



POLICY NO. 3/2000

Coordinated Firefighting Operations Health and Safety

Rationale

Fire fighting authorities have an obligation and responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its fire fighters. This obligation arises from the legal, moral, economic and social impacts of injury, illness and death upon the community and family of fire fighters.

Each agency has their own health and safety policies which they implement when participating in Coordinated Firefighting Operations. The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee believes it is important to have a health and safety policy which supports cooperative and coordinated fire fighting and fire management activities.

It is also recognised that during coordinated operations, that the principles of Incident Control Systems (ICS) will be employed. ICS recognises the responsibility of the Incident Controller for health and safety as well as the possible appointment of a Safety Officer. Accordingly, health and safety considerations should underlie all activities on the fire ground and within the incident management team.

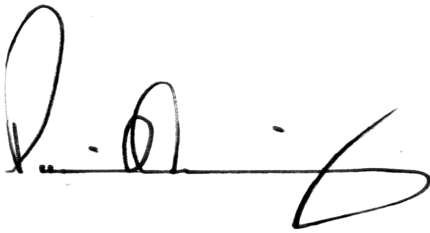
Policy

- 1. The health and safety of all personnel in bush fire preparation and operations is the principle consideration.**
- 2. The responsibility for health and safety on the fire ground at all times lies with the Incident Controller. The Incident Controller may appoint a Safety Officer with health and safety functions when the size of an incident grows and warrants such appointment.**
- 3. Having a Safety Officer does not relieve any personnel of responsibility for their own health and safety. All personnel are obligated to look out for their own personal health and safety and that of their co-workers. Where an individual or crew considers health and safety circumstances are genuinely threatened, they are under an obligation to report this immediately to the Incident Controller (via the chain of command) and may refuse to undertake the task.**

4. **Within the overall command structure for Coordinated Firefighting Operations, individual agencies will retain their own command structure and shall be responsible for and exercise their own work practices to ensure the health and safety of their personnel. The Coordinated Firefighting System is structured such that no member of an agency can direct a member of another agency to engage in work practices that are inconsistent with the policies/approved practices of the agency concerned.**

5. **All injuries, accidents and unsafe work practices are to be reported to the Incident Controller or his/her delegate. In addition, the incident is to be reported in accordance with the relevant agency procedures.**

6. **This policy is to be brought to the attention of all firefighters and particularly managers/supervisors and agencies likely to be involved in firefighting operations and planning.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Koperberg', with a long horizontal line extending to the right and a large loop at the end.

Phil Koperberg, AO, AFSM, BEM
Chairman
20 April 2000