



07.08 Community Engagement SOP

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) To provide guidance on the process and responsibilities for the design, planning, delivery, reporting and review of community engagement by CFA.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This procedure applies to all CFA members designing, coordinating and/or delivering community engagement programs and local activities.

Section 3 - Procedure

General Principles for CFA Community Engagement

(3) CFA has a responsibility for fire prevention under the [Country Fire Authority Act 1958](#), and with this comes a shared responsibility with the community for fire and emergency preparedness.

(4) CFA delivers community engagement on fire risk to enhance the capability of communities to prepare for and respond to incidents safely. Meaningful engagement with CFA empowers communities to actively manage their fire risk.

(5) CFA community engagement aims to build communities' preparedness for fire by:

- a. Enhancing knowledge about what they need to do to manage their fire risk;
- b. Developing skills to plan, prepare, and respond to fire;
- c. Boosting communities' awareness and capability through targeted community engagement during incidents;
- d. Strengthening trust in CFA advice and service delivery;
- e. Creating an understanding of shared responsibilities for fire safety; and
- f. Facilitating the development of community networks.

Design

(6) Design for community engagement programs is managed and coordinated at the state level. This includes the development of content, campaigns and statewide partnerships.

- a. Programs should be designed so that program delivery can be adapted to local fire risks and community needs, to be delivered by both volunteers and CFA staff.
- b. Brigades, Districts and Regions can then design local activities for community engagement (as defined in the [centralised glossary](#)).

(7) Community engagement design at the state level uses evidence-based best practice findings to determine capabilities and design programs. This should be done in collaboration with communities, CFA members, CFA Regions,

Districts, other agencies, researchers, and experts through the appropriate governing and consultative bodies.

(8) By delegation from the Chief Officer, the Deputy Chief Officer Fire Risk, Research and Community Preparedness (DCO FRRCP) can approve the development and dissemination of programs, publications, and general information in the interest of community education and preparedness.

Planning

(9) Community engagement planning is managed at both the Region, District and community level and aims to mitigate specific fire and emergency risks to communities.

- a. Community Engagement Plans should respond to regional, district and local or municipal level fire management plans and forums and support other management activities identified through a fire management planning process. Planned community engagement programs and activities can be recorded through the [Community Engagement Activity Reporting Tool \(ART\)](#).
- b. Brigades must ensure a Community Engagement Plan is in place, relevant to the local risk profile within the response area as per Section 29, question 18 of the Brigade Inspection Report.
 - i. In situations that require it, Community Engagement Plans can be supported and facilitated at the Group Level.
- c. CFA Districts plan community engagement service delivery to meet the specific fire risks within the District. The District Service Delivery Plan includes support to Brigades in implementing their Community Engagement Plans, programs and activities identified by Regional Community Safety Teams (RCTs) for the District.
- d. CFA Regions have a responsibility to include planned community engagement service delivery in the annual Regional Business Plan, as part of planned community safety work to meet the specific fire risks within the Region. Regional Business Plans should be submitted to the Regional Leadership Team and approved by the Deputy Chief Officer, Service Delivery for the Region.
- e. Regions have a responsibility to plan and deliver training sufficient to allow members to deliver planned programs and activities.

Delivery

(10) Where practicable, CFA members must undertake appropriate training for programs and activities they intend to deliver to make sure that information is accurate and protocols and program guidelines are followed to achieve intended outcomes.

(11) CFA Districts support the implementation of community engagement risk based service delivery as outlined in the Regional Business Plan for their District area.

(12) Districts have a responsibility to support Brigades in facilitating and delivering community engagement programs and local activities as per Brigades' Community Engagement Plans.

(13) When undertaking community engagement inside schools or education facilities members:

- a. should wear workwear or CFA uniform, Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) should not be worn; and
- b. must adhere to the [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#) and [Working with Children Clearance Policy](#).

Delivering Community Engagement Outside the Country Area of Victoria

(14) CFA Brigades can plan and implement community engagement material or activities outside the country area of Victoria through regular CFA approval and delivery processes.

(15) CFA Brigades conducting community engagement activities should ensure that the relevant land manager and/or

fire agency are notified within a reasonable period before the community engagement occurs.

Reporting and Review

(16) Community engagement programs or local activities that have been delivered to a community must be reported through the [Community Engagement Activity Reporting Tool \(ART\)](#) or other appropriate reporting tool.

(17) Regions and Districts have a responsibility to monitor and report the implementation of community engagement in their area.

(18) The DCO FRRCP has a responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement and report service delivery activity and outcomes to the Chief Officer, CFA Board and Victorian Government. Service delivery activity is reported as per the schedule in the [Community Engagement Service Delivery Reporting Guidelines](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

Role Level	Role	Responsibilities
State	Fire Risk, Research and Community Preparedness	Utilises research to determine best practice approaches to create engagement programs and assess resources to meet local requirements. This team works with Regions, Districts, Brigades and subject matter experts in developing programs, training, tools and resources to support the implementation of community engagement processes.
	Deputy Chief Officer - Fire Risk, Research and Community Preparedness (DCO FRRCP)	Approves community engagement programs and content. Additionally, the DCO FRRCP reports service delivery activity and outcomes to the Chief Officer, CFA Board and Victorian Government quarterly.
Region	Regional Deputy Chief Officer - Service Delivery	Approves the annual Regional Business Plan including community engagement service delivery and the associated delivery budget and oversight of reporting.
	Regional Community Safety Teams	Assists in the identification of local fire risks and supports volunteers and staff in planning, resourcing and delivering community engagement programs and activities. The team also monitors and reports the outcomes of these activities to measure the success of engagement.
	Service Delivery Coordinators	Region-level coordination, planning and implementation of community engagement service delivery from Regional Business Plans.
	Manager Community Safety (MCS)	Manages Regional Community Safety Teams, including submission of planned community engagement service delivery for the annual Regional Business Plan. Also enables coordination between community engagement activities and other community safety initiatives (e.g. vegetation management or municipal emergency management planning).
	Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC)	Coordinates the planning, delivery, monitoring and reporting of community engagement activities in one or more CFA Districts based on Regional Business Plans and supports Brigade Community Engagement Plans.
	Community-Based Bushfire Management Facilitator (CBBM)	Facilitates community-based bushfire management processes and networks in selected high bushfire risk areas in the Region. This is applied in a partnership approach with communities, local governments, and other fire agencies, enabling active participation of communities in decision-making.
District	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)	Reviews and approves the annual District Service Delivery Plan for community engagement programs and activities.
	Brigade Administrative Support Officers (BASOs)	Provides administrative support to Brigades for the delivery of Brigade activities, this can also include community engagement activities.

Role Level	Role	Responsibilities
Brigade/Group	Brigade Community Safety Coordinators (BCSCs)	Oversees and coordinates Brigade-level community engagement activities that address fire risk in their Brigade area, including the development of a Community Engagement Plan.
	Brigade Management Teams (BMTs)	Helps implement and develop risk-based community engagement plans for their Brigade.
	Group Community Safety Coordinators (GCSCs)	Assists in coordinating and supporting the delivery of Group-level activities that address fire. GCSCs provide support to brigades in their group to implement community engagement activities outlined in their Community Engagement Plans.

Safety Note

(19) Risk management for community engagement programs and activities is important for maintaining CFA member safety and community trust. This process will differ depending on the type of program and activity.

(20) Training will cover appropriate risk assessments and processes for the community engagement program or activity being delivered.

(21) Safety incidents and/or near misses encountered during community engagement delivery must be reported in [CFASafe](#).

Environmental Note

(22) Nil.

Section 4 - Definitions

(23) Commonly defined terms are located in the CFA [centralised glossary](#).

Section 5 - Related Documents

[CFA Community Engagement Guidelines](#)

[CFA Community Engagement Approach](#)

[Section 29 Brigade Information \(July 2023\)](#)

[Strategy and Outcomes Framework 2020-2030](#)

Status and Details

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Effective Date	8th August 2025
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Accountable Officer	Jason Heffernan Chief Officer
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"CFA member" - Refers to all CFA volunteers, volunteer auxiliary workers, officers, employees and secondees.

"Personal Protective Clothing (PPC)" - Includes clothing used to provide protection to CFA members from the risks associated with performing a specific operational task for which they are competent and endorsed

"Community Engagement" - A planned process with a specific purpose to empower communities to prevent and prepare for fire. It involves working with individuals and groups to encourage active involvement in decisions and actions that affect them or are of interest to them.

"Programs" - (Community Engagement): A set of activities managed together over a sustained period to deliver community outcomes. They are designed to address a specific risk or to reach a certain audience, with specific intended learning and behavioural outcomes. The term 'program' is used as an umbrella term to also include projects, services, and interventions.

"Local Activities" - These activities can be designed and delivered by CFA brigades, independently or with support from Region and District Community Safety staff. The objective is to improve awareness and community access to appropriate fire safety information. An indicative list includes Brigade Open Days, engagement with tourists, community events, pop-up engagement, library or school visits.