

	<p style="text-align: center;">ACT Rural Fire Service Standard Operating Procedure 1.10 <b>Code Of Conduct and Ethics Of RFS Members</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1.10</b> Administrative Management</p>
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### Purpose

It is important that the behavior of all ACT RFS members be above reproach. Appropriate conduct not only develops a sense of confidence within the community but also attracts credibility from other emergency services.

### Operating Procedure.

The Code of Conduct ("**the Code**") establishes standards of behavior expected of all members of the Service.

The Code is not intended to be read as a set of rules where each word is scrutinized for its legal meaning. Rather, it is intended to convey, in plain words, the standards expected of members of the Service.

The Code does not replace, nor is it a substitute for, the general law. All members of the Service must comply with all relevant Territory and Federal laws in common with other members of the community.

Members of the Service who are employed by the Service must also comply with the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Service.

All members of the Service must follow the Code when:

- Acting in the capacity of a member of the Service;
- Participating in any Service activity;
- On Service premises or in a Service Vehicle; or
- Wearing any item of clothing identifiable to the RFS or ESA.

The provisions of the Code are not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive.

The overriding principle or priority guiding the conduct of members of the Service is the safety of members of the Service and the public.

If a member of the Service is unsure about what is appropriate conduct or behavior in a particular situation, the member should seek guidance and clarification from a more senior member of the Service or their supervisor.

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### **Reputation of the Service**

- A member must conduct themselves in a manner that maintains and promotes the reputation of, and enhances public confidence in the Service.
- A member must not behave in a manner that could bring the Service into disrepute.

### **Personal and professional conduct**

- A member must act appropriately and professionally when representing or acting on behalf of the Service.
- A member must perform the duties associated with their position diligently, impartially, efficiently and conscientiously.
- A member must provide necessary and appropriate assistance to members of the public and the Service in line with the core values of the Service.
- A member must not misuse information gained in the course of their involvement with the Service.
- A member must not disclose information gained in the course of their involvement with the Service except as required to properly perform their duties.

### **Honesty and Integrity**

- A member must act honestly and with integrity at all times. A member must act fairly and equitably when dealing with the public and other members of the Service.
- A member must not accept a gift or benefit if it could be seen by a reasonable member of the public as intended or likely to cause the member to do their job in a particular way or to deviate from their proper course of duty.
- A member must not engage in any other conduct that may result in their position being compromised or appearing to be compromised.
- Token gifts or benefits may be accepted where refusal to accept may offend, provided that there is no possibility that the member might be, or might appear to be, compromised in the process. If in doubt, the member should seek advice

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from their Captain, Manager Membership or other senior officer or their supervisor. A member must disclose the receipt of any gift or benefit to such senior officer or supervisor.

- A member must ensure that Service facilities, equipment and vehicles are used efficiently and economically in the course of performing their duties.
- Unless authorised, a member must not use Service facilities, equipment or vehicles for private purposes except where such use is authorised by the Chief Officer.

### **Respect for others**

- A member must acknowledge and respect the rights of other members of the Service and the public.
- A member must treat other members of the Service and the public with courtesy and respect.
- A member must not discriminate against or harass any other member of the Service or the public on the ground of sex, race, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual preference or political opinion.
- A member must not behave in a manner that is likely to cause other members of the Service or the public offence or embarrassment.
- A member must understand and follow the ESA Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

### **Public comment**

- All members of the Service have the right to make public comment and to enter into public debate on social and political issues provided that it is clear that such views do not seek to represent the Service. Public comment includes making oral and written statements in the media as well as in other public forums such as books and journals.
- A member must not make an official comment on matters relating to the Service unless that member is authorised to do so by the Chief Officer.

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- There are some circumstances in which public comment may be inappropriate. These include where it appears (either expressly or by implication) that the public comment, although made in a private capacity, is an official comment of the Service or represents the views of the Service.

### **Conflicts of interest**

- The Term 'conflict of interest' refers to situations where a conflict arises between public duty and private interest, which could influence the performance of official duties and responsibilities. Such conflict generally involves opposing principles or incompatible wishes or needs.
- Conflict of interest can involve pecuniary interests (i.e., financial interests or other material benefits or costs) or non-pecuniary interests. Members must avoid any financial or other personal interest or undertaking that could directly or indirectly compromise the performance of their duties.
- A member who has an actual, possible or potential conflict of interest should promptly, fully and appropriately disclose the conflict with his or her Captain, Manager Membership or other senior officer or their supervisor.
- A conflict of interest will be assessed in terms of the likelihood that the member possessing the particular interest could be influenced, or might appear to be influenced, in the performance of their duties.
- Any such conflict of interest must be resolved in favour of the public interest.
- Any non-disclosure for conflict of interest will be treated as a breach of the code of conduct.

### **Breach of the Code**

- A complaint in relation to a breach of the Code should be referred in the first instance to a more senior officer. In the case of brigade members, this will be the Brigade Captain or Manager Membership. In the case of salaried staff, the more senior officer will be a supervisor or manager.
- If the complaint concerns the senior officer in question, or if the complainant is uncomfortable reporting the matter to the senior officer, the complaint should be

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referred, in the case of brigade members, to the Manager Membership or, in the case of salaried staff, to the Deputy Chief or Chief Officer.

- Action will be taken, and sanctions may be applied, if a breach of the Code occurs. These may include counseling, reprimanding and/or training to ameliorate the effects of the breach and to discourage further breaches.
- Where an alleged breach of the Code constitutes a breach of discipline, it should be dealt with in accordance with relevant Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBA's) for salaries staff, or through brigade management in the case of volunteer members
- Where an alleged breach of the Code constitutes a grievance (i.e., in relation to discrimination or harassment), it should be dealt with in accordance with SOP 6.5 Dispute Resolution
- Alleged breaches of the Code must be dealt with promptly, consistently and fairly.
- Decisions involving alleged breaches of the Code must be properly documented and be supported by written reasons.
- If a suspected breach of the Code also constitutes a breach of law, action may be taken under the Code in addition to any legal proceedings.

### **Interpretation of the Code**

- Questions regarding interpretation of the Code should be referred to the Chief Officer for determination.

**Maintained By:** Manager Membership

**Approved By:** Andrew Stark

**Position:** Chief Officer RFS

**Signature:**



**Date:** 15/02/2011

**Cross Reference SOP/s:** SOP 1.11 Dispute resolution

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SOP 1.23 Alcohol consumption and RFS activities

**Amendments:**