

Pregnancy and Safe Work

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

Purpose

This service standard provides guidance to ensure the safety, support systems and continued involvement of any pregnant or breastfeeding members of the ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS) volunteer brigades.

Scope

This service standard applies to all pregnant or breastfeeding volunteer members of the ACTRFS.

Background

ACTRFS places a high importance on its members' safety. In acknowledging the risks to the health and safety of the firefighter and unborn child, ACTRFS encourages pregnant firefighters to withdraw from frontline bushfire fighting as soon as possible.

Responsibilities

Volunteer members	<p>Pregnant members inform themselves of potential risks of continuing in operation role before continuing.</p> <p>Request leave from service or alternative duties, as appropriate.</p>
Brigade Captain	<p>Treat pregnant member's information as confidential.</p> <p>Obtain confirmation from the pregnant member that she is fully informed of her risks and WHS obligations if requesting to continue operational duties.</p> <p>Arrange for alternative duties or leave if requested.</p> <p>Liaise with ACTRFS Assistant Director Membership and Engagement.</p>
ACTRFS Assistant Director, Membership and Engagement	<p>Maintains membership records.</p> <p>Provides suitable and comfortable PPC when requested.</p>

ACTRFS Chief Officer	Exercise right for approval/non-approval for a member to continue operational roles in the final six weeks of pregnancy on provision of medical clearance by the member.
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Service standard

Participation in frontline operational duties

Members will not be compulsorily removed from frontline operational duties if they choose to continue. However, they must have informed themselves of the potential risks to themselves and their unborn child before making this decision. In doing so, members must be mindful of their own obligations under workplace health and safety legislation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety.

Members can decide to take leave or request non-operational roles and request this through the Brigade Executive.

Six weeks before due date

If a pregnant member wishes to perform frontline operational duties in the six weeks before her due date, she must produce medical evidence to the Brigade Captain from a registered medical practitioner that it is safe for her to do so.

The Brigade Captain must forward this to the ACTRFS Assistant Director, Membership and Engagement. The decision to continue is subject to approval by the ACTRFS Chief Officer. (See Fair Work Act 2009).

Brigade arrangements

Brigade Executive, in consultation with the pregnant member, will make arrangements for leave or non-operational roles, as requested by the member.

The Brigade Executive advises ACTRFS Assistant Director, Membership and Engagement of the arrangements.

Privacy

All information regarding the pregnancy must be handled sensitively and confidentially. Only members and staff who are directly involved in the member's arrangements will be informed until the member is ready to make the information public.

Uniform and PPC


ACTRFS will provide pregnant members with an appropriate and comfortable uniform if requested. If a member chooses to continue in a frontline operational role, personal protective clothing (PPC) that fits the member must be provided, (subject to availability, as custom orders may incur a delay for manufacture).

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Rohan Scott	1.0	10/08/2020	1 st Version
Lynda Scanes	2.0	08/06/2021	Administrative Review
Andrew Gradie	3.0	1/03/2023	Administrative Review

Approved by

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

Document Owner

Position	Section
Assistant Director	Membership and Engagement

Next review due: 01/02/2027

Related documents

Document name
3.1.1 Code of Conduct and Ethics of RFS Members Service Standard
ACT Public Sector Management Standards
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
ACT Discrimination Act 1991
Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
Fair Work Act 2009

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.