



Shire of
Collie



Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Fit for Duty Policy

1.0 Application:

All members are reminded of their responsibility in relation to be Fit for Active Duties.

This policy applies to volunteer fire fighters who are registered with the Shire of Collie Bush Fire Brigades as Active and Auxiliary members whilst attending incidents and training events.

2.0 Head of Power:

Pursuant to Clause 36 (d) of the Bush Fires Act 1954, Local Government has the following responsibility:

(d) establish and maintain bush fire brigades as a part of its organisation for the prevention, control, and extinguishment of bush fires.

Pursuant to the Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984.

3.0 Purpose:

The Shire of Collie is committed to providing volunteers with a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which to work and meeting its obligations in accordance with the Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984 and accepts the responsibility for safety at work through creating and maintaining a safe work environment.

The Shire of Collie recognises the unsafe behaviour and health risks associated with alcohol and other drug use and is committed to responding to this issue responsibly. This includes auxiliary volunteers who wish to seek treatment.

The purpose of the drug and alcohol policy is to ensure a safe workplace free from the effects of drugs and alcohol. The procedure is directed towards the welfare of the individual and the safety and health of other people. Although disciplinary action may be necessary, the focus is on preventative measures such as utilising the Employee Assistance Program, counselling options, information sessions and a drug free workplace.

For the purpose of meeting our duty of care, volunteers who attend incidents or training under the influence of, drugs and/or alcohol in excess of 0.05%BAC and/or , medications which affect mental alertness or coordination, or being in any other way impaired for Active Duty, will not be tolerated by the Shire of Collie. In order to ensure that this duty is fulfilled, the Shire of Collie has implemented this policy in the interests of occupational safety and health.

Refusal to undergo a drugs or alcohol screen test will be deemed as a positive result. The volunteer will follow the Return to Duty/Disciplinary Process.

The Shire of Collie recognises that the health and wellbeing of our volunteers is important and will commit to providing a supportive and safe culture.

This document is to be included in the volunteer's induction to the relevant brigade.

4.0 Responsibilities:

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Directors:

- are responsible for authorising this procedure and any amendments made.

The Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM):

- is responsible for formulation of any correspondence and guidance relating to any disciplinary matters resulting from this work procedure.
- in consultation with the OHS Officer are responsible for updating and reviewing this policy.
- They will be required to arrange, where necessary for any testing that may be required.
- Authorises the AOD test.

The OHS Officer:

- provides support, legislative updates and assistance where required.
- Is the Pathwest contact for AOD results.

Brigade Office Bearers:

- are responsible for managing their personnel in their brigade and will be required to report concerns to the CEO, CESM or Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO).
- are required to ensure compliance of the procedure throughout their respective Shire of Collie Bush Fire Brigades.
- must maintain privacy and confidentiality at all times and facilitate other actions required of them within the policy.
- Must initiate a personal incident diary note where a possible breach occurs.
- Ensure that all volunteers are made aware of this policy through induction into the brigade.
- Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy.

All volunteers:

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required.
- Consider this policy while completing active volunteer related duties and at any time while representing the Shire of Collie.
- Support fellow volunteers in their awareness of this policy
- Support and contribute to the Shire of Collie's aim of providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment for all volunteers.
- are responsible for ensuring they are fit and free from the effects of alcohol and drugs, prior to responding to incidents or attend brigade events.
- at any time can report any concerns in their brigade to the CEO, CESM or CBFCO.

5.0 Scope

The policy applies to all Shire of Collie Bush Fire Brigade Members and Office Bearers.

Alcohol

Volunteers under the influence of alcohol, above the cut off test levels, will not be permitted to perform active duties or attend incidents. Volunteers working under visibly obvious, adverse effects of alcohol, will be stood down from their duties and taken for breath analysis testing. If a positive test result which is greater than 0.05%BAC is received, then the volunteer will be stood down from their active duties and will not be permitted to resume active duties until such time as they have proven they are fit for work. The accepted level of

alcohol will be at the current level denoted in the Road Traffic Act 1974. The level is currently 0.05 BAC (blood alcohol content). A BAC limit of 0.02 applies to drivers of the following vehicles of a heavy motor vehicle (one which has a GVM or GCM exceeding 13.9 tonnes), with the exception of response to an incident as defined Road Traffic Act 1974, Part V, Division 2, Section 64A, Subsection (4A). In this case a BAC limit of 0.05 applies.

In some instances, there will be occasions where alcohol may be included as part of a brigade function, incident debrief, or other recognised brigade event. Volunteers must continue to behave in a sensible and responsible manner with due care for their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. Failure to behave in a sensible and responsible manner with due care, or any failure to follow any directions given by management regarding consumption of alcohol may result in disciplinary action.

In these instances, alternative arrangements need to be made by volunteers for getting to their own residence. The Shire of Collie accepts no responsibility for volunteers during travel to and from any brigade function whilst under the influence.

Drugs – Illicit and other illegal substances

Being under the influence of Illicit drugs or prescribed drugs that cause deleterious effects and other illegal substances are strictly prohibited by the Shire of Collie. Suffering adverse effects of drugs or other illegal substances whilst performing their duties for the Shire of Collie Bush Fire Brigades and/or whilst on any active duty for the Shire of Collie will result in disciplinary action and may lead to instant dismissal.

6.0 PROCEDURE:

6.1 Testing for Alcohol & Illicit Drug Substances

To deter the use of alcohol and drugs and reduce the level of risk of accidents/ incidents from alcohol and drugs, testing shall be carried out as Urine Testing and Breath Alcohol Analysis. If a non-negative is indicated for THC by the urine test, then a swab test will be conducted to establish impairment/recent use. This may occur at any time.

Once a breach has been identified, the process is:

- a) The CESM or OHS Officer will make the appointments and raise a purchase order at an approved provider. Each volunteer will then be notified of their appointment time.
- b) The brigade Fire Control Officer or Captain of each volunteer will be notified of their appointment time.
- c) The OHS Officer/CESM and/or Captain/Fire Control Officer (FCO) will accompany the volunteer to the appointment.
- d) Each volunteer will be verbally notified of their test results after the test.

6.2 For Cause testing shall occur:

- a) if after consultation with the CEO, CBFCO and/or CESM by the incident controller or crew leader, the volunteer exhibits indicators as listed in 6.2(d).
- b) After any motor vehicle accident/incident occurring performing active duties if deemed necessary by either the CEO, CBFCO and/or CESM after consideration of the indicators as listed in 2(d).

*The driver of the vehicle/appliance must report the incident immediately to their Incident Controller/Sector Commander/Crew Leader and where possible, not move the vehicle until they have been instructed to do so.

* The incident resulted in bodily harm to any person; or

* If it is a moving vehicle accident – if both vehicles involved were moving at the time of accident;

* Consideration is to be given to the nature of firefighting and the need for appliances to be used in a manner that would not be considered normal operating conditions. Damage to appliances can be expected to occur in some of these situations. Where damage goes beyond what would be considered normal for the operating environment the vehicle is in, or impairment appears to have been a contributing factor, or the damage is significant in nature.

c) The CEO or his delegated authority has the discretion to undertake alcohol and drug testing at any time.

d) Indicators that may be displayed by people affected by AOD;

Immediate physical indicators may include but are not limited to:

- impaired or unstable coordination
- slowed reaction times
- glazed and/or bloodshot eyes
- disorientation and dizziness
- slurred speech
- speaking too loudly or too softly
- drowsiness and falling asleep
- difficulty in concentrating
- shakes, tremors and/or seizures
- nausea and vomiting
- unusual behaviour, including violence, aggression, paranoia, lack of inhibition or self-control
- unusual smells on breath, body or clothing.

All testing for drugs and alcohol shall comply with the Australian/New Zealand Standard 4308-2008: “Procedures for specimen collection and the detection and quantitation of drugs of abuse in urine.”

A flow chart of the process is attached as Diagram 1: Managing Volunteers who may be impaired by Alcohol and Other Drugs.

7.0 Disciplinary Action

7.1. First Warning

7.1.1 The volunteer will be immediately stood down from active duty if found unfit for active duty by producing a non-negative drug or positive alcohol test or failure to present for the testing result. This will be communicated to their FCO/Captain.

7.1.2 Alcohol: If a positive test result is received, then the volunteer will be stood down from their duties and will not be permitted to resume their duties until such time as they

have proven they are fit for work. The accepted level of alcohol is at the current level denoted in the Road Traffic Act 1974. The level is currently 0.05 BAC (blood alcohol content) or 0.02 BAC applies to drivers of vehicles of a heavy motor vehicle (one which has a GVM or GCM exceeding 13.9 tonnes), with the exception of response to an incident, in this case a BAC limit of 0.05 applies.

7.1.3 Illicit Drugs: A volunteer must undergo a urine drug screen, paid for by the Shire of Collie. If this test comes back with 'non-negative' reading, then that volunteer will be stood down immediately from active duty. The non-negative test sample will be sent to PathWest for further analysis – (this can take up to 3 working days). The results will be sent to OHS Officer.

- a) If the PathWest results are over the Australian Standards cut off limit, then the volunteer will remain stood down. The volunteer will not be permitted to return to active duties until they have tested again and present a negative result for all illicit substances. All costs associated with the test to return to active duties will be the responsibility of the Shire. The test results are to be sent to the OHS Officer.
- b) If the PathWest results are under the Australian Standards cut off limit, then the volunteer can return to active duties. The volunteer will return to active duties immediately with no prejudice and no further action.
- c) The CEO or his delegated authority is required to meet with the affected volunteer after the volunteer has returned to active duty unaffected by drugs or alcohol to reiterate:
 - The unacceptability of the volunteer's behaviour.
 - The risk that such behaviour creates for the safety of the individual and other volunteers or members of the public.
 - The volunteer's responsibility to demonstrate that the problem is being effectively addressed.
 - That any future breach of the policy may result in instant dismissal.
- d) The volunteer may be submitted for random drug and alcohol screenings for a period of twelve months from the date of a positive test result. All costs will be paid for by the Shire of Collie.

7.2. Second Warning/Dismissal

The volunteer will be immediately stood down from active duty, if found unfit for active duties by producing a non-negative or positive drug or alcohol test result.

- a) If the PathWest results are under the Australian Standards cut off limit, then the volunteer can return to active duties. The volunteer will return to active duties immediately with no prejudice and no further action.
- b) If the PathWest results are over the Australian Standards cut off limit, then the volunteer shall not return to the brigade or active duties and shall await a meeting request from the CEO or his delegated authority. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to state their case to the CEO or his delegated authority.
- c) The volunteer may then be immediately dismissed without further notice.

If after a period of 12 months, the volunteer would like to return to the original brigade, or another brigade, a negative drug test must be presented (no older than 2 weeks old) prior to reinstatement.

7.3. Instant Dismissal

The following are guidelines to circumstances that can result in dismissal without notice:

- a) Any attempt to interfere with or falsify the drug and alcohol screen.
- b) Found guilty of cultivating, selling or supplying drugs and/or other illegal substances.
- c) Unauthorised consumption of illicit drugs or alcohol during training or active duties.

7.4. Refusal to comply

- a) If at any stage a volunteer refuses to stop active duties or leave the fire ground, as directed by Incident Controller/Crew Leader, the appropriate steps necessary shall be taken to remove the volunteer.
- b) Refusal to participate in a drug and alcohol assessment will be treated as a positive result.

The volunteer will have to complete a Drug and Alcohol test at their own expense with the results sent directly from the medical center to the OHS Officer before return to duty. A non-negative result will be treated as a first or second offence.

8.0 Privacy and Confidentiality

The use of information gained as a result of an alcohol or illegal drug tests will be strictly limited to the purposes consistent within this policy.

It is important that the Shire of Collie ensures that volunteer information is kept confidential and secure. All documentation and requests for disclosure will be handled according to relevant legislation. The Shire of Collie will however provide information from test results to relevant brigade FCO's/Captains to allow them to determine fitness for work, assignment of appropriate duties or rehabilitation purposes.

9.0 What are the cut-off levels for a positive result?

Type of Drug	AS/NZS 4308:2008 (Urine)GC-MS cut-of level	Shire of Collie cut-off level
Alcohol	<i>In line with the Road Traffic Act 1974</i>	<i>In line with the Road Traffic Act 1974</i>
Amphetamines	300 ug/L	300 ug/L
Benzodiazepines	200 ug/L	200 ug/L
Cannabis	Refer to Saliva Test	25 ng/mL Parent THC (Delta 9)
Cocaine	300 ug/L	300 ug/L
Opiates	300 ug/L	300 ug/L

10.0 Test Cut-off Levels Saliva Drug Test

- **THC: 25 ng/ml (Parent Drug)**
- **COC: 50 ng/ml**
- **AMP: 50 ng/ml**
- **METH: 50 ng/ml**
- **OPI: 50 ng/ml**
- **BZO: 50 ng/ml**
- **OXY: 40 ng/ml**

11.0 Physically Fit

For the purpose of meeting our duty of care, volunteers will take responsibility for maintaining their physical wellbeing and will be physically fit to carry out their inherent role requirements. The Shire of Collie will support all volunteers who are actively maintaining their physical wellbeing by providing encouragement and support. Any volunteer who cannot carry out their role as an Active Member may seek a leave of absence or a change in membership status.

12.0 Fatigue

For the purpose of meeting our duty of care, volunteers who are suffering fatigue will immediately notify their officer in charge/community emergency services manager. Fatigue can be the result of many different situations. Due to this, this procedure will directly reflect the implications of fatigue through

- Lack of sleep
- Work
- External activities/commitments

In the interest of safety and health it is important that volunteers remain alert and function at full capacity whilst performing the duties of an active member. When affected by significant fatigue, actions may be impaired through lack of concentration and poor judgement, therefore increasing the potential to cause injury or harm to themselves, personnel or members of the public. All volunteers must be responsible and report any significant fatigue.

The Shire of Collie will provide transport and/or alternate arrangements for volunteers affected by fatigue whilst attending incidents within the Shire of Collie and external to the Shire of Collie when arrangements have not been made by the controlling agency.

13.0 Prescription Medication

If a Shire of Collie volunteer is taking any prescription medication that have been prescribed for them by their medical practitioner that may affect their ability for duty or work performance, then they should report this directly to their manager/supervisor. The volunteer should also find out from their doctor or pharmacist what effects prescribed drugs may have on their work performance, and if necessary take the recommended leave so that they may recover.

14.0 Medically Unwell/Unfit

All volunteers who are medically unfit or unwell and have taken time off work for an extended period of time, may be requested at the discretion of the CEO/CESM to provide a full medical clearance based on the active volunteer role. The Shire of Collie will be responsible for any cost associated with the clearance requested by the CEO/CESM.

All volunteers who are receiving a disability pension or workers compensation from their paid employment, will be required to provide a full medical clearance based on the inherent volunteer role. The Shire of Collie will be responsible for any cost associated with the clearance.

15.0 Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Shire of Collie understands volunteers may be experiencing difficulties external to work that may influence their behaviour and health whilst at work. To assist with the recovery of the volunteer, the Shire of Collie has in place a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP). We offer a total of 3 counselling sessions, if further sessions are required; approval from the CEO must be obtained. This can be requested through the treating counsellor. All sessions are confidential, and the Shire of Collie are not advised of any information shared or obtained at a counselling session. All volunteers can access this service by calling 1300 667 700.

16.0 Communication

All volunteers will receive a copy of this policy during their induction process

Volunteers are informed when an activity aligns with this policy

All volunteers are empowered to actively contribute and provide feedback to this policy

17.0 Review

Effectiveness of this policy will be assessed through feedback from volunteers, executive committees, and management.

TERMS

AOD – Alcohol and other drug

OHS – Occupational Health and Safety

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CESM – Community Emergency Services Manager

CBFCO - Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

FCO – Fire Chief Officer

LEGISLATION AND OTHER REFERENCES:

- Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984
- Shire of Collie Code of Conduct
- How long do drugs stay in your system – refer to internet research
- The Australian Cut off Levels – AS/NZS 4308
- Personal incident diary

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Diagram 1: Managing Volunteers who may be impaired by Alcohol and Other Drugs

