

VFBV Driver Training Position Paper



VFBV

VOLUNTEER FIRE
BRIGADES VICTORIA

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VFBV Position Paper

VFBV has just completed a review of the CFA's discussion paper, with interested parties offered the opportunity to make submissions and provide feedback to a VFBV Reference Panel. This expert panel considered written submissions and have made a detailed recommendation to the VFBV Board.

VFBV puts forward its recommendations to the following clauses contained therein:

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Appropriateness of current driver training

Recommendation:

Do not agree to different courses being provided across the State on an ad hoc basis.

Committees Deliberations:

As discussed, due to a lack of any formal driver training direction, a number of different courses are being provided across the State on an ad hoc basis. These courses are being provided by a range of instructors at various locations, which may or may not be suitable, using varying standards of delivery and assessment.

There is a formal direction from the Co-ordinator Driving and Vehicle Ops which is a superior method ensuring our drivers are best prepared for emergency response driving. This does not give 'tick in the box' numbers and is quality over quantity which may become a problem for regions which are trying to obtain numbers rather than skilled emergency response drivers.

The committee believe driver training should be delivered to our CFA operational staff and volunteer operational members to the same standard. Non operational staff should have skills based training that will meet the need for their employment. This also enables a better standard of driver in the community. The firefighters who are trained by our ADIs or driver educators can take the skills home to their wives and children which should help to reduce the road toll. We continually refer to our standing in the community as a community service.

Discussion included:

- training needs to be delivered to PUAVEH001A and FPIFGM3208A standards
- a challenge test involving one day at a training ground to incorporate skills acquisition
- deliver a two hour session on the drivers role when driving a CFA vehicle Code 1 or Code 3 for members who will not take on the recommended CFA driver training. This would give the instructor an idea of where that person is as a driver and enable him to make recommendations to the appropriate manager
- inconsistencies with what instructors are teaching; need for re-training/skills maintenance – not just driver training, with every course
- theory sessions need to be more self paced – bare facts, policy and legislation.



4.2 Preferred driver training

4.21 On-road

Recommendation:

To ensure PUAVEH001A Drive Vehicles Under Operational Conditions is maintained, CFA instructors to have an annual update for emergency driving to ensure a standard is maintained and the delivery remains consistent.

A driver training co-ordinator be introduced to each district to co-ordinate all driver training, and where possible provide an admin assistant; the co-ordinators be attached to the State Co-ordinator, Driving & Vehicle Operations.

Committees Deliberations:

The PUAVEH001A Drive Under Operational Conditions is our recommended position in our submission.

This can be easily achieved for training and assessment purposes. The system of vehicle control can be used in any area and if proficient in the system a driver can adapt and use the system in any traffic condition. Knowledge of specific road rules and the practical application of these may be a factor in rural driver training. Rural brigades that have no built up area to assess the practical assessment training should undertake this in the closest town to that brigade for light to medium traffic conditions.

4.21 Off-road

Recommendation:

Off-road training be delivered to all operational members to the standard of national competency FPIFGM3208A – Perform complex 4 x 4 operations.

Committees Deliberations:

We believe this training can be delivered to all operational members to the standard of national competency FPIFGM3208A – Perform Complex 4 x 4 Operations.

This can be achieved at our training grounds' driving tracks, then another day out in the field at a suitable location within an hour's drive of the training ground.

Co-ordinator Driving and Vehicle Ops Fiskville in our opinion should have more resources available to him for the delivery of driver training.

4.3 Process for obtaining new competency

4.3.2 Drivers without current competency

Recommendation:

RPL/RCC and challenge testing to be undertaken by the District ADI.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- Issue of not being able to change the bad driving habits of existing drivers
- Interpreting and understanding the road rules and legislation
- challenge testing undertaken by ADI.



4.4 Process for OIC's endorsement

Recommendation:

Support the process for endorsing members permitted to drive a CFA vehicle Code 1 and Code 3, and that after 2015, the OIC's endorsement shall be subject to obtaining the relevant competencies

4.5 Process for skills maintenance

Recommendation:

Skills maintenance:

1. should be obtained within a 2 year period, preferably annually. For driving on-road - 1 year, off-road - 2 years.
2. be mandatory once per year; preferably attend a skills maintenance day every 2 years.
3. include fire reports, vehicle log books, weekly runs, annual skills maintenance day; and where possible training instructors go out to the brigades.

5. Issues that impact on implementation of a driver training strategy

5.2 Instructor numbers

5.2.1 Internal providers

Recommendation:

A driver training co-ordinator be introduced to each district to co-ordinate all driver training, and where possible provide an administrative assistant; and that the co-ordinators be attached to the State Co-ordinator, Driving & Vehicle Operations.

15-20 driver educators are required for each district to conduct the training required over the next 5 years.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- need to ensure a consistent standard is maintained
- train all Brigade educators to a consistent standard
- write to volunteer instructors who have completed the course, offer travel and out of pocket expenses, to re-train to a consistent standard.

5.3 Volunteer availability

Recommendation:

Access to driver training – it will need to be provided in flexible packages and in locations as close to the Brigades as possible.



5.5 Availability of appliances

Recommendation:

Where possible, 4 wheel drive tankers be made available at training grounds.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- 4 wheel drive tanker be available at all training grounds for all training courses
- Recommend RV (recreational vehicle) or heavy 4 wheel drive vehicle
- Fiskville overcome budget issues, by using 20 year old vehicles which are restricted to driver training at the training ground.

5.7 Costs

Recommendation:

Being an important project, ensure the required funding is budgeted for.

6 Timeframe for implementation of new driver training program

Recommendation:

Five years from when the decision is made to implement.

7 Numbers to train

Recommendation:

On-road driver training be a pre requisite for off-road driver training.

ISSUES FOR DECISION:

1. Should CFA train both staff and volunteers to the same competency and to the same level?

Recommendation:

Volunteers are trained in the same competency to a level commensurate to the brigade's risks and environment.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- Responses received: A – seven agree; B – four agree
- At Fiskville 7 days training for recruits; 2 to 50 hours on station depending on skill level
- If training all to the same standard, access would be an issue
- Diverse differences in willingness to training eg. willing to turn out, but not interested in training
- Volunteers at integrated stations receive the same competency; no difference in hours taken to reach that competency; but the volunteers don't retain that standard
- Issue of having trainers that suit everyone
- All that is required is competency, not so much their environment
- 7 days training at Fiskville includes driving in busier areas eg. Geelong; 2 hours driving per day; initial day is theory.



2. Is it suitable to provide off – road driver training in RVs or should all training be in the similar vehicles to what the student will drive in their brigade?

Recommendation:

Where possible driver training should be delivered in like vehicles to what the student will be expected to drive in their home location. RVs can be used for the initial part of the training to develop skills and build confidence.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- Responses received: Eleven agree to preferred position
- Demand for off-road training; concern of some volunteers driving off road FCV's not having a truck licence
- Need to be trained in both, depending on their licence
- Recommend to begin with 4 wheel driving skills
- Need to know the limitations of the truck and themselves
- Recommend adding ultra light tankers for initial part of training

3. Should all drivers of CFA vehicles be required to hold an appropriate competency?

Recommendation:

All drivers of CFA vehicles will be required to gain the appropriate competency.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- Responses received: Nine agreed to the preferred position; Not sure - One.
- Need to ensure 'the sell' is delivered effectively eg. was an issue with Minimum Skills
- The timeframe is the most important thing – need to set the bar eg. in so many years, this is where we need to be; need to suggest a timeframe
- issues with RPL and RCC.

4. Is providing training and assessment of the off – road competency at two levels (CFA and national) appropriate or should all drivers be required to be competent for all risks?

Recommendation:

Provide training and assessment of the off-road competency to FPIFGM3208A.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- Responses received: Against – nine, four agree to preferred position.
- Including the ten elements in off-road training, will overcome issues with having the right amount of strike team drivers for campaign fires.
- Fiskville course content remains the same, only the competency wording changed
- If CFA decides FPIF to be the National level.



5. If a two level of training and assessment is appropriate for the off - road competency, should all drivers with current competencies be confirmed as being qualified for the CFA competency only, not the national competency?

Recommendation:

All drivers with current competencies be confirmed as having the CFA (local) competency unless they are able to provide evidence that they have been trained and assessed against all 10 performance criteria of the national competency. Drivers holding CFA competency, have until 2015 to obtain the outstanding performance criteria of the national competency.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- Responses received: Nine agree to preferred position; Not sure - one.
- Members trained to AFAC competency may not have all the elements eg. water crossing, sand, mud – may not be available
- To resolve this, could undertake a challenge test – or provide the evidence
- Undertake course at Fiskville of missing elements
- Implement over a reasonable amount of time eg. the expectation is by such and such a date
- Operational issues with assembling strike teams
- Volunteers resigning following a fatal incident
- Off-road courses could be held over 3 weekends
- Build training grounds to the same standard
- Bendigo course entails 3 hour theory, then 2 full days driving
- Important to have the training grounds within 2 hours driving distance of brigades
- Members holding CFA competency, have up to 5 years to gain national competency
- Some Rural brigades undertake the entire minimum skills every year – over 2 days.

6. Should there be a skills maintenance requirement for Driving competencies?

Recommendation:

Skills maintenance is required for driver training competencies. Skills maintenance to include: fire reports, vehicle log books, weekly runs, annual skills maintenance day; and where possible training instructors go out to the brigades.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- Responses received: No – one, eight agree to preferred position
- Changes to road rules
- Can't achieve skills maintenance with minimum skills
- Skills maintenance - FIRS, weekly maintenance runs, vehicle log book, or a one day skills maintenance at training ground or with a driving instructor
- skills maintenance for Brigade driving educators
- take training to the brigade.



7. If so what skills maintenance is required?

Recommendation:

Skills maintenance should be obtained within a 2 year period, preferably annually. For driving on-road - 1 year, off-road - 2 years.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- Responses received: Ten responses and most are in agreement of annually to three year skills maintenance.

8. Should CFA develop a number of full or part off-road driver training facilities similar to Fiskville across the State?

Recommendation:

Provide full off-road driver training facilities similar to Fiskville, at all field training grounds, and where possible use natural features at local areas.

A similar track and skid pan to DECA's at Shepparton, be provided at Fiskville for on-road driver training.

Committees Deliberations:

Discussion included:

- Responses received: No – one, Yes – one, Six agree to the preferred position.
- Approach owners to use local gravel pits etc.
- Red tape issues of arranging to undertake a course in a Mildura sand pit
- Not every member needs to be a Code 1 driver
- Including a road network and skid pan at Fiskville
- No available location where drivers can get up some speed; recommend CFA develop such a location.



