



CFU TEAM LEADERS

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Introduction

The ACT Fire & Rescue Community Fire Unit program has been operating in Canberra since 2003. During this time it has grown to 58 CFU units and 800 Volunteers. For the program to work well ACTF&R relies on the generosity of the Team Leaders and CFU members who volunteer to keep their teams trained and prepared for a bushfire emergency.

One of the challenges Team Leaders and ACTF&R face is to keep members interested and engaged in the CFU program. CFU units are rarely activated due to the fuel reduction efforts of the ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT Parks and Conservation Service. This presents problems with members feeling they are training for an event that may never happen, however it is far better to be prepared than unprepared and complacent.

CFU volunteers prepare and protect their homes and other properties in their area by preparing bushfire survival plans, reducing fine fuels around properties, training and raising the level of fire awareness in their community.

Team Leaders are an integral part of ensuring the CFU team functions effectively. Team Leaders take on leadership roles and responsibilities to ensure the volunteers in their unit are trained, prepared and equipped to safely defend their homes from a bushfire emergency.

CFU members are also occasionally requested to fill Community Engagement roles at The Canberra Show, ESA open day and pop up stalls.

ACT Fire & Rescue Web Page

The following Information included on the web page can be accessed by visiting the below website address:

<https://esa.act.gov.au/join-us/volunteering/community-fire-units>

1. Joining information for new members
2. New member application process
3. Training and recruitment area locations
4. Cadet information
5. Training activities guide
6. Team Leaders manual
7. Request For ACTF&R attendance
8. Dynamic Risk Assessment overview
9. Work Safety Dynamic Risk Assessment
10. CFU Equipment Guidelines
11. CFU Standards and Protocols
12. CFU Induction Booklet
13. Events



Legislation

Emergency Act 2004

Section 49

Objects and functions of community fire units Emergency Act 2004

Section 49 Objects and functions of community fire units

- (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,
 - (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,
 - (b) assist with fire fighting during a fire emergency,
 - (c) assist with recovery operations after a fire emergency.
- (3) A community fire unit must exercise its functions;—
- (a) only in the area for which the unit is established,
 - (b) in accordance with the standards and protocols for Fire and Rescue,
 - (c) under the direction of the Chief Officer (Fire and Rescue service).

Powers under the Emergency Act 2004

CFU members should give careful consideration when making decisions to act under section 65 (5) of the Act,

Members may:

- With any necessary assistance and force enter land
- Bring equipment onto land or into a structure or vehicle
- Use a supply of water without charge
- Give directions or regulate or prohibit the movement of people, animals or vehicles
- Advise persons on the evacuation options
- Other duties by appropriate trained members as required by the Chief Officer

Members may not:

- Open a container or dismantle equipment using any necessary or reasonable force
- Remove, dismantle, demolish or destroy a structure or vehicle
- Contain an animal or substance
- Close a street or road to traffic
- Control, shut off or disconnect a supply of fuel, gas, electricity, water or anything else
- Remove or destroy an animal, a substance or vegetation
- Turn off, disconnect or shut down a motor or equipment
- Require a person to give reasonable assistance to a member of an emergency service.

Health and Safety

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

There are laws to protect you from injury at work.

These are:

- Work Health and Safety Act (2011)
- Work Health and Safety Regulation (2011).

Under the Act, as stated in Division 2.2 - Primary duty of care
Section 19 - 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.

CFU members also have a personal responsibility under the Act for maintaining a safe workplace. Your workplace is the area of operation for your CFU or a place where you undertake training activities.

ACTF&R is responsible for ensuring that the workplace is safe by:

- Providing safe work areas, machinery and equipment
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision
- Providing personal protective clothing and equipment.

Health & Safety

You are responsible for maintaining a safe workplace by:

- Looking after your own health and safety
- Following instructions from your Team Leader and/or ACTF&R personnel
- Not putting others at risk
- Wearing the right Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) for each CFU activity
- Following all safety directions when using equipment
- Work in a safe manner
- Keeping skills up to date
- Recording your CFU activities in the occurrence book

It is important that you are aware of and accept these responsibilities, so the workplace is safe and you are covered by insurance if you are injured. The Standards and Protocols, recommended practices and policies have been developed for member's safety.



Health & Safety (cont.)

CFU member safety is the most important consideration at any incident and safety is everyone's responsibility. Please always consider the following;

- Fire Danger Ratings and weather conditions
- Stay and defend or leave (Catastrophic conditions)
- Minimum members for activation is four CFU members
- Appropriate PPC
- Accountability
- Escape routes
- Evacuation point
- Evacuation Sirens

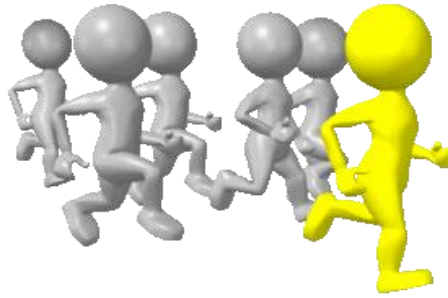


Functions of the Team Leader Role

Each CFU is represented by a Team Leader. The role of the Team Leader is to;

- Lead the CFU Members
- Act as liaison with the CFU coordinator
- Take charge of CFU operations pending the arrival of ACTF&R
- Monitor availability of members during periods of bushfire alert
- Maintain an accurate register of members and inform the CFU Coordinator of any changes
- Ensure the CFU activities are logged in the occurrence book and is accurately maintained
- Ensure all team members wear approved personal protective equipment
- In September of each year, Team Leaders are required to submit a report on the previous training activity period
- At the end of each fire season, Team Leaders will be requested to submit a progress report of team activations.

Leading your CFU Team



The role of the Team Leader is to ensure leadership is present during an activity to avoid confusion in decision making. The role can be shared amongst individuals but must be appointed prior to any CFU activity/activation.

1. Be Proficient

- People trust leaders who are confident in their own abilities.
- To be confident, a leader must be tactically and technically proficient.
- Maintain your confidence, all leaders at some time have doubted their abilities

2. Seek and accept responsibility.

- Leading always involves responsibility.
- A good leader should accept this responsibility and encourage others to accept responsibility.
- When you see something that needs doing don't wait to be told to act.

3. Lead by example.

- As the Team Leader you must become a model that others trust and choose to follow.

4. Provide direction.

A team must understand its purpose.

- When you need to give directions make sure they are clear. Then confirm the crews understanding of the directions.

- Encourage the crew to seek an explanation if anything is not clear.
- Supervise the execution of the instructions to ensure the intent is being achieved; but don't stifle any initiative shown by over supervising.

5. Know and care about your crew.

- When you show genuine concern for the team they will show trust and respect in return.
- Get to know your team personally and build a social connection.

6. Develop the potential of your team.

- Try to tell team members what needs doing, not how to do it and then supervise, intervening only when necessary.
- Provide opportunities for crew members to take on additional responsibilities.
- Provide support, and have faith in their performance until convinced otherwise.

7. Make sound and timely decisions.

- A leader must be able to rapidly assess a situation and make a sound decision.
- Good decisions made at the right time are better than the best decision made too late.
- Maintain situational awareness. Listen to the crew and value their knowledge. Seek their opinion and use their thoughts to assist in your decision-making process.

8. Build the team and challenge their abilities.

- Most of what we do revolves around the "team".
- The team needs confidence in your ability to lead them and in their own ability to perform as part of the team.
- The environment you create plays an important role in developing the camaraderie that motivates the team to willingly and confidently meet all challenges.

9. Communicate and keep the team informed.

- Keeping the crew informed helps them to make decisions and execute plans within the Incident Action Plan.

Leadership is as much about the characteristics of the followers as the attributes of the leader. Being a good Team Leader involves accepting responsibility for others, modelling values and setting an example, developing people through encouragement and promoting a team culture.

Good leaders understand the importance of getting the job done but they also understand that if they take care of the people and empower them the results will follow.

“Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.”

General George S. Patton



Managing Equipment

It is your team's trailer and it is your team's responsibility to:

- Keep it clean & tidy,
- Inventories up to date,
- Check equipment operation,
- Report any faulty equipment,
- Report vandalism or theft,
- Check the radios,
- Check that radio batteries are charged.
(Flat batteries are dangerous in Emergencies).



Inventories

Inventories should be checked on a regular basis. This may be at the start and end of each season, the end of each training activity and at the completion of use in an operational situation.

Reporting of equipment

For damaged/lost or broken equipment Contact the CFU Coordinaton team during business hours by phone or email actfbcfu@act.gov.au and the equipment will be replaced at the earliest possible convenience. Please label broken or damaged equipment clearly in order for the damaged equipment to be replaced or the fault to be identified.

For any urgent or serious equipment malfunctions (e.g. a trailer that is inoperable) after hours, contact the Operational Commander on 62004103 (Northside) or 62004102 (Southside) who will make a decision on the request.

Vandalism/broken into/stolen should be reported to the CFU coordinator and the police.

Managing Members

Active members

- Maintain up to date records of active members in your unit.
- If you are made aware of members resigning or retiring communicate this with the CFU Coordinator so that the CFU Team can update their records.
- Inform us of any members that are missing/haven't been provided with a uniform.
- Pass on new contact details (address, mobile/home phone number, email), and any change in name so Comcen can have correct details.

Training activities

- Conduct regular training to maintain skills,
- Requesting a Pumper to attend if you want one through the online request form,
- Identify deficiencies in members and address them (pump operations, drafting, fire ground communications),
- Allowing all members to play the "Team Leader" role as you may not be available on the day your unit is stood up,
- Notify CFU Coordination Team of the training sessions. Document and provide CFU Coordination Team with the list of attendees during the September reporting.

Handover to other Team Leaders and members

- Notify CFU Coordination Team and your unit if you are going away. Ensure someone is available to act as the TL while you are away.

Communication

Situation Reports

All communication with COMCEN must use the Harris radio.

On arrival at your chosen/designated location, the team leader should provide an initial situation report (sitrep) to COMCEN in order to provide COMCEN and other attending units with a “picture” of the incident itself.

A Sitrep should include the following:

- **Identify your unit number (e.g. CFU01),**
- **How many members of your unit are present,**
- **Where you are located,**
- **What you see; and**
- **What are you tasking your team to do.**

NOTE: Only identify your name once. Use your CFU number for all ongoing communication with COMCEN

For example:

- *CFU01: COMCEN this is CFU01, **SITREP***
- *COMCEN: CFU01 this is COMCEN, pass your **SITREP***
- *CFU01: COMCEN this is CFU01, we have 5 members of CFU01 activated and are on scene at 123 Smiths Street, Chapman. We have a small grass fire behind 123 Smiths Street and are deploying two teams of two along both sides of 123 Smiths Street to extinguish the grass fire.*
- *COMCEN: Received CFU01, you have 5 members of CFU01 activated and are on scene at 123 Smiths Street, Chapman. You have a small grass fire behind 123 Smiths Street and are deploying two teams of two along both sides of 123 Smiths Street to extinguish the grass fire.*

NOTE: Once you have completed a training or operational activity, the Team Leader is to inform COMCEN using the Harris Radio

For example:

- *CFU01: COMCEN this is CFU01, we have completed our training exercise and are making up equipment.*
- *COMCEN: CFU01 this is COMCEN, you have completed our training exercise and are making up equipment –
COMCEN CLEAR*

Conditions, Actions, Needs (CAN) Reports

After the **situation report** on arrival, all other status reports, including an emergency communication, follow the **Conditions, Actions, Needs** format.

The Team Leader provides CAN reports when:

- When a strategic objective has been met or the plan/activities change.
- When further assistance is required.
- When there is an emergency – e.g. a CFU member is injured, missing or cannot be accounted for.

CFU members or Sector leaders provide CAN reports regarding their sector to the Team leader as requested, or when:

- A new critical factor is discovered.
- A previous task is complete, and the unit is ready for re-tasking.
- If, for some reason, the task allocated cannot be completed.

CAN Reporting

- CAN reporting keeps things simple and it delivers the team leader the information needed to keep the strategy and plan current.

C.A.N REPORTS

CONDITIONS (What you see)

ACTIONS (What you are doing/going to do)

NEEDS (What resources do you need –
e.g. Need more hose)

SMEAC'S Briefing to ACTF&R on scene

ACTF&R use the SMEAC briefing format to brief Command on their arrival. CFU members should adopt this method to brief the first arriving ACTF&R personnel.

Situation: What has happened

Mission: What you are doing about it

Execution: How you are going to do it

Administration: What resources you need to do the job

Communication: What is the communication plan and who is in Command.

Safety: Safety Considerations

INCIDENT CONTROL

Any wildfire that requires CFU involvement will more than likely be divided into what ACTF&R call Sectors.

A Team Leader will be expected to run an incident or the sector of an incident until relieved by a Fire and Rescue crew.

A number of adjoining CFU's may operate in the one sector

Even though you are operating in a sector, you may not necessarily see the Sector Leader as they may be operating elsewhere within the sector.

Communications with the IC/Sector Leader will be either face to face or by use of the radio via COMCEN.

At any incident Team Leaders need to be across what their team is up to at that incident.

1. Be aware of where your team is operating
2. Always ensure escape routes are available for members
3. Be aware of who is on the fire ground by use of Accountability Boards
4. Have your radio with you so communication with ComCen is possible at all times and utilise CFU Benelec radio to communicate with members.

STRATEGIES

We believe we can get the best out of a CFU if it is in an integrated effort with ACTF&R. We would like Team Leaders to deploy their teams in a way that best supports the strategic plan of a particular incident.

If specific instruction has not been given to you by an IC/Sector Leader, a CFU should deploy their resources using the following formula and communicate their actions to COMCEN.

Team Leaders deploying some members to the fence line of their area to watch and report.

Team Leaders reacting to reports from their members, can then deploy hoses to support activities at the fence in the event of ember attack, spot fire or other changes in conditions.

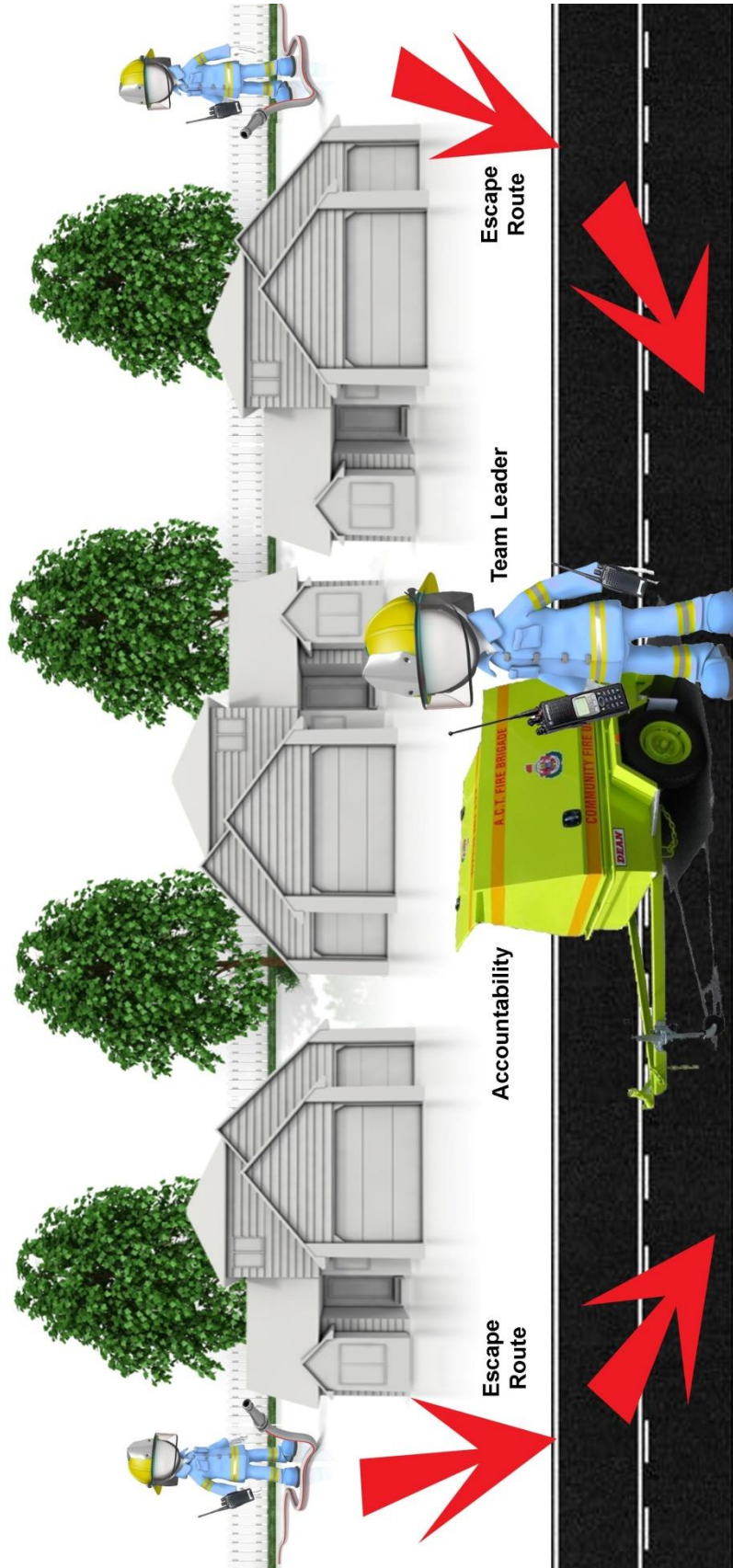
Team Leaders identifying clear escape routes.



CFU Refresher Training

Managing Accountability Boards so that the IC/Sector Leader or CFU Team Leader is aware of which members of your unit are at the Incident.

CFU SECTOR WITHIN AN INCIDENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

Purpose:

All CFU Units carry an accountability board, which is located on the internal side of a trailers fold outdoor. The boards are designed to hold the yellow magnetic name tags of all members of that CFU unit, with the team leaders name tag coloured **BLUE**.

The purpose of an accountability board is to ensure that the team leader or any ACTF&R personnel (usually the Station Officer) can quickly identify who is currently engaging in firefighting activities at a glance, ensuring WHS protocols are adhered to.

Use:

- The unit accountability board ***must*** be used when the unit is engaging in training activities or activated during an emergency incident by all members present.
- A CFU accountability board has two columns titled **MEMBERS** and **AVAILABLE**.
- When a member arrives at the trailer, he/she must first move ***their own*** name from the **MEMBERS** column to the **AVAILABLE** column for the duration of the activity.
- When the activity is finished, and the member is ready to leave, he/she must move their name from the **AVAILABLE** column to the **MEMBERS** column.

MEMBERS	AVAILABLE
Joe SMITH	
Sally JONES	
Mark STRONG	
Johnathan FRAKES	
Patrick STEWART	

At the end of the training/incident, it is the Incident Controller's responsibility to ensure all members' name magnets have been returned by the members to the **MEMBERS** side of the control board. This ensures that all members who were 'on deck' at any training/incident have been accounted for and have left the fire ground safely.

Any name magnets remaining on the **AVAILABLE** side of the control board must be investigated.

NOTE

- Members must move only **their own** name magnet between each side of the control board. They must not ask other CFU members to move their name for them nor should a CFU member move another CFU member's name magnet.
- New CFU members will be issued their individual name magnet on completion of induction training. They will place it on the **MEMBERS** side of their CFU trailer at the first available opportunity and notify the responsible team leader.
- Check the bottom of the trailer for any member name magnets which may have fallen off during transit.

Strict adherence to these rules is vital to the efficient operation of the Accountability System.

CFU TEAM MEMBERS SAFETY

CFU member safety is the most important consideration at any incident and safety is everyone's responsibility.

Please always consider the following;

- Escape routes must be set when members are operating along a fence line in front of an active fire so members are clear where their avenue of retreat is.
- Set an agreed meeting point (preferably at the trailer) in the event of an evacuation from the fence line.
- Use the evacuation sirens to call members back to the trailer by using 3 short blasts repeatedly until all members are accounted for at the trailer before considering next course of action.

Personal Development

There are various courses offered to CFU members by ACTF&R and ESA Training for personal development which include the following:

- Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management Systems (AIIMS)
- First Aid and CPR
- Stress Management
- Volunteer Management

As courses become available, ESA Training will notify the CFU Coordination team who will then notify the CFU membership for nomination form submissions.