

Alcohol and Drug Consumption and RFS Activities

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 ensure that the RFS and its members, in line with ACT Government legislation, practices and procedures, ensure safety of members through the legal use and responsible attitude towards the consumption of alcohol and drugs during RFS activities or where members are in uniform or RFS PPE.

Scope

This Service Standard is applicable to all personnel from the ACT Rural Fire Service brigades, as defined in the *Emergencies Act 2004*.

It should be read in conjunction with the ACT Public Service: *Alcohol and other drugs* Policy which applies to all workers, including volunteer members when engaged on ACT Government business.

Background

The ACT Government is committed to providing safe and healthy working environments for its employees and other people through practices that eliminate or reduce risk in its workplace arising from the use of alcohol or other drugs.

The *WHS Act* places an obligation on those undertaking work to take responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of themselves and others. This includes a responsibility to ensure that they attend places of work unimpaired by alcohol or other drugs.

Responsibilities

Members	<p>Must ensure they comply with this Service Standard.</p> <p>Must report to the Brigade Captain/Officer/Crew Leader if they suspect impairment of themselves or others due to alcohol and drug use while on RFS activities.</p>
Brigade Captain/Officers/Crew Leader	<p>Must ensure that this Service Standard is known and understood by all members.</p> <p>Must take appropriate action if alcohol or drug use is suspected by brigade members while on RFS activities.</p> <p>Must report alcohol or drug issues to the RFS Duty Officer or Membership Manager.</p>

RFS Duty Officer, Director Membership, Chief Officer	Must take appropriate action when non-compliance with this Service Standard is reported.

Applicability of this standard

Personnel will comply with this Service Standard when engaged on RFS business, including training, brigade activities, deployment at any incident or community engagement activity. Agency representatives and agency personnel, including volunteer members, are responsible for compliance with this Service Standard.

Operating procedure

1. Under no circumstance are alcohol or other drugs to be consumed in or on RFS vehicles, at any incident, training, brigade, prevention or promotional activity by any member.
2. Members must not consume alcohol while wearing uniform or PPE unless approved in writing by the RFS Chief Officer. Brigades must obtain this permission in advance for social or celebratory occasions at sheds.
3. Members must remember that when consuming alcohol, while wearing items of clothing such as brigade t-shirts, hats, etc, (items that identify individuals as members of RFS) that they must abide by the Service Standard 3.1.1 Code of Conduct and Ethics of RFS members, ACT Public Sector Management Standards and ACT Public Service Code of Conduct. If attending a session at a public location where alcohol is likely to be offered, members should change into non-badged items of clothing, including t-shirts and hats.
4. Alcohol must not be kept at brigade premises.
5. Any Brigade Officer who suspects a member of being under the influence of alcohol or illicit substance must prohibit that member from driving, as well as any other service activity (as described above) and, if practicable, remove that member from the activity. Before that member can return to duty, the officer must be satisfied that he or she is no longer under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances.
6. Brigade Officers should seek the advice and assistance of the RFS Duty Officer or Membership Manager when dealing with issues relating to members who are suspected of being intoxicated while engaged on RFS activities or who are suspected of suffering from drug or alcohol dependence.
7. Drivers must have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.00% and have no illicit drugs in the body while operating an ACTRFS vehicle for an emergency response. Drivers of any government vehicle must have a BAC of less than 0.02%. For vehicles with a GVM greater than 15 tonnes, the BAC must be 0.00%.
8. Drug and alcohol testing may be conducted at some RFS work locations.
9. Due to the hazardous nature of fire fighting duties, no exemptions will be given in the application of these procedures.

It is recommended that any member who is about to go on a call-out or stand-by roster should refrain from consuming alcohol at least 12 hours prior to the start of their rostered duty.

Additional agency involvement


ACTRFS members operating in cross border operations must comply with this Service Standard.

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Andrew Stark	1.0	15/02/2011	Version 1.0
Rohan Scott	2.0	10/03/2020	Reviewed and updated
Rod Anderson	3.0	10/06/2021	Administrative Review
Steve Quinlan	3.0	01/03/2023	Administrative review

Approved by

Name	Title/Role	Signature	Date
Rohan Scott	CO ACT RFS		09/02/2024

Document Owner

Position	Section
RFS Director	Operations

Next review due: 01/02/2027

Related documents

Document name
ACT Public Service Code of Conduct
3.1.1 Code of Conduct and ethics for RFS members Service Standard
ACT Public Service: Alcohol and other drugs Policy
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
ACT Public Sector Management Standards
ACT/ESA Volunteer Charter

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.