



New South Wales
Fire Brigades

FIRE SERVICES JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE



New South Wales
Rural Fire Service

POLICY NO. 1/2002

NSW Fire Brigades and NSW Rural Fire Service Joint Training Criteria and Proposal

1. Purpose

To promote joint training of members of the NSW Fire Brigade and NSW Rural Fire Service, so that the safety and effectiveness of joint operations is enhanced.

2. Criteria

To ensure a joint activity is appropriate, its purpose and objectives are to be consistent with the business plans of Services involved.

To ensure a joint training activity is provided properly, it shall be coordinated by a person possessing a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, or higher.

To ensure a joint training activity is conducted properly, it shall be conducted by a person (or persons) determined by the person coordinating the activity to have appropriate technical and training and/or assessment competencies.

To ensure a joint training activity is appropriately authorised, it shall only be conducted with the approval of:

- The appropriate Zone Commander (or higher) of the NSW Fire Brigades (or a person delegated by them) and,
- The appropriate Fire Control Officer (or higher) of the NSW Rural Fire Service (or a person delegated by them).

3. Proposal

Each Bush Fire Management Committee's Operations Plan and each Mutual Aid Agreement shall include a requirement for appropriate, regular joint training activities. As a minimum guideline, these requirements should include at least one annual exercise appropriate in scope and scale to the area involved. Examples of joint training activities are given in the following section.

Costs of joint training activities shall be borne by each Service to the extent of the involvement of each. (Note that this does not preclude either Service from providing training on a fee for service basis to the other as a separately agreed arrangement, if desired.)

The Training sections of each Service shall regularly liaise with each other (bilaterally and through the Australasian Fire Authorities Council) to avoid any unnecessary duplication of training activities and to cooperate in training activities where appropriate.

This proposal shall be circulated in the appropriate policy document/s of each Service. Further information may be obtained from the officer in charge of the Training section of each Service.

4. Examples of Joint Training Activities

The following examples of joint training activities are provided to give users of this document some ideas and guidelines for such activities.

(a) Initial Training

Coordinators of courses of initial training at recruit and supervising officer level should consider including a session familiarising participants with the other's Service. Wherever possible, this should be conducted by a suitable officer from the other Service, and typically cover the other Service's:

- History, legislative basis, roles, functions, organisation and culture.
- Typical range of vehicles, equipment, communications and capabilities.
- Structure and content of Standard Operating Guidelines/Procedures.
- Support it can provide under joint arrangements
- Structure, process and content of training.

(b) Specific Support Function Training

Where a mutual aid agreement indicates that one Service has a recognised support function to the other at specific types of incidents, then sufficient joint training should be provided to ensure such operations can be conducted safely and effectively. Typical examples include:

Activities by both services to provide appropriate joint incident management team, communications and logistical support arrangements at joint operations.

- Activities by both services where they provide mutual support in some cases, such as fire investigation.
- Activities by NSWRFSS to provide water supply to NSWFB units at structure or similar fires in locations remote from reticulated water.
- Activities by NSWRFSS to provide peripheral support, if needed, to NSWFB activities at large structural fires, hazmat incidents and rescue incidents. (i.e. To free up NSWFB resources to focus on their core activities, such as work in the “hot zone”.)
- Activities by NSWFB to provide urban fringe property protection support to NSWRFSS bush fire fighting activities.
- Activities by NSWFB to provide support to NSWRFSS at structure fires and vehicle incidents under NSWRFSS control.

(c) Simulated Exercises

Simulated exercises can include discussions of procedures, table-top exercises and exercises for incident management teams supplied with “operational” information from a simulation (or “activation”) cell. They should be planned as regular activities. The simpler types of exercises can be run in conjunction with scheduled joint meetings. The more elaborate exercises will require one or more competent facilitators. Simulated exercises should be used for:

- Evaluating and familiarising members of joint incident management teams with new procedures, and gathering and collating pre-incident planning information.
- Bringing new members of the team “up to speed”.
- Maintaining current incident management team skills.
- Forging effective operational bonds between team members.

(d) Field Exercises

Field exercises involve operational units carrying out simulated fireground activities. These may vary from simple joint drills involving a few appliances, up to large-scale exercises simulating a large disaster.

Simple joint drills and exercises between units of both Services who are likely to work with each other operationally should be encouraged as part of each Service’s normal competency maintenance program. Joint pre-incident planning activities should also be considered (e.g. joint familiarisation visits to high risk locations and joint development of local pre-incident planning sheets/maps)

Large scale exercises need to have the following characteristics:

- They should simulate a clearly defined scenario.
- They should use the type and scale of resources that would normally be expected to respond to such an incident.
- All participants should be thoroughly briefed about the situation being simulated, the objectives of the exercise, any “props” being used, how it is to be conducted, simulated and initiated, the resources (participants, equipment and supplies) available, the applicable command control and communications arrangements, and any specific hazards and precautions (e.g. hot fire training precautions).

- Provisions should exist to handle contingencies such as the occurrence of a real incident during the exercise and emergencies involving participants.
- Sufficient, suitably competent observers and equipment should be provided to monitor the safety of activities, preserve the safety of activities, ensure any community or environmental restrictions on the exercise are observed, and to record and critique the exercise.
- A thorough debriefing should be conducted with the aim of identifying items of improvement to the equipment, systems, doctrine, procedures, communications and training that were exercised.

Joint exercises may be integrated with exercises conducted for other purposes, such as airport emergency exercises. However, from year to year, joint exercises should be varied so as to cover a wide scope of possible scenarios and issues.

5. The Joint Exercise Process

Each mutual aid agreement is to provide for an annual meeting between officers from each Service who have principal responsibility for operational and training activities in the area. The meeting is to:

- Discuss and evaluate recent joint operations in the area, review changes to risks and familiarise participants with any recent, relevant, policy and procedural changes.
- From the above, discuss and determine the area's joint training needs and priorities.
- Determine the type and scale of training sessions and major joint exercise/s appropriate to the area, and set a suitable schedule for them to be conducted.
- Assign suitable officers to plan the proposed major sessions and exercises.
- Determine and implement suitable ways to promote and monitor minor joint training and exercise activities within the area (e.g. combined drills, or pre-incident planning activities involving one or two neighbouring units from each Service.)
- Review, monitor and report on the above activities.

6. Auditing

The officers from each Service responsible for auditing performance in the region to which an area belongs shall ensure their auditing process includes:

- Checking that joint training activities comply with the above criteria and proposal.
- Identifying any barriers that might exist to joint training and exercises.
- Providing the relevant local officers with advice on how any shortfalls and barriers can be effectively corrected.
- Reporting any shortfalls and barriers to their supervising officer.

7. Review

The Fire Services Joint Standing Committee requires that this Policy be reviewed within 12 months of the implementation date of 12 March 2002.

Issued on behalf of the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee:

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P C Koperberg, AM, AFSM, BEM
Commissioner
NSW Rural Fire Service

14 March 2002

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I Mac Dougall, AC, AFSM
Commissioner
NSW Fire Brigades

14 March 2002