

Code of Conduct and Ethics of RFS Members

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 describes the values and behaviours that mark the conduct and ethics of ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS) members.

The ACTRFS is a service integrated within the Emergency Services Agency (ESA) within the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) and is subject to the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) Code of Conduct. The ACTPS Code of Conduct defines the Employee Values and Signature Behaviours, which define who we are as an organisation. This service standard defines the code of conduct for ACT RFS staff and volunteer members.

Scope

This service standard is applicable to ACT RFS personnel engaging in ACT RFS activities within the ACT, interstate or overseas.

Responsibilities

Members	Ensure they understand the ACTRFS Code of Conduct. Adhere to the Code of Conduct when engaged in RFS activities. Report breaches of the code to a more senior brigade officer or ACTRFS HQ
Brigade Captain/Crew Leader	Seek advice for action from the ACT RFS Manager, Membership. Resolve disputes in compliance with 3.1.8 Dispute Resolution Service Standard.
ACT RFS Chief Officer	Ensure appropriate actions are followed.

ACT Public Service Values and Signature Behaviours

The ACTPS Employee Values and Signature Behaviours are the fundamentals by which we measure our own behaviour and the behaviour of others. These values and behaviours apply across the entire ACTPS, including staff and volunteer members of the ACTRFS.

Respect

Respect in the ACTPS means treating others with the sensitivity, courtesy and understanding we would wish for ourselves, and recognising that everyone has something to offer. It means considering 'would I be happy if this was happening to me?' and rests on the foundation of fundamental decency in our dealings with all.

*In demonstrating **respect**...*

- We take pride in our work.
- We value and acknowledge the contribution of others.
- We relate to colleagues and clients in a fair, decent, caring and professional manner.

Integrity

Integrity in the ACTPS means being apolitical, honest, dependable, and accountable in our dealings with Ministers, the Parliament, the public and each other. It means recognising achievement, not avoiding uncomfortable conversations and implies consistency in our dealings with others.

*In demonstrating **integrity**...*

- We do what we say we will do and respond appropriately, especially when the unexpected occurs.
- We take responsibility and are accountable for our decisions and actions.
- We engage genuinely with the community, and manage the resources entrusted to us honestly and responsibly.

Collaboration

Collaboration in the ACTPS means actively sharing information and resources, working together towards shared goals and considering 'who else do I need to talk to in order to get this right?'. It means actively seeking opportunities for breaking down unhealthy silos and relies on genuine engagement with colleagues in the ACTPS and the broader community.

*In demonstrating **collaboration**...*

- We work openly and share appropriate information to reach shared goals.
- We actively seek the views of others when solving problems, and value and act on feedback for how we can do things better.

Innovation

Innovation means asking 'why?', actively seeking both new and better ways of doing what we do, as well as better things to do, and not settling for how it has always been. It means empowering members at all levels to offer new ideas and necessitates sensible and thoughtful engagement with risk.

*In demonstrating **innovation** ...*

- We look for ways to continuously improve our services and skills.
- We are open to change and welcome new ideas from all sources.

Code of Conduct

The ACTRFS Code of Conduct (the Code) establishes standards of behaviour expected of all members including volunteers, paid employees, trainees, all third parties and students on work placements with the ACT RFS (the Service).

The Code applies to conduct in all circumstances including face to face interactions, engagement on social media, published material, in written form, and in meetings.

The Code is intended to convey in plain words, the standards expected of all people engaged with the Service.

The provisions of the Code are not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive. Under the code, ACTRFS members must:

- conduct themselves in a manner which maintains and promotes the reputation of the Service, enhances public confidence in the Service, and does not bring the Service into disrepute.
- comply with all relevant Territory and Federal laws.
- comply with and uphold all ACTRFS guidelines and procedures and follow all lawful and reasonable directions.
- act in accordance with the core values and signature behaviours as outlined above.
- abide by and follow the principles set out in the ESA Volunteer Charter.
- Members always act honestly and with integrity when representing or acting on behalf of the Service, including when:
 - acting in the capacity of a member of the Service
 - participating in any Service activity
 - on Service premises or in a service vehicle
 - wearing any item of clothing identifiable to the Service or ESA.
- not engage in any conduct which may result in their position being compromised or appearing to be compromised.
- perform the duties associated with their position diligently, impartially, efficiently and conscientiously.
- refrain from providing false or misleading information relating to the Service, its staff, or its members.
- acknowledge and respect the rights of other members, staff, and the public and not discriminate.

- fully and appropriately disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest to a Senior Brigade Officer, supervisor or the Assistant Director Volunteer Membership and Engagement.
- 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.
- ensure Service facilities, equipment, vehicles and other resources are used for their intended purpose and in an efficient and proper manner. Exceptional use of resources must be approved in writing by the ACTRFS Chief Officer.
- not misuse or disclose information gained through the Service, or from an incident, for personal gain.
- not make any official comment on matters relating to the Service unless that member is authorised to do so by the ACTRFS Chief Officer.
 - Inappropriate comments include, but are not limited to, those of an offensive, obscene, threatening, abusive or defamatory nature, whether in reference to, or directed towards, a colleague, a member of the public, the Service, ESA/JACS or ACT Government.
 - Members must be aware that comments expressed in all social media forums such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter or Public Forums - may lead to disciplinary action where the comments are found to be inappropriate and a connection to the workplace is established. A connection to the workplace may exist where the nature of the comments identifies the person is making them as an ACT RFS member.
 - Despite privacy mechanisms in many social media tools, the content should be considered public. ACTRFS members are advised to exercise discretion in determining what content they post on social media particularly given that images could be disturbing or misleading to others in an emergency.

Where a perceivable connection might exist between such content and the workplace, it is important to ensure that the content is in accordance with the values and requirements of the ACT RFS Code of Conduct.

Breach of the Code

Breaches of the Code should be referred to a more Senior Brigade Officer, a supervisor or the Assistant Director Volunteer Membership and Engagement.

Sanctions may be applied if a breach of the Code occurs. These may include counselling, reprimand, training and/or removal from the Service to ameliorate the effects of the breach and to discourage further breaches.

All decisions relating to an alleged breach of the Code must be documented in writing.

Breaches of the Code in relation to a grievance (i.e. discrimination or harassment), should be dealt with in accordance with 3.1.8 Dispute Resolution Service Standard.


Further guidance can be obtained from a more senior member, a supervisor or the Assistant Director Volunteer Membership and Engagement. Matters relating to the interpretation of the Code should be referred to the ACT RFS Chief Officer.

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Andrew Stark	1.0	15/02/2011	Previously SOP 1.21
Rohan Scott	3.0	03/04/2019	Complete review of document
Stephen Carter	3.0	20/02/2020	Adapted to new template and numbering system.
Julian Davies	3.0	29/07/2021	Administrative review completed
Andrew Gradie	4.0	1/03/2023	Administrative review

Approved by

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

Document Owner

Position	Section
Assistant Director	Volunteer Membership and Engagement

Next review due: 01/02/2027

Related documents

Document name
3.1.8 Dispute Resolution Service Standard
1.1.4 Alcohol & Drug Consumption and RFS Activities Service Standard
3.1.4 RFS Membership Service Standard
1.1.1 Proper Use of RFS Property and Equipment Service Standard
Emergency Services Agency Volunteer Charter

Document name
ACT Legislation Register
Commonwealth Legislation
ACT Public Sector Management Act 1994
Fair Work Act 2009
ACT Public Service Code of Conduct
ACT Public Service Code of Ethics
ACT Public Sector Management Standards

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.