure they remain familiar with the equipment and processes.
- 2.7 Using a risk management approach the District Manager and Brigade Captain may determine that the CFU leader and deputy leader be required to hold Bush Firefighter (BF) qualification.
- 2.8 CFUs and NSW RFS Brigades are encouraged to combine training activities where possible.

Training delivery

- 2.9 Training for CFUs will be in accordance with the CFU Course Guide.
- 2.10 Training may be provided by local NSW RFS staff or members of the local Rural Fire Brigade.
- 2.11 At the completion of training trainees will be assessed in accordance with the process contained in the CFU Course Guide

Assessment

- 2.12 Training assessments will take place in accordance with the CFU Course Guide.



SOP 2.1.13 - 3

NSW RFS Community Fire Unit Equipment Management and Maintenance

This SOP forms part of ▪ SS 2.1.13 NSW RFS Community Fire Units

Related Forms ▪ None

1. Purpose

1.1 This SOP provides information on the management of equipment supplied to NSW RFS Community Fire Units (CFU), including the use, storage and cleaning of equipment, and the processes for maintenance, repair and replacement of equipment.

2. Procedures

2.1 Each CFU is supplied with a standard set of equipment. Members must not modify or otherwise adapt supplied equipment in any way.

2.2 Two CFU equipment options are available:

(a) **Option 1:** An enclosed trailer containing equipment listed in Appendix 1.

(b) **Option 2:** A fixed position cabinet containing equipment listed in Appendix 1.

2.3 The District Office must enter trailer details into the Red Fleet Management System upon taking delivery.

2.4 Radios, pagers and other communications equipment may be issued to a CFU leader or deputy leader at the discretion of the District Manager.

CFU Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) and Equipment (PPE)

2.5 Each CFU member will be provided with PPC/PPE which is to be worn at all times during the operation of the CFU. PPC/PPE will be provided once CFU members have successfully completed training.

Equipment not supplied by the NSW RFS

- 2.6** Only the equipment supplied as part of the CFU is to be used as asset management issues may arise and it may be damaged.

Location of the CFU

- 2.7** The placement of the CFU within the designated area of operation is to be discussed and agreed upon by the District Manager, the CFU leader and the local Brigade as applicable.
- 2.8** A CFU trailer may be located at the Brigade station or hosted by a CFU member.
- 2.9** The CFU must be accessible to the local Brigade captain and the majority of members of the CFU at any time.
- 2.10** Members hosting a unit must ensure that the location of the CFU is able to be accessed when the member is absent from their property.

Use of CFU equipment

- 2.11** Only trained NSW RFS and CFU members may operate CFU equipment.
- 2.12** CFU equipment must only be used for NSW RFS operations and approved related activities.
- 2.13** Operation of the equipment is covered in detail during CFU induction and training.

Cleaning and storage of equipment

- 2.14** All CFU equipment is to be cleaned and stored properly by members after use to ensure that it is ready to be used again.
- 2.15** Proper cleaning and storage of CFU equipment is covered during induction training.

Equipment inspection

- 2.16** The District Office will facilitate an annual equipment inspection and maintenance service of all CFU equipment within its area.
- 2.17** Any faulty/worn equipment is to be reported by the CFU leader to the Brigade Captain or delegated officer for maintenance, repair or replacement as required.

If the CFU is attached to the District Office, any faulty/worn equipment is to be reported by the CFU leader to the District Manager.

2.18 A register of CFU equipment is to be maintained by the CFU Leader.

Privately owned vehicles towing the CFU trailer

2.19 A CFU member may use their own vehicle to tow a CFU trailer providing:

- (a) the activity is an approved NSW RFS activity
- (b) the member has a certificate of registration for the motor vehicle,
- (c) the member has a valid drivers licence, and
- (d) the member has ensured their motor vehicle meets the safety requirements for towing trailers (see [RTA booklet: Towing Trailers — Things you Should Know](#)).

Appendix 1

Community Fire Unit Equipment List

Qty	Equipment	Size Description
1	4kw pump	Complete with frame and fittings
8	Lengths of hose	4 x 38mm and 4 x 25mm
1	1 into 2 breeching	38mm, valved
1	Controlled breech	65mm (where appropriate)
1	Reducer	65mm x 38mm Storz
1	First Aid kit	Class B, for 1 – 24 persons
1	Fuel container	10 litre
3	Hose branches	38mm diffuser and 2 x dial-a-jet
2	Reducers	38mm to 25mm
1	Hydrant bar	
2	Knapsacks	Hard knapsack extinguisher
3	McLeod tools	
1	Standpipe	65mm
2	Storz spanners	70mm
3	Torches	Dolphin
1	Suction hose	38mm, complete with float and strainer
1	Water container	5 litre
2	Witches hats	450mm



SOP 2.1.13 - 4

NSW RFS Community Fire Unit Designated Area of Operation

This SOP forms part of ▪ SS 2.1.13 NSW RFS Community Fire Units

Related forms ▪ None

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP provides detail on Community Fire Unit designated areas of operation. The area of operation is allocated by the NSW RFS District Office and outlines activities permitted within and outside the designated area of operation.
- 1.2 This SOP applies to all NSW RFS CFU members.

2. Procedures

CFU Designated Area of Operation

- 2.1 Each CFU has a designated area of operation. Defined boundaries are established as part of this process.
- 2.2 The District Manager will seek the advice of the local Brigade captain, where one exists, in determining the CFU designated area of operations.
- 2.3 The District Manager should consider the following before determining a CFU designated area of operation:
 - (a) The number and nature of assets
 - (b) The number of available CFU members
 - (c) The link to the bush fire risk management plan and ability to implement a risk treatment option
 - (d) Historical fire behaviour/events in that area, and
 - (e) The input of local Brigades.

Activities permissible within a CFU Designated Area of Operation

- 2.4 The activities that are permissible within a designated area of operation during bush fire events are specified in SOP 2.1.13 - 5 CFU Operations.

- 2.5** CFU members may participate in community education activities within their designated area of operation provided direct supervision is provided by a suitably qualified NSW RFS member.
- 2.6** CFU members may assist with hazard reduction activities providing;
- (a)** The CFU members have been requested by the District Office to attend,
 - (b)** The CFU members only conduct activities they have been trained to perform,
 - (c)** Direct supervision is provided by a suitably qualified NSW RFS member.

Activities permissible outside a designated CFU area of operation

- 2.7** It is permissible for CFU members to undertake activities listed in clause 2.4 and 2.5 of this SOP outside their designated area of operation, provided they have been requested to do so by the District Office and are supervised by a suitably qualified NSW RFS member.
- 2.8** CFU members may attend training events outside their designated area of operation provided it is an authorised training event and they have been requested to attend.

Area of operation map

- 2.9** The District Office will provide the CFU with a map which clearly delineates its designated area of operations boundary and clearly displays:
- (a)** Individual property boundaries,
 - (b)** Location of hydrants,
 - (c)** Location of static water supplies, and
 - (d)** Topography.
- 2.10** The District Office will provide a copy of the map to the local Brigade Captain and retain a copy of the map in the District Office.
- 2.11** The District Office will maintain a file for each CFU.



SOP 2.1.13 - 5

NSW RFS Community Fire Unit Operations

This SOP forms part of ▪ SS 2.1.13 Community Fire Units

Related Forms ▪ None

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This SOP provides detail on the responsibilities and procedures to be followed by NSW RFS Community Fire Unit (CFU) members to minimise risks during bush fire related activities.
- 1.2 This SOP applies to all NSW RFS CFU members.

2. Safety for CFU members

- 2.1 The safety of CFU members must always be the first priority.
- 2.2 It is important that CFU members work safely and minimise operational risk.
- 2.3 CFU members must wear the Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment (PPC/PPE) provided by the NSW RFS and follow the procedures listed below during all fire related and training activities.
- 2.4 T-cards listing information for each member must be stored in the trailer with a T-card holder utilised to record personnel movements and activities.
- 2.5 Any injury or near miss incurred by a CFU member must be reported to the Brigade Captain and the District Office.

3. Procedures

Before CFU Operations

- 3.1 A CFU will prepare to undertake CFU operations as a result of an instruction given by a Field Officer of the local Rural Fire Brigade, the District Office or the Incident Controller.

- 3.2** If a CFU member notices a bush fire they believe could be in their area of operation, and they have not received notification, they must immediately call Triple Zero (000) and provide the operator with information on the fire. The member should then contact, in the following order:
- (a)** The CFU leader or deputy leader, and
 - (b)** A Field Officer from the local Rural Fire Brigade
- 3.3** After contact has been made, the CFU should prepare to activate in accordance with the Activation Procedure developed in consultation with the District Manager and the Brigade Captain (where applicable)
- 3.4** The CFU leader or deputy leader, following consultation with a Brigade field officer, may activate the CFU.
- 3.5** The CFU must have a minimum of three members present in their area of operation and be dressed in CFU personal protective clothing before it can be activated.
- 3.6** Where the CFU has decided to activate, one member must call the District Office who will inform the Incident Controller of the CFU activation
- 3.7** Each member present and active in the area of operation must ensure their T-card is placed in the 'Allocated' sleeve on the T-card holder.

During CFU operations

- 3.8** During fire activity, CFU members must ensure only duties in line with this Service Standard and SOPs are undertaken. Any instruction given by an authorised officer from the NSW RFS or Fire and Rescue NSW must comply with this Service Standard and be consistent with these SOPs.
- 3.9** CFU members are trained to:
- (a)** Prepare their home and other properties by actively extinguishing spot fires and managing ember attack,
 - (b)** Take shelter until the fire front has passed and
 - (c)** Assist with mop up in their area of operation after the fire front passes, thus releasing fire services to respond to the fire front.
- 3.10** CFU members are not trained, equipped or permitted to:
- (a)** Engage in direct firefighting attack on a bush fire
 - (b)** Undertake firefighting in the interior of a structure, or
 - (c)** Undertake major external structural firefighting.

Note: A major external structural fire is defined as any fire greater than an area equivalent to 3 metres by 3 metres and involving a structure.

- 3.11 CFU members are only permitted to undertake CFU operations inside their designated area of operation. See SOP 2.1.13-4 Designated Area of Operation for further advice.
- 3.12 CFU members must follow evacuation orders given by the Police or other authorised personnel.

Regular roll call during activities

- 3.13 The CFU Leader, Deputy Leader or, if they are not available, another active CFU member must undertake a roll call of active CFU members every 30 minutes to ensure all active members are accounted for.
- 3.14 Results of the roll call must be recorded by the correct placement of T-cards in the T-card holder.
- 3.15 Where a member is not accounted for during roll call, members must immediately cease activities and search the designated area of operation until the member is located. The District Office must be notified if the search fails to locate the member.

CFU member participation after activation

- 3.16 Members who join the CFU fire activity after activation must ensure they tell the CFU Leader, Deputy Leader or, if they are not available, another CFU member responsible for recording this information, that they are joining the CFU fire activity.
- 3.17 The member's T-card must be placed in the 'Allocated' sleeve of the T-card holder.

Members withdrawing from CFU operations before stand down/deactivation

- 3.18 Members who withdraw from CFU activities before stand down/deactivation must ensure they advise the CFU Leader, Deputy Leader or another member responsible for recording this information, that they are withdrawing from activities.
- 3.19 The member's T-card must be placed in the 'Stood down' sleeve of the T-card holder.

Ending CFU operations

- 3.20 CFUs' may be verbally directed to stand down at the direction of an Incident Controller or an officer of the NSW RFS. CFUs must follow any direction to stand down.

- 3.21** CFUs' self-deactivate under the following circumstances
- (a) The number of active members in the area of operation falls below four i.e. the minimum safe working numbers, or
 - (b) The CFU decides it is otherwise unsafe to continue with CFU activities, or
 - (c) The CFU decides there is no longer a reason to be active in the area of operation, e.g. there is no bush fire or ember activity.
- 3.22** When self-deactivating, the CFU Leader, Deputy Leader or other responsible member must make contact with the District Office who will inform the Incident Controller, and the local Brigade Captain.
- 3.23** The CFU Leader, Deputy Leader or other responsible member must make an entry in the log book briefly describing the activities undertaken and the members involved. The Leader or Deputy Leader must also log a Fire Incident Report (FIRS) by phoning 1800 679 737 and advise the FIRS report reference number to the Brigade.
- 3.24** On deactivation or stand down, members should check, clean and stow equipment in the trailer or cabinet.
- 3.25** Following deactivation and stand down, members may be asked to take part in operational debriefs run by the NSW RFS.
- 3.26** Members who wish to do so may access the services of the NSW RFS Critical Incident Support Service by calling 1800 049 933.