

Using a Mobile Data Terminal

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

Purpose

This standard operating procedure (SOP) is to be followed when operating a Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) for ACT Rural Fire Service (ACT RFS) operations and routine business. It ensures the location of all operational appliances can be tracked and seen to allow the nearest, most appropriate appliance to be dispatched to incidents.

Applicability

This SOP is applicable to all personnel from ACT RFS brigades and ACT RFS staff when engaging in any RFS activities.

Background

The MDT is used in conjunction with the Territory Radio Network (TRN) to maintain situational awareness for brigade officers, crew leaders, other appliances, the ESA Communications Centre (ComCen) and the ACT RFS Duty Officer (RFS DO).

The TRN remains the primary method of communications for all ACT RFS appliances. The MDT will supplement but not replace any of the functions currently undertaken via the radio. All operational movements, incident dispatch and status changes will first be sent via the radio and then backed up through the use of the MDT.

Responsibilities

Members	Acknowledge incident information from the ComCen. Use MDT to manage crewing information. Use MDT to report vehicle status at start of shift, when in transit and on arrival at a location. Activate Duress if in imminent danger. Report any faults in MDT.
ACT RFS Duty Officer (RFS DO)	Report faulty appliances to ESA ITC Support.

Operating procedure

Reporting vehicle location

The ESA ComCen CAD system must know the physical location of each ACT RFS appliance to be able to identify and recommend the closest, most appropriate and available appliance for dispatch to incidents. The MDT is a GPS resource tracking system. It tracks and updates each appliance's location, which allows an appliance's location to be sent and seen on the CAD system.

All ACT RFS appliances must radio their operational movements to ComCen to supplement the MDT data and allow the RFS DO, brigade officers and other appliances to be aware of ACT RFS appliance movements.

Movements in local brigade areas, when stood up, don't need to be communicated to ComCen, e.g., when going to refuel or to the local shops. If a vehicle is marked available, messaging movements within a local area is unnecessary radio traffic

Tracking vehicle status

Vehicle status is used by the CAD to determine the current operational availability of ACT RFS appliances as well as recording when they are responding or proceeding to incidents. The MDT allows the members to directly change their own status within the CAD. Using the MDT, ACT RFS appliances can record their status as follows:

NOT AVAILABLE	The appliance is not available for operational purposes.
MOBILE NOT AVAILABLE	The appliance is mobile but not available for response.
MOBILE AND AVAILABLE	The appliance is mobile, meets the ACT RFS minimum crew requirements and is ready for immediate response to incidents.
AT HOME STATION	The appliance is stood up and available from its home station with the accepted minimum crew in the appliance.
RESPONDING	The appliance has received a call and MDT tasking from ComCen or the RFS DO and is responding to a given address or location (see SOP 2.2.13 Response).
PROCEEDING	The appliance has received a call and MDT tasking from ComCen or the RFS DO and is proceeding to a given address or location (See SOP 2.2.13 Response).
DELAYED RESPONSE	The appliance is at another activity, such as a community education event. It will respond but the response will be delayed.
ARRIVED AT INCIDENT	The appliance has arrived on scene at the incident. The appliance should maintain this status until formally released from the incident.

All appliances must change their status and provide updates using both MDT and radio. This is to maintain the situational awareness of the RFS DO, Brigade Officers and other appliances.

Examples:

Operational message: *ComCen, Tidbinbilla 20 **responding** to the car fire in the Paddys River area.*

When there are enough members of a brigade at station to be operationally available (See SOP 2.2.14 Crewing Arrangements for Operational Incidents) they should stand an appliance up using the MDT and radio by choosing a status of **AT HOME STATION**.

The CAD has a number of other statuses that may on occasion appear on the MDT. If this occurs and the status displayed by the CAD doesn't reflect the appliance's actual status, the RFS appliance's

operator should change their appliance's status on the MDT and radio ComCen to inform them of the change.

Dispatch to incidents

ComCen will dispatch all ACT RFS appliances to incidents via radio as soon as the incident is created, as well as sending the incident details to their MDT. ComCen will not wait to see if a crew has acknowledged the incident via the MDT before radioing the appliances. All ACT RFS appliances must acknowledge the receipt of any incident (by indicating that they are responding or proceeding) both via the radio and changing their status via the MDT.

Interstate assistance

When ACT RFS appliances assist interstate agencies, ComCen will create the event as an incident in CAD which the appliances will be assigned to (e.g. "Bombala Bushfire Assistance").

Duress

This function is a critical feature of the MDT to report when the crew is in imminent danger. The Duress function will immediately alert ComCen confirming the appliance's location.

When activated, ComCen will:

1. radio the appliance to confirm the nature of the threat
2. advise the Incident Controller, RFS DO and appliances in the vicinity of the appliance, requesting assistance.

The crew should also attempt to activate the TRN Duress alert as this will provide an open microphone for a limited time in which ComCen can be alerted to the nature of the threat without a crew member having to operate the radio.

The Incident Controller and RFS DO must take appropriate actions in response to the threat to the Appliance.

Command, group officer and staff vehicles

ACT RFS command, group officer and staff vehicles being used in an operational role, must only be 'stood up' and made available for response when crewed by a member who is deemed to have the experience and qualifications to perform the role of a Level 1 Incident Controller (See 3.1.9 Command Vehicle Use Service Standard). If the appliance is required for response and it is not crewed by an individual who meets this requirement, that member must notify the RFS DO via ComCen.

Appliances without MDTs, out of MDT coverage or Faulty MDT

The MDT transmits and receives data through the TRN. Any appliance that does not have an MDT or has a non-functioning MDT must radio through their status updates and also provide ComCen with a location name and the ESA Handy Map Location (Grid Square Location) in which they are available. This will ensure that the CAD system has accurate information on the appliance's availability and standby location.

Example:

Operational message: *ComCen, Dozer 1 is available at Rivers Station grid square India One Three, that is grid square India, One, Three.*

It is important to use the phonetic alphabet and provide numerical values as numbers and words.

For appliances that are “Mobile and Available” in a particular area, the location name and grid square where the appliance are is to be radioed to ComCen and this will be the location for that appliance used by the CAD system.

Appliances that have informed ComCen of their grid square location and are mobile in that square do not need to inform ComCen again until that appliance moves from that grid square.

Appliances travelling from one location to another over some distance (for example Stromlo Depot to Kowen Forest) must tell ComCen the location name and grid square of the destination that they are travelling to.

Once an appliance arrives at their destination, they must radio ComCen, confirming the relevant location name and grid square.

Reporting faults

When a fault occurs that the crew of an appliance are not able to rectify, they must report the fault and continue operating via radio.

To report the issue for fixing, members should:

- during work hours – advise RFS Operations via the Brigade Equipment Officer or Captain
- during afterhours and/or during an incident – advise the RFS DO via the Brigade DO or ComCen
- during an incident with an established IMT – contact the Sector Leader who must report the issue to the IMT Operations Officer.

Once reported, the appropriate ACT RFS officer will report the issue to ESA ICT via the normal channels during working hours. Where deemed necessary, the RFS DO or IMT Operations Officer will refer the problem to the ESA ICT on-call technician for after hour’s attention.

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Andrew Stark	1.0	10/07/2012	Version 1.0
Rohan Scott	2.0	01/04/2020	Reviewed and updated

Approved by

Name	Title/Role	Signature	Date
Joe Murphy	CO ACT RFS		09.04.2020

Document Owner

Position	Section
Manager	Operations

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Related documents

Document name
Emergencies Act 2004
2.2.12 Communications Standard Operating Procedure
2.2.15 Urgent Duty Driving Standard Operating Procedure
2.2.13 Response Standard Operating Procedure
2.2.14 Crewing Arrangements for Operational Incidents Standard Operating Procedure
3.1.9 Command Vehicle Use Service Standard

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.

