



**ACT**  
Government



**ACT**  
**FIRE &  
RESCUE**



# COMMUNITY FIRE UNIT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## POLICY CFU003

JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY DIRECTORATE  
ACT EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCY  
ACT FIRE & RESCUE

NOVEMBER 2024

# Content

- 1 PURPOSE..... 3
- 2 LEGISLATION..... 3
- 3 CATEGORIES OF DUTIES..... 4
- 4 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES ..... 5
- 5 HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUESTIONNAIRE ..... 6
- 6 REPORTING INJURIES, INCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES ..... 7
- APPENDIX 1 – HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUESTIONNAIRE ..... 8
- MEDICAL PRACTITIONER CLEARANCE ..... 12

# 1 PURPOSE

**1.1** This policy establishes the processes that must be followed to ensure the health and wellbeing of Community Fire Unit (CFU) members so they are able to perform their duties on behalf of ACT Fire and Rescue (ACTF&R).

**1.2** Fit for duty, for the purpose of the policy, includes that a member is in a state (physical and mental) where they can perform assigned tasks competently and in a manner which does not compromise or threaten the safety or health of themselves or others.

**1.3** These health and wellbeing requirements take into consideration:

- the awareness of individuals to understand their obligation to be fit for duty to carry out the required functions performed by the CFU; and
- the duty of care requirements in accordance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (WHS Act 2011)*.

**1.4** This policy is applicable to all personnel from the CFU, as defined in the *Emergencies Act 2004*.

**1.5** This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with a formal review to occur every two years.

# 2 LEGISLATION

**2.1** Division 2 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* outlines the provisions of Primary Duty of Care:

*(1) A person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of:*

*(a) workers engaged, or caused to be engaged by the person; and*

*(b) workers whose activities in carrying out work are influenced or directed by the person; while the workers are at work in the business or undertaking.*

**2.2** CFU volunteers are considered 'workers' for the purposes of the *WHS Act 2011*.

**2.3** The ACTF&R Chief Officer must ensure the health and safety of the CFU members is considered as part of the environment in which they participate and operate and encourages CFU members to achieve and maintain a good level of health and fitness to participate in the tasks required of them.

**2.4** As outlined under Division 4.2.2 of the *Emergencies Act 2004*, the objects and functions of CFUs are:

*(1) The object of a community fire unit is to assist people in the area for which the unit is established to learn how to —*

*(a) assist with defensive protection of property from fire; and*

*(b) use equipment for fire prevention work and fire fighting.*

*2) The functions of a community fire unit are to —*

*(a) undertake fire prevention work; and*

*(b) assist with fire fighting during a fire emergency; and*

*(c) assist with recovery operations after a fire emergency.*

## **3 CATEGORIES OF DUTIES**

**3.1** The functions performed by the CFU occur in a variety of environmental settings such as steep and uneven terrain, adverse weather conditions, and the presence of smoke. CFU members therefore may in the course of their duties be asked to perform tasks that demand a specific level of physical fitness in a range of environmental conditions. CFU members also need to ensure they are mentally prepared for tasks which may be asked of them.

**3.2** The following serves as a physical baseline standard for CFU tasks:

- field work that requires complete control of all physical faculties;
- considerable walking over irregular ground and standing for prolonged periods of time;
- lifting 11 to 20 kg, including heavy items out of a trailer;
- bending, twisting, and reaching;
- dragging a charged hose over the fire ground;
- other occasional demands that may require moderately strenuous activities in emergencies over lengthy periods of time.

## 4 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

**4.1** CFU Volunteers have a responsibility to themselves to manage their health and wellbeing and understand what is required of them under this policy and in the course of their duties. CFU members should:

- Familiarise themselves with this document and the requirements outlined within.
- Understand their own personal requirements for health and wellbeing.
- Complete the Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire (Refer Appendix 1).
- Ensure that personal information, including any limitations related to health and wellbeing, is disclosed to the relevant individuals.
- Adequately consider risks to health and wellbeing during the course of their duties.
- Report all injuries, incidents, near misses and illnesses, and
- Maintain an appropriate level of health and wellbeing for CFU functions.

**4.2** CFU members should also refer to the *Fatigue Management Guidelines* and the *Heat Stress Guidelines* when conducting CFU operations and training.

# 5 HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUESTIONNAIRE

**5.1** CFU members must complete the **CFU Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire** (Refer Appendix 1) every two years to evaluate whether they are fit for duty for the CFU.

**5.2** New recruits are required to complete the CFU Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire upon applying to join the CFU.

**5.3** The ACTF&R CFU Coordinator will review completed questionnaires to evaluate appropriate levels of health and wellbeing, and to categorise members into related operational and non-operational roles.

## **Evidence of Health**

**5.4** There will be occasions where CFU members are required to show documentation and evidence of their health and/or ability to perform CFU duties, generally through presentation of a medical certificate from a licenced medical practitioner. These include:

- Where they have identified any current conditions in their health and wellbeing questionnaire.
- Returning from injury or illness.

**5.5** The costs associated with gaining a medical certificate must be borne by the CFU member or new recruit.

**Note:** As per Section 4 of the *Justice and Community Safety Privacy Policy*, ACTF&R strive to collect only the information needed for the specific function or activity being carried out. ACTF&R do not collect personal information about you unless it is necessary.

## 6 REPORTING INJURIES, INCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES

**6.1** CFU members must submit an online report via the ACTPS Safety Portal within 48 hours for all injuries, incidents and near misses that take place during CFU activities. This includes:

- any injury that requires some form of first aid treatment;
- any damage to equipment or vehicles; and
- any near misses that could have resulted in personal injury or damage to equipment or vehicles.

**6.2** Members who develop an illness or sustain an injury outside of their CFU activities must also report this to the CFU Coordinator as soon as possible. This includes, but is not limited to, illness or injuries that results in the member:

- being deemed medically unfit for their normal employment;
- being deemed medically unfit for their CFU role.

**6.3** The CFU Coordinator will advise on a case-by-case basis the conditions that must be met by members to enable their return to CFU duties following illness or injury. This includes if they believe a case presents a high risk to the CFU, volunteers or their peers.

**6.4** All ACTF&R staff and volunteers who handle documentation in relation to injuries, incidents and near misses must do so in accordance with the current *Territory Records Act 2002*.

# APPENDIX 1 – HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION ONE: CONTACT DETAILS		
Name:		
CFU:		
Phone:		
Emergency Contact:		
Emergency Contact Phone:		
SECTION TWO: HEALTH DETAILS		
Age:		
Date of Birth:		
Gender:		
Are you male over 35 or female over 45 and NOT used to VIGOROUS exercise?	Y	N
Is there a family history of heart disease, stroke, raised cholesterol or sudden death?	Y	N
Are you on prescribed medication?	Y	N
Have you given birth in the last 6 weeks?	Y	N
Do you have any infectious diseases?	Y	N
Have you been hospitalised recently?	Y	N



Are you pregnant?	Y	N
<b>Do you have or have you had:</b>		
Stroke	Y	N
Diabetes	Y	N
Any heart condition	Y	N
High blood pressure > 140/90	Y	N
Dizziness or fainting	Y	N
Palpitations/pain in the chest	Y	N
Asthma	Y	N
Arthritis	Y	N
Other musculoskeletal problems	Y	N
Epilepsy	Y	N
Hernia	Y	N
Gout	Y	N
Liver or kidney condition	Y	N
Stomach or duodenal ulcer	Y	N
Glandular/rheumatic fever	Y	N
Mental health issues	Y	N

<b>Any chronic pain or major injuries in the following areas?</b>		
Neck	Y	N
Knees	Y	N
Back	Y	N
Ankles	Y	N
Shoulders	Y	N
Elbows	Y	N
Wrists	Y	N

**If you circled yes to a condition above, please give details of conditions, medications and if relevant, approximate dates cleared.**

**If you circled YES to any condition above, please take this form and the Medical Practitioner Clearance form to your Medical Practitioner and ask for a written medical clearance prior to commencing the CFU Induction program, or continuing your CFU membership.**

**If you already have a medical clearance for any conditions above please provide evidence.**

Medical clearance attached:	Y	N
<b>SIGNATURE</b>		
<p>I recognise that the ACT Emergency Services Agency is not able to provide me with medical advice in regard to my health and that the information above is used as a guideline to the limitations of my ability to exercise.</p> <p>I have answered the questions to the best of my ability.</p> <p>Signed: .....</p> <p>Date: .....</p> <p>NOTE: Should you suffer an illness or condition in the future, please tell us by completing this form again.</p>		

## MEDICAL PRACTITIONER CLEARANCE

Member Name	
<p>The above client has indicated an intention to participate in Community Fire Unit training and/or Work Capacity test. The client would like to attempt training consisting of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• field work that requires complete control of all physical faculties;</li> <li>• considerable walking over irregular ground and standing for prolonged periods of time;</li> <li>• lifting 11 to 20 kg, including heavy items out of a trailer;</li> <li>• bending, twisting, and reaching;</li> <li>• dragging a charged hose over the fire ground;</li> <li>• other occasional demands that may require moderately strenuous activities in emergencies over lengthy periods of time.</li> </ul> <p>Please note that conditions during a fire event when the unit is likely to be stood up will be hot, smoky and at a heightened stress level. Please take this into consideration when signing this clearance.</p> <p>Can you please assess this client to see that they are a suitable candidate to complete the above assessment, and if required, list any recommendations regarding the client’s exercise limitations.</p>	
<p>This client is able to undertake the training stated above. <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></span></p>	
<p>This client is not able to undertake the training stated above. <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></span></p>	
Recommendations:	

--	--	--	--

Name of Medical Practitioner			
Contact Number		Provider Number	
Signed and Date			

**Related legislation and documents**

Emergencies Act 2004 (ACT)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Fatigue Management Guidelines

Heat Stress Guidelines

Territory Records Act 2002

Justice and Community Safety Privacy Policy

**Amendment History**  
Version number:

Description of changes

1.0

Created

**Version control**

**Guideline created by**

ACTFR Training and Development

**Version number**

1

**File location**

**Approval officer**

ACTF&R CHIEF OFFICER

**Review date**

November 2026

**Section responsible for review**

ACTF&R CFU Section



**ACT  
FIRE &  
RESCUE**

JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY DIRECTORATE  
ACT EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCY  
ACT FIRE & RESCUE

NOVEMBER 2024