



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLE USAGE HANDBOOK

Document control

Release history

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Related documents

Document name
NSW Government Motor Vehicle Guideline
P8.1.1 Passenger Motor Vehicle Usage
P8.1.2 Fleet Management of Passenger Motor Vehicles
Service Standard 8.1.2 Vehicle Marking and Identification
Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics
Service Standard 3.1.14 Fatigue Management
NSW RFS Safe Driving Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

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1 Introduction

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is the lead combat agency for bush fires in NSW and is the world's largest volunteer fire service. Members provide fire and emergency services to a range of incidents including:

- Bush and grass fires
- House and structure fires
- Storm damage
- Search and rescue
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Community education, and
- Bush fire mitigation.

The jurisdiction of the service extends across approximately 95% of New South Wales and is serviced by Headquarters, Regional Offices, and District Offices.

All NSW RFS motor vehicle are either vested or acquired by the Service, and are allocated to an appliance category. This includes firefighting, passenger and light commercial vehicles, including those specially equipped passenger motor vehicles used by operational officers to enable them to respond to incidents.

All NSW RFS motor vehicles should be operated in accordance with the NSW RFS Safe Driving Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

2 Purpose

This handbook provides guidance to managers and employees on the appropriate use of NSW RFS passenger motor vehicle and forms part of, and should be read in conjunction with, *P8.1.1 Passenger Motor Vehicle Usage*. It does not duplicate content already published in other documents including NSW Government and NSW RFS Service Standards, Policies and other procedures as referenced in this handbook.

Note: this handbook does not apply to motor vehicles procured as part of executive service remuneration arrangements.

3 Review

This handbook is to be reviewed in conjunction with and as a component of the review of NSW RFS policy *P8.1.1 Passenger Motor Vehicle Usage*.

4 Definitions

Bona fide	Any matter or thing done or said or omitted to be done or said, in good faith, without fraud, collusion, deceit or participation in wrongdoing. Authentic, genuine.
Business use	As defined by the ATO, any use of a NSW RFS vehicle by an employee that is exclusively in the course of producing assessable income of the employee. One journey may consist of multiple legs.

Manager	For the purpose of <i>P8.1.1 Passenger Motor Vehicle Usage</i> and this handbook means a NSW RFS Regional, District, Team or Zone Manager, or a Manager located at Headquarters or its satellite offices.
Emergency	An emergency due to an actual or imminent occurrence (such as fire, flood, storm, earthquake, explosion, terrorist act, accident, epidemic or warlike action) which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Endangers, or threatens to endanger, the safety or health of persons or animals in the State, or b. Destroys or damages or threatens to destroy or damage, property in the State, being an emergency which requires a significant and coordinated response.
Emergency Conditions	The presence of a sudden state of danger requiring immediate action by the emergency services.
Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT)	A fringe benefit is a ‘payment’ to an employee, but in a different form to salary or wages. According to FBT legislation, a fringe benefit is a benefit provided in respect of employment. This means a benefit is provided to somebody <i>because they are an employee</i> . In the context of <i>P8.1.1 Passenger Motor Vehicle Usage</i> and this handbook a “fringe benefit” is the use of a work car for private purposes. An employer pays FBT on the fringe benefits provided to an employee.
FBT Year	The FBT year for calculation of FBT liability is from 1 April to 31 March.
Member	Any member of the NSW RFS, either volunteer or salaried, who has met all joining criteria.
Passenger Motor Vehicle	Any vehicle that is procured for use by the NSW Rural Fire Service. All references to passenger motor vehicle in this handbook will include corporate & operational vehicles as defined below unless otherwise specified. This includes light commercial vehicles.
Passenger Motor Vehicle (Corporate)	Any NSW RFS passenger motor vehicle that is not operationally marked and which is not fitted with warning devices. These vehicles are classified as pool vehicles and are shared by more than one member.
Passenger Motor Vehicle (Operational)	Any NSW RFS passenger motor vehicle that is operationally marked and fitted with warning devices in accordance with NSW RFS engineering standards and are available for business use 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days per year. These vehicles are classified as pool vehicles and are shared by more than one employee.

Personal Use/Private Use	Any use of a NSW RFS passenger motor vehicle for any purpose other than bona fide NSW RFS activities.
Reportable Fringe Benefits	If the value of fringe benefits provided to an employee exceeds \$2,000 in an FBT year, the NSW RFS must record the grossed-up taxable value of those benefits on that employee's payment summary for the corresponding income year (1 July – 30 June). This is known as the <i>reportable fringe benefits total</i> .
Respond (to an incident)	To drive using visible and audible warning devices as appropriate, in response to an emergency, in accordance with NSW RFS Safe Driving SOPs.

5 Tools of Trade

In order to perform its functions and activities the NSW RFS maintains a fleet of specially equipped and identified passenger motor vehicles for operational purposes.

As tools of trade, these NSW RFS operational passenger motor vehicles must be available to the Service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

Usage is limited to authorised NSW RFS activities. Personal use will incur Reportable FBT.

The use of these vehicles is at the discretion of the Commissioner.

6 Fleet profile

The determination of vehicle type is the responsibility of the Engineering Services Business Unit at Headquarters.

Any request to add or vary the configuration of any NSW RFS passenger motor vehicle is to be in accordance with *Service Standard 5.1.4 NSW RFS Appliance Standards*.

6.1 Passenger Motor Vehicles - Operational

Operational passenger motor vehicles may be located at Headquarters, Regions or Districts for use by members for NSW RFS activities.

The access to these vehicles is determined by the relevant Manager under the delegated authority of the Commissioner.

6.2 Passenger Motor Vehicles - Corporate

Corporate passenger motor vehicles may be located at Headquarters, Regions or Districts for use by members for NSW RFS activities.

The access to these vehicles is determined by the relevant Manager under the delegated authority of the Commissioner.

7 Fleet management

The NSW RFS passenger motor vehicle fleet is managed by the Engineering Services Business Unit located at Headquarters, and in accordance with *P8.1.2 Fleet Management of Passenger Motor Vehicles*.

8 Licensing

Licensing requirements for NSW RFS passenger motor vehicles are in accordance with *P8.1.1 Passenger Motor Vehicle Usage*.

9 Duty and On Call

Members may be granted use of an operational passenger motor vehicle solely on the basis that the member is rostered as either an On Call officer or a Duty Officer and therefore, must be able to respond immediately to emergencies that arise outside of normal working hours.

In these instances, use of an operational passenger motor vehicle to travel to and from the home and the normal place of work whilst On Duty or On Call is considered to be business use.

10 Interstate usage

Use of passenger motor vehicles interstate is permissible for bona fide NSW RFS activities.

11 Motor vehicle running sheets

The NSW Government *Motor Vehicle Policy* and the NSW RFS policy *P8.1.1 Passenger Motor Vehicle Usage* require continuous running sheets to be maintained. The running sheet template is available from the NSW RFS Intranet.

Running sheets must be kept with the vehicle and the completed running sheets are to be attached to the SAP EAM record of that vehicle.

12 Non-Agency Passengers

The carriage of passengers from other agencies is only acceptable when it is directly related to the management of a NSW RFS incident.

13 Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT)

13.1 Motor vehicle FBT

The NSW RFS has an obligation to pay Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) in accordance with Australian Taxation Office (ATO) requirements for all passenger motor vehicles.

13.2 Reportable Fringe Benefits Amount

If the value of certain fringe benefits provided to an employee exceeds the ATO limit, the NSW RFS is obliged to record the 'grossed-up' value of the benefit on the employee's annual Payment Summary. 'Grossed-up' refers to the pre-tax value of the benefit if it had been provided as part of the salary.

This is known as a Reportable Fringe Benefits Amount ('RFBA').

Where a Fringe Benefits Tax liability arises for NSW RFS in respect of the use of a passenger motor vehicle by more than one employee during the FBT year, it will not result in a Reportable Fringe Benefit for any of the employees who used that particular vehicle during that FBT year.

14 Annual odometer declaration

Officers responsible for managing passenger motor vehicles are required to submit an annual odometer declaration, using either the [Odometer declaration – Corporate vehicle](#) or [Odometer declaration – Operational vehicle](#) form available from the NSW RFS Intranet.

15 Leave and absences

Employees are not entitled to access to a NSW RFS passenger motor vehicle while on leave. It is the responsibility of the employee's manager and the employee to ensure the vehicle is relinquished prior to the commencement of leave.

Under no circumstance is a pool vehicle to remain with an officer or away from the office while the officer is on leave or absent.

16 Fatigue Management

Assessing individual fitness for duty is particularly pertinent for those in supervisory roles, especially those responsible for operational activities. Members holding those roles have an ethical and operational obligation for self-care and good fatigue management includes recognising travel times and the need for appropriate breaks. Managers should also remind those for whom they are responsible, of their obligations of self-care.

Detailed information on fatigue management can be found in:

- Service Standard 3.1.14 *Fatigue Management*
- Operational Protocol 1.4.4 *Fatigue Management*
- The Firefighter's Pocketbook
- The NSW RFS Health, Safety and Welfare section (Ph: 8741 5221 or safety@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

17 Driving under emergency conditions

Requirements for driving under emergency conditions can be found in the *NSW RFS Safe Driving SOPs*.

18 Driving in Remote/Isolated Areas

If it is anticipated that use of a passenger motor vehicle might include remote or isolated areas, officers should leave a travel plan with their manager.

19 Trip Planning

When using a passenger motor vehicle consideration should be given to ensuring the most direct and appropriate route is selected.

20 Road Tolls

All corporately marked passenger motor vehicles are fitted with an electronic toll tag.

21 Traffic and parking infringements

Drivers who incur a traffic or parking infringement while driving a NSW RFS passenger motor vehicle are personally responsible for the payment of the fine/s and any ensuing legal action.

A member who activates a speed or red light camera as a result of responding to an emergency, is required to immediately notify their District Office or line manager, who will notify Headquarters.

The following details are to be reported:

- Date, time and location of camera activation
- Driver's name
- Estimated speed at activation
- Whether warning devices were activated at the time.

22 Traffic Accidents and Incidents

All traffic accidents and incidents are to be notified to the District Office immediately, or for staff at Headquarters and satellite locations, the Engineering Services Business Unit is to be notified, and managed in accordance with Service Standard 5.3.5 *Fleet Insurance for NSW RFS Appliances*.

Where an officer driving a NSW RFS passenger motor vehicle encounters a traffic incident or accident, a common sense approach should be taken to rendering assistance, especially if it is evident that no other person or vehicle has stopped i.e. a single vehicle incident. Any assistance provided should be commensurate with the skill and ability of the officer.

23 Immobilisation and vehicle recovery

All NSW RFS passenger motor vehicles are covered by the Service's NRMA roadside assistance membership. Roadside assistance can be requested by calling 1300 369 349, quoting membership number 0013430B.