

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEER CHARTER



INTENT

The intent of this Charter is to ensure:

- the safety of the South Australian community remains a priority for all,
- consultation occurs with Volunteers about all matters that affect them,
- consideration of Volunteers' views when approving or adopting new practices or policies,
- consideration of Volunteers' views when consulting on proposed amendments to legislation,
- consideration of Volunteers' views when reviewing current legislation, practices or policies,
- that there is a mutual obligation and practical partnership based on respect between the parties, and
- that a fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory approach is taken by all.

This Charter identifies the key roles and responsibilities of the parties as set out below.

INTRODUCTION

The Volunteer members of the South Australian Country Fire Service (SACFS) are fundamental to emergency management in South Australia. Their value and importance is recognised and highly regarded by the South Australian community. Volunteers and the commitment they bring to the community through delivering professional fire and rescue services remain the core strength of the SACFS.

SACFS Volunteers selflessly bring time and life skills to protect life and property, preventing and suppressing fire to create a safer community. They deliver professional fire, rescue and community services across South Australia and actively promote community resilience.

This Charter provides a framework for the commitment to protect the needs and interests of Volunteers.

Section 58A of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005* provides parliamentary recognition of the SACFS Volunteer Charter as a statement of the commitment and principles that apply to the relationship between the Government of South Australia, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) and SACFS and ensures that they:

- consult with Volunteers and the Country Fire Service Volunteers Association (CFSVA) about all matters that affect them,
- consider Volunteers' views when adopting or approving new practices and policies or reviewing current practices or policies, and
- consider Volunteers' views when consulting on proposed amendments to legislation.

This Charter was written in consultation with the Government of South Australia, SAFECOM, SACFS, CFSVA and SACFS Volunteers and recognises that these parties operate under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*.

COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION

Role

The CFSVA is recognised as an association representing the interests of members of the SACFS. It is empowered to take such steps as may be reasonably available to promote and advance the best interests of SACFS Volunteers. The Association provides an additional means of consultation and communication and through its organisational structure, on behalf of, and in the interests of SACFS Volunteers, liaises with SACFS, SAFECOM and the Minister for Emergency Services to identify and develop strategic directions for the provision of emergency services in South Australia.

Responsibilities

The CFSVA will:

- fairly represent SACFS Volunteers to protect and progress their interests and welfare within the emergency services sector,
- ensure that consultation occurs with Volunteers about all matters that affect them,
- consider Volunteers' views when adopting or approving new practices and policies or reviewing current practices and policies,
- work to secure conditions ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of SACFS brigades and their development,
- represent Volunteers on various committees, and
- nominate a person to the Board of The Commission.

COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Role

SACFS Volunteers are drawn from communities throughout South Australia to participate in an integrated fire and emergency service. This is a practical partnership based on mutual respect for the SACFS, the staff employed by the SACFS, and personnel of other organisations. It ensures that community safety needs are met to the best of their collective abilities.

SACFS Volunteers depend on the goodwill and practical support of their families, friends, employers and local communities to enable them to serve, recognising that time available to them is limited

by the needs and demands of their families, employment and other obligations. SACFS Volunteers do not contribute their time for financial reward but gain satisfaction from service, achievement, personal development and camaraderie.

Responsibilities

SACFS Volunteers will:

- where able, provide their services for the protection of life, property and the environment, and the prevention and suppression of fires, or when the need arises as provided by the *Fire and Emergency Service Act 2005*,
- undertake other relevant duties to create a safer community in a mutually respectful and active partnership with the staff of the SACFS, other organisations and the community,
- operate safely in accordance with the policies and procedures of SAFECOM and the SACFS,
- undertake appropriate training and planning to ensure their personal safety and enhance the delivery of services in creating a safer community,
- exercise the powers vested in them by the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005* and *Fire and Emergency Services Regulations 2021* in the best interests of the community,
- recognise and support the elected CFSVA representatives and the consultative mechanisms as agreed with SAFECOM and the SACFS,
- be committed to working in harmony and consultation with SAFECOM and the SACFS, and
- seek to resolve disputes appropriately within policy.

GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Role

The Government of South Australia supports and recognises the role that emergency service Volunteers play in our community.

The Government supports the energy, dedication and professionalism of SACFS Volunteers by providing support to emergency services. It provides appropriate facilities and equipment to ensure that members are trained and resourced. This Charter develops this relationship further for SACFS Volunteers and the Government of South Australia.

Responsibilities

The Government of South Australia supports Volunteers by:

- recognising, valuing, respecting and promoting SACFS Volunteers, their families and employers for their contributions to the well-being and safety of the people of South Australia,

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- using best endeavours to ensure that relevant legislation appropriately recognises the needs and interests of SACFS Volunteers who provide their service in accordance with the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005* and *Fire and Emergency Services Regulations 2021*,
- providing protection for Volunteers under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*, *Volunteers Protection Act 2001*, *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* and *Return to Work Act 2014*,
- ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to enable consultation with SACFS Volunteers and the CFSVA about all matters that affect them,
- applying a whole of Government approach to effectively consider Volunteers views when adopting or approving new practices and policies or reviewing current practices and policies, including legislative and regulatory,
- committing to developing active and positive communication networks and respecting one another's confidential information, and
- ensuring Volunteers are kept informed and up to date with issues and their views are accurately represented.

The Government works through two specific agencies in supporting SACFS Volunteers - SAFECOM and the SACFS.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMISSION (SAFECOM)

Role

SAFECOM provides for the governance, strategy and policy aspects of the emergency services, namely the SAFCS, South Australian State Emergency Service and South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service.

Responsibilities

SAFECOM will:

- support and encourage voluntary participation in the SACFS, and foster and support personal development opportunities for members of the emergency services organisations,
- recognise outstanding achievements of persons who are involved in the provision of fire and emergency services, or who take action or assist at the scene of any fire or emergency or who otherwise support the objectives or activities of the emergency services sector (or any part of that sector), within any part of the State,
- ensure that Volunteer views, opinions and concerns are considered through the SACFS/CFSVA before adopting any new or revised policies, procedures or approaches which might affect them as SACFS Volunteers,

- recognise and promote innovation, safety and efficiency within the SACFS,
- use established SACFS/CFSVA mechanisms to consult with stakeholders, unions and associations and other government agencies to discuss matters of common concern in relation to SACFS Volunteers,
- promote a team based performance culture throughout the emergency services sector, and
- actively seek financial and other support from Government to ensure Volunteers are adequately resourced to meet legislated obligations and community expectations.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

Role

The SACFS is a community based fire and emergency service dedicated to protecting life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies in outer metropolitan, regional and rural South Australia.

Responsibilities

The SACFS will:

- recognise value, respect and promote SACFS Volunteers,
- consult with Volunteers and the CFSVA about all matters that affect them,
- incorporate Volunteers' views when adopting or approving new practices and policies or reviewing current practices or policies,
- recognise that the CFSVA is the association that represents SACFS Volunteers,
- ensure that consultative mechanisms are in place,
- provide necessary resources to enable Volunteers to deliver agreed services in a safe and effective manner,
- recognise and acknowledge that a primary responsibility of the SACFS and people employed by the SACFS is to nurture and encourage Volunteers and to facilitate and develop their skills and competencies,
- recognise and acknowledge the value of the time that Volunteers provide to the SACFS,
- ensure that Volunteer time is used appropriately, bearing in mind other commitments, and
- minimise barriers to volunteering.

SIGNATORIES

The parties commit themselves to use and apply the Charter in the spirit of mutual respect and goodwill and to work together in that spirit, in accordance with the key principles set out in this Charter.

The Charter will be reviewed as required by agreement of the parties or at the end of four years from its date of commencement.

This Charter commences on the 18th day of May, 2022.

Hon Peter Malinauskas MP
Premier

Hon Joe Szakacs MP
Minister for Emergency Services

Mrs Julia Waddington-Powell
Chief Executive, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission

For Mr Mark Jones QFSM
Chief Officer, South Australian Country Fire Service

Mr David Lindner
President, Country Fire Service Volunteers Association



Government of South Australia

