



ACT Rural Fire Service
Standard Operating Procedure 1.25
Bushfire Operational Plans

1.25
Administrative
Management

Purpose

This Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) exists to clarify and outline procedures relating to the creation, approval, review and reporting of Bushfire Operational Plans (BOPs).

Scope

This SOP applies to any person who, as specified in section 78 of the *Emergencies Act 2004* (the Act), is:

- a) the manager of an area of unleased territory land or land occupied by the Territory, unless the land is exempt from the operation of this section under the strategic bushfire management plan; or
- b) the owner of an area of land in a bushfire abatement zone if:
 - i. the strategic bushfire management plan sets out requirements for a bushfire operational plan for the bushfire abatement zone; and
 - ii. the land is identified in the strategic bushfire management plan as land for which a bushfire operational plan must be prepared; and
 - iii. there is no land management agreement applying to the land that is consistent with the strategic bushfire management plan.

Procedures

1. Creation

Under the Act, the above stated land owners and managers must supply to the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ACTESA) Commissioner (the Commissioner) a draft BOP for their land in accordance with the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP). The draft SBMP version 3 states that all BOPs must 'detail the specific timing, type and location of fuel-reduction, access and infrastructure activities proposed to be taken in the ACT' (SBMP v3. page 8).

Bi-annually ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS) will identify land that requires a BOP and provide this advice to the Commissioner. The Commissioner will write to the land owner or manager, requesting a draft BOP be supplied within 90 days. The land owner or manager will then work with ACTRFS to draft the BOP or, where appropriate, implement a Farm Fire Wise plan to meet the requirements of a BOP.

2. Approval

Once a draft BOP is received the Commissioner has forty working days to approve the BOP, approve the BOP with amendments or decide not to approve the BOP. If the ESA Commissioner does not make a decision about the approval within the 40 working days it is assumed that the BOP is approved without amendments.

ACTRFS will maintain a database (the database), showing all land owners and managers, date of BOP receipt, date of BOP approval and date BOP is due for review. Copies of all BOPs will be kept by ACTRFS, in accordance with the *Territory Records Act 2002*.



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3. Review

The Act specifies BOPs must be reviewed by the land owner or manager at least once every two years. When reviewed land owners or managers must supply the updated draft BOP to the ESA Commissioner for approval.

4. Reporting

Reporting on BOPs will be undertaken in two forms, through accountability indicator reporting and reporting to the Commissioner.

4.1 Reporting on Accountability Indicators

(a) Desktop audit of ACT Government Directorate Bushfire Operational Plans activity progress reports

Indicator (a) is designed to show that ACTRFS regularly monitor the progress of ACT Government Directorates in actioning the activities outlined in their BOPs. There are three ACT Government Directorates responsible for managing ACT land and who hold BOPs, being:

1. Community Services Directorate (CSD);
2. Land Development Agency (LDA); and
3. Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TaMSD).

At the beginning of each financial year these three Directorates will supply ACTRFS with a list of approved BOP activities for the year to come; detailing activity type, location and expected timing. Within 10 working days of the end of each financial year quarter (30 September, 31 December, 31 March and 31 June), the Directorates will supply BOP activity progress reports to ACTRFS; detailing work undertaken on BOP activities during the period. Progress reports should be cumulative over the reporting year.

Using the original list of BOP activities as a measure, ACTRFS will conduct a desktop audit of BOP progress reports, giving consideration to the:

- Total numbers of activities undertaken.
- Total number of activities not completed as scheduled.
- Reasons for changes or delays in schedule.
- Risk of activities not having been undertaken.
- Other mitigation strategies appropriate for the situation.

Full audit comments will be supplied to the Chief Officer ACTRFS for verification of findings. Both the Chief Officer and the ACTRFS officer undertaking the audit must sign the paper copy of audited reports.

The results of the desktop audit will be provided to the Directorates and to the Commissioner bi-annually, as assurance that the objectives of the BOPs are being achieved.



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(b) Field assessment of access management upgrades and hazard reduction burns conducted in accordance with ACT Government Bushfire Operational Plans

Indicator (b) is designed to show that ACTRFS regularly conduct field assessments on all access management upgrade (AMU) and hazard reduction burn (HRB) activities completed in accordance with the TaMSD BOP.

Throughout the year ACTRFS will conduct assessments on AMU and HRB activities they are notified of as being completed. ACTRFS aim to assess one hundred percent of the AMU and HRB completed activities, though for reporting purposes ACTRFS are only able to assess activities completed during the reporting period and notified to them within 5 days following the end of the reporting period. Any work completed not notified of within 5 working days following the end of the period, ACTRFS are not able to conduct assessments on and will not be counted within that period.

To complete an assessment ACTRFS will visit the site of the activity, complete the assessment form and where possible, photograph the activity, attach correspondence notes, and other relevant evidence. The forms and evidence accumulated result in the field assessment. All field assessments will be filed in accordance with *Territory Records Act 2002* requirements. Files will be reviewed in combination with TaMSD BOP progress report to ensure the report reflects the results of the field assessments.

4.2 Reporting to the Commissioner

ACTRFS will write to the Commissioner bi-annually (approximately February and August) outlining:

- a) Accountability Indicator results;
- b) number of BOPs outstanding or due for review;
- c) number of BOPs received in draft and awaiting approval;
- d) number of approved BOPs within date;
- e) progress of ACT Directorate BOPs;
- f) any strategic or operational issues identified in review of ACT Directorate BOPs; and
- g) actions required in line with legislated responsibilities.

Supporting Documentation

Form Title	Location (document path)
ACTRFS Access Management Upgrade assessment form	G:\ACTRFS\Community Safety\BOP documents\BOP forms
ACTRFS Hazard Reduction Burn assessment form	G:\ACTRFS\Community Safety\BOP documents\BOP forms
ESA Accountability and Strategic Indicators Methodology	G:\Support\SUPPORT SERVICES\CORPORATE\Accountability and Strategic Indicators\Methodology



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5 Related Material

Name	Location (document path)	Document Type
<i>Emergencies Act 2004</i>	http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-28/default.asp	ACT Legislation
Strategic Bushfire Management Plan version 3 (SBMP v3)	http://esa.act.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/SBMP-v3-Draft1.pdf	Territory Plan
<i>Territory Records Act 2002</i>	http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2002-18/default.asp	ACT Legislation
ACT RFS SOP 1.26	G:\ACTRFS\Operations\SOPs\1 Administrative Management	ACT RFS SOP

Maintained By: Manager Community Bushfire Protection

Approved By: Andrew Stark

Position: Chief Officer