

Briefings and Situation Reports

The ACT Rural Fire Service Chief Officer has issued this Guideline under Section 38(1) of the *Emergency Act 2004* – A Chief Officer may determine standards and protocols.

Purpose

This guideline describes when briefings and situation reports are required and the information to be included in the briefings.

Scope

This guideline is applicable to all personnel from the ACT Rural Fire Service (ACT RFS) brigades, as defined in the Emergencies Act 2004, and crews deployed from interstate, engaged in firefighting operations within the ACT.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Briefings SMEACS Format	Briefings are reports delivered to all crews proceeding to a fireground. The type of information will depend on the phase of the operation. They provide known information, objectives, strategies, safety issues, reporting relationships.
Situation reports (SITREPs) ITASC Format	A situation report contains critical information provided by the first unit to arrive on scene at an incident, to allow appropriate follow-up response decisions to be made. A situation report is provided by the officer in charge to the ESA Communications Centre (COMCEN) or Incident Management Team (IMT).
Debriefings	A feedback process to provide information on the progress of the event, as well as new information and risks.

Responsibilities

Members	Attend briefings.
Officer in Charge (OIC)	Provide situation reports to COMCEN. Provide briefings to crew.
Incident Controller	Ensures briefings are delivered to all crew.

Applicability of this guideline

RFS personnel and others acting under their direction will comply with this guideline wherever deployed at any incident. The IMTs, agency representatives and agency personnel are responsible for compliance with this guideline.

Conducting briefings

The Incident Controller is responsible for ensuring that briefings are delivered. The style of briefing crews will receive will depend on the phase of the incident.

RESPONSE – the information received by the units responding from both COMCEN and other responding units.

CONTROL and SUPPRESSION – a verbal briefing from the Incident Controller, Divisional Commander or Sector Leader.

CHANGEOVER – a full SMEACS-Q format briefing required before entering fireground.

Content

All briefings shall be in the nationally recognised SMEACS-Q format

Situation	Precise overview of the current situation, including resources committed and available.
Mission	A concise single purpose statement of the overall objective, including purpose, method, outcome.
Execution	Objectives, strategies, tactics and tasks.
Administration and logistics	Sufficient details to enable the provision of administration, logistics and welfare to be clearly identified.
Command and Communication	Chain of command, communications procedures.
Safety	Issues that may impact on safety, including predicted weather changes, known and anticipated hazards, escape routes, etc.
Questions	Ensure key points are known and understood.

The incident management team may provide additional information to the SMEACS provided, such as:

- weather outlook
- air operations
- Division/Sector plan
- map of the incident ground
- road closures
- water supplies
- location of significant assets and any management or control issues related to the protection of these assets.

Briefing location

For a type 1 (small) and type 2 (medium) incident, the briefing is usually conducted on the fireground.

A designated location will be advised for crews responding to a type 3 (large) incident, and for all crews attending an incident as a part of the changeover arrangements.

Where there are multiple fires it may be necessary to have a single briefing area rather than each incident having its own briefing area, ensuring a consistent message is given to all responding crews.

Situation reports

The first unit to arrive on scene at an incident must provide COMCEN with an initial SITREP.

All sitreps shall be in the nationally recognised ITASC format.

Incident	Type of Incident: bush/grass. Location: address or grid reference where it is now. Future location: where it is likely to go. Fire Status and size. Any losses so far
Threats	What is under threat now: people, property, environment. Future threats: what and when, distance to these assets
Actions	What are we doing now. e.g., offensive or defensive. What may we need to do next.
Support	What is needed now: extra appliances, public warnings, supplies etc. What may be needed in the future. Category and number of resources. Aviation.
Command, Control and Communication	ICS. Who is the IC (assume control): Incident ground organisation now and in the future. Radio channels for tactical and command networks.

Additional SITREPs should also be provided:

- if the situation changes
- when major benchmarks have been achieved
- when additional information is known.

During the control and command phase, SITREPs may also contain:

- Fire name
- Map name
- Fuel load
- Topography
- Fireground weather
- Comments.

Final size up SITREPs must contain:

- Size – metres or hectares
- Suspected cause – lightning, campfire, smoking, debris burning, equipment use, incendiary, arson, motor vehicle, unknown.

Prolonged incidents


For prolonged incidents, the Incident Controller, Divisional Commander or Sector Leader should provide timely SITREPs back to either COMCEN or the IMT. These SITREPs should include the above information as well as additional information on:

- incident progress
- local weather
- updated strategies/tactics
- incident prediction
- tasking of resources.

Document information

Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Andrew Stark	1.0	15/02/2011	Previously SOP 3.5 Situation Reports and SOP 2.8 Briefings
Rohan Scott	2.0	05/03/2020	Combined, reviewed and updated
Steve Quinlan	3.0	30/03/2023	Reviewed and addition of ITASC format

Name	Title/Role	Signature	Date
Rohan Scott	CO ACT RFS		08/02/2024

Document Owner

Position	Section
RFS Director	Operations

Next review due: 01/02/2027

Related documents

Document name
2.2.13 Response Standard Operating Procedure

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.