

## Use of Liaison Officers

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

### Purpose

This SOP outlines the roles and responsibilities of liaison officers working within an Incident Management Team or during a prescribed burn.

### Applicability

This SOP is applicable when a bushfire incident or prescribed burn is active, and the incident is being controlled through an IMT. The IMT may be located at PCS facilities or at the ESA ECC, or other locations where an interstate IMT is operating.

### Definitions

In this SOP the following terms have specific meanings.

Term	Meaning
Liaison officer	A member of the land management agency or Emergency Services Agency (ESA).
Prescribed burning	Prescribed burning is the process of planning and applying fire to a predetermined area, under specific environmental conditions, to achieve a desired outcome.
IMT	Incident Management Team.
ICC	Incident Control Centre (in the ACT the ICC is located in the ESA Incident Management Room (IMR)).
ECC	Emergency Control Centre (in the ACT the ECC is located in the ESA Incident Management Room (IMR)).
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
FBI	Fire Behaviour Index
PCS	Parks and Conservation Service

### Background

Liaison officers are appointed to participate in an IMT to represent the interests of their agency and maintain a timely and appropriate information flow during a prescribed burn or bushfire event.

## Responsibilities

Liaison officer	<p>Provide information to the agency they represent about the burn or incident.</p> <p>Provide advice or relevant land management information, as appropriate, to the Incident Controller.</p> <p>Monitor incident operations to identify current or potential incident problems.</p> <p>Coordinate and facilitate requests for agency resources.</p> <p>Advise Incident Controller when trigger conditions are met to instigate an IMT based at the ESA's ICC.</p>
Incident Controller	<p>Activate a prescribed burning IMT at ESA's ICC when advised that trigger conditions have been met.</p>

Personnel will comply with this SOP when deployed as a liaison officer to any incident or prescribed burn in the ACT.

## Operating procedure

### Liaison officer

A liaison officer is a person who is appointed by a particular agency to work within an IMT, for incidents or prescribed burns, to provide advice to the IMT and to be the conduit of information to and from their respective agency.

### Liaison officer responsibilities

The liaison officer holds the following responsibilities:

- to obtain briefings from the Incident Controller
- to provide a point of contact for assisting/co-operating agency representatives
- to provide advice to the IMT regarding their respective agency's business, concerns and requirements
- to identify agency representatives from each agency and maintain communications links as required
- to respond to requests from incident management personnel for external contacts
- to monitor incident operations to identify current or potential liaison problems
- to advise the Incident Controller and RFS Chief Officer when trigger conditions have been met for activating a prescribed burning IMT based at the ESA's ICC. See Appendix A for trigger conditions.

### Relationship with IMT

The liaison officer has no control, command or coordination role within incident management.

Shift changes for liaison officers should take place in consultation with the Incident Controller and take place after the field crews have changed over.

For prescribed burns, the liaison officer should additionally work with the prescribed burning IMT to ensure awareness of planned operations and requirements for engagement of RFS.

## Additional agency involvement

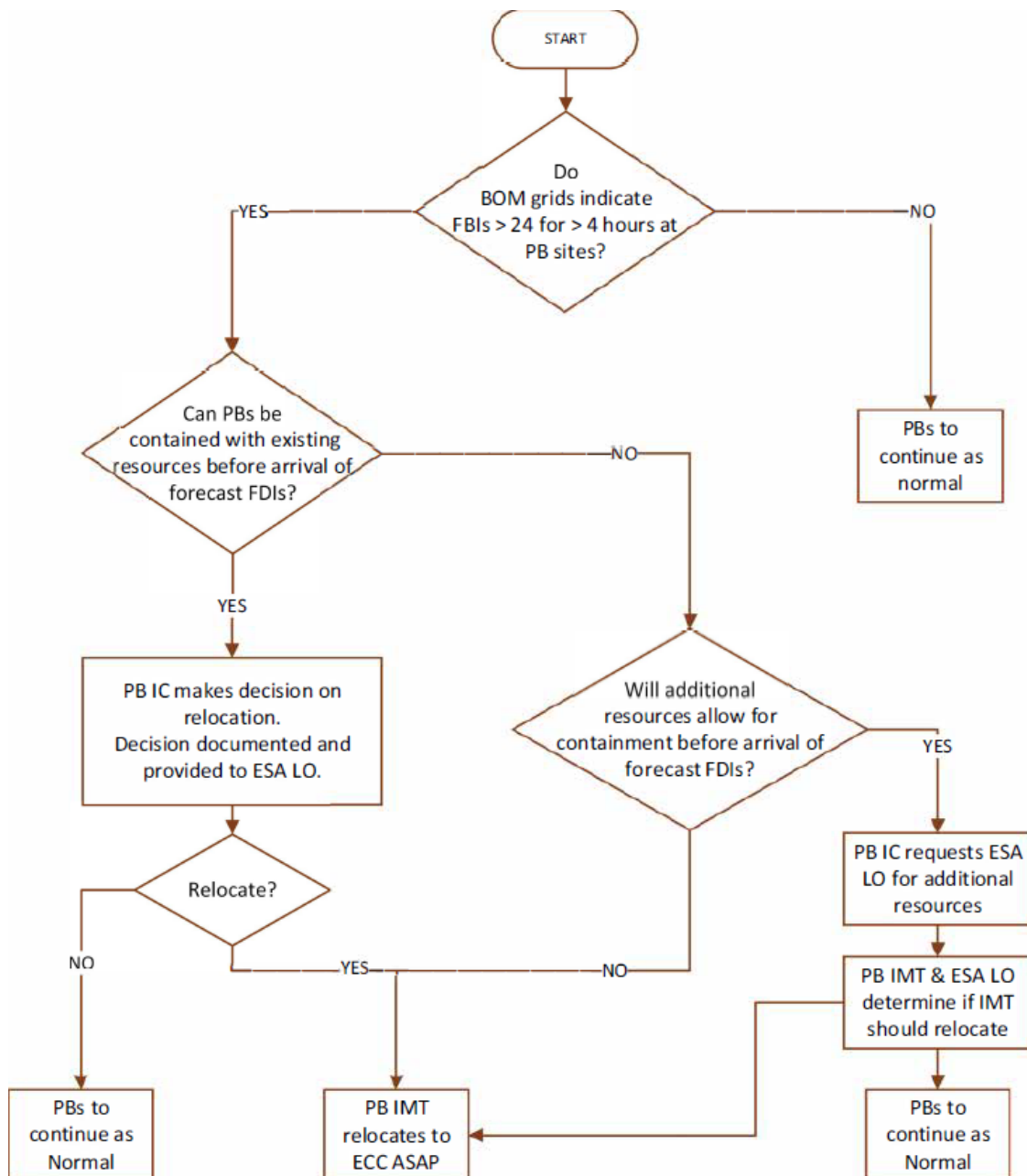
This SOP applies to incidents managed by the ACT.

## Appendix A: Trigger conditions for activating a prescribed burning IMT at ESA's EIC

While most prescribed burns are managed through the IMT based at the PCS facilities at Stromlo, there are certain trigger conditions that may necessitate the use of a larger IMT with multi-agency involvement. This will be considered when:

- the BOM forecast FBIs are in the “high” range (FDIs 24 to 49) for a minimum of 5 consecutive hours at the sites of any going prescribed burns
- where PCS has prescribed fires in the landscape that are of a scale that cannot be effectively contained before arrival of the forecast high fire danger
- at the direction of the RFS CO on assessment of size of breach, rate of spread and estimated time for containment.

The following flowchart describes the decision path for relocation of a prescribed burn IMT to the IMT based at the ESA's ICC as part of the Potter's Hill recommendations.




## Document information

### Version history

Author	Version	Version Approval Date	Summary of Changes
Andrew Stark	1.0	15/02/2011	Version 1.0
Rohan Scott	2.0	12/03/2020	Reviewed and updated
Ailish Milner	3.0	06/10/2022	Updated to AFDRS
Steve Quinlan	4.0	29/3/2023	Revised flowchart to FBI >24

### Approved by

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	Version

Signed documents will be scanned and filed in TRIM.