



## **POLICY NO. 1/2007**

### **Section 44 Payment and Reimbursement Criteria and Procedures**

The NSW Rural Fire Fighting Fund provides funding through the Estimates Process each year towards the cost of "Section 44" Declarations under the Rural Fires Act 1997. This funding takes the form of a sinking fund, which means that any leftover funding at the end of the financial year is carried over into the next financial year.

#### **General Principles**

1. All expenditure is to be authorised and approved by the Incident Controller in accordance with the following principles.
2. GST is to be paid on all items purchased.
3. At the time of the "Section 44" Declaration the Incident Controller is responsible for identifying and detailing all existing resources including Incident Management Team personnel, Support personnel, firefighters, aircraft, plant, machinery and equipment.
4. All costs for combating an incident, prior to the "Section 44" Declaration, will be the responsibility of the supplying Agency.
5. The salaries of all personnel utilised during a "Section 44" Declaration will be the responsibility of the supplying Agency.
6. Aircraft, other than Agency owned aircraft, operating at the incident at the time of the "Section 44" Declaration will, subject to agreement with the Incident Controller, and subsequent to acceptance by the Rural Fire Service, State Operations Centre, Homebush Bay, be paid directly by the Rural Fire Service.
7. All further aircraft requests and hiring of aircraft will only be made through the Rural Fire Service, State Operations Centre, Homebush Bay during a "Section 44" Declaration. If this process is not followed, claims may not be paid.
8. There should be no need for a Council or an Agency to pay aircraft accounts locally. Any accounts should, therefore, be forwarded to Homebush Bay for payment and should not form a part of a claim for reimbursement.

9. Claims for the purchase of items of Capital equipment (such as telephones, facsimiles, refrigerators, air conditioners, photocopiers and radios) will not be reimbursed.

### **Types of Payments and Claims for Reimbursement**

10. Expenses, authorised by the Incident Controller, incurred by and approved by the Rural Fire Service when a "Section 44" has been declared are paid directly by the Rural Fire Service.
11. Expenses, as defined herein, authorised by the Incident Controller and incurred by numerous Agencies when a "Section 44" has been declared may be claimed for reimbursement on the NSW Rural Fire Service. These Agencies may include (but are not limited to):
- ❑ Councils when combating an incident on lands not managed by that Council.
- Note: All costs for combating an incident on Council managed lands are the responsibility of that Council.
- ❑ Land Management Agencies such as National Parks and Wildlife Service, State Forests, Sydney Catchment Authority, etc.

### **Claiming Procedures**

#### **General**

12. All claims should be lodged with the Financial Officer, Headquarters, NSW Rural Fire Service at Homebush Bay or addressed to Locked Mail Bag 17 Granville NSW 2142, within 90 days of the revocation of the "Section 44".
13. All claims for reimbursement must to be authorised and signed by the Incident Controller.
14. For Councils: all claims for reimbursement must be countersigned by the General Manager or his/her Delegate.
15. For other Agencies: all claims for reimbursement must be countersigned by the Agency Representative.
16. The following information shall be clearly shown on the front page of the claim for reimbursement: the name of the claimant, the name of the "Section 44", the declaration date and time, the revocation date and time, the total amount of the claim and contact details of the person preparing the claim.
17. All claims should be substantiated by the production of written evidence, e.g. invoices, receipts, ledger transcripts etc
18. GST should be paid on all goods and services purchased by the Agency and claimed back through their own GST (BAS) return. GST should not form a part of the claimed amount to be reimbursed.
19. Copies of the **Council Summary Header Sheet** and **Agency Summary Header Sheet** are at **Annexes A and B** respectively and are for use by Councils and Agencies.

20. A claim for reimbursement should take the form of a formal letter of claim and attached to that letter should be the Summary Header Sheet listing amounts claimed against the following headings:
- Plant/Machinery and Equipment Hire
  - Meals and Accommodation
  - Fuel
  - Overtime or temporary salaries
  - Other
21. The Summary Header Sheet should also add up to the total of all the attached individual invoices, etc. All relevant supporting documentation should be attached to the Summary Header Sheet in the order of the list shown above.
22. A complete copy of the claim for reimbursement and all attached documentation should be retained for your own records.

### **Rural Fire Service State Operations Centre (OpsCen) – Homebush Bay**

23. The OpsCen Logistics Section is responsible for processing the requests that are directed to State Operations and authorised by the Incident Controller of the "Section 44".
24. The OpsCen Aviation Section is responsible for processing and coordinating the requests for aircraft and associated logistics, authorized by the Incident Controller of the "Section 44".
25. All requests must have an order raised to substantiate any expense that may occur.
26. All orders must be signed by the person/s who have the delegated authority to expend monies in this manner. The order shall contain details of the name of the "Section 44", the number of items required, the description of the items being ordered, the name, address and contact details of the supplier, an approximate cost including GST for the item/s ordered and the name of the person who raised the order.
27. Accounts that follow will be paid in accordance with the normal trading terms and conditions stated on invoices or on request should the circumstances dictate.

### **Councils**

28. Council may claim reimbursement of costs incurred where the fire is declared on lands not managed by Council:
- For the hiring of temporary staff including any overtime.
  - For Council staff when working "out of hours", the cost of overtime incurred.

**Note:** Where there is a claim for reimbursement for staff overtime, copies of the timesheets should be attached as well as ledger postings that substantiate the amounts and hours worked. Information in relation to day, date, time from and to, should be made clear in the paperwork provided to support each person's worked time. As well, normal working hours should be indicated for each person who worked overtime.

- For the hire of plant, machinery and equipment.
  - For the floating of plant to the declaration, e.g. bulldozers, tractors
  - For the hire of Council owned plant.
  - For repairs done by Council mechanics.
  - For the provision of fuel.
  - For the provision of other services, purchase of non capital equipment, damage or loss, each claim will be subject to individual consideration.
29. Council may also claim reimbursement of costs incurred on behalf of other Agencies including "out of area" Rural Fire Service resources, where the fire is declared on lands managed by Council:
- For repairs done by Council mechanics.
  - For the provision of fuel.
  - For meals and accommodation.
  - For the provision of other services, purchase of non capital equipment, damage or loss, each claim will be subject to individual consideration.
30. Council may approach the Major Incident Controller (MIC) for their Region (located at the OpsCen, Homebush Bay) where it is envisaged that financial difficulties may result as a consequence of a Section 44 declaration in the Council fire district. If the MIC for the Region approves the request for financial assistance, orders in excess of \$1,000 on one supplier will be processed by the OpsCen Logistics Section. These orders must be authorised by the Incident Controller in the first instance. The criteria at 28 and 29 of this policy apply to these orders.

### **Other Agencies**

31. By agreement, with National Parks and Wildlife Service and State Forests, any personnel being utilised at the incident prior to the "Section 44" Declaration will continue to operate at the Agency's expense, which includes the cost of overtime incurred and accommodation.
32. By agreement, with National Parks and Wildlife Service and State Forests, any plant, machinery and equipment operating at the incident prior to the "Section 44" Declaration will continue to operate at the Agency's expense.

33. By agreement, with National Parks and Wildlife Service and State Forests, any Agency owned aircraft operating at the incident prior to the "Section 44" Declaration will continue to operate at the Agency's expense.
34. Where the National Parks and Wildlife Service or State Forests commit out of area (i.e. out of LGA) resources to fires not burning on their own tenure, those resource costs incurred from the time of declaration of a Section 44 may, with the approval of the Incident Controller, be claimed for reimbursement.
35. The above standing agreements are made on the understanding that an Agency may, with the prior approval of the Incident Controller, withdraw the plant, machinery, equipment, personnel or Agency aircraft for urgent use at another incident.
36. Subject to the above, Agencies may claim reimbursement of the following costs associated with a Section 44 declaration:
- For overtime incurred for all additional Incident Management Team Personnel, Support Personnel and out of area firefighters (base salaries of Agency personnel will be met by the Agency concerned);
  - For all additional resources including the hire of plant, machinery and equipment;
  - For mechanical repairs during the declaration;
  - For the provision of fuel;
  - For meals and accommodation; and
  - For the provision of other services, purchase of non capital equipment, damage or loss, each claim will be subject to individual consideration.
37. BFCC Policy No 5/2001 – Section 44 Payment and Reimbursement Criteria and Procedures is hereby cancelled and is replaced by this policy.



**Rob Rogers, AFSM**  
**Chairman**  
**29 March 2007**

**ANNEXES:**

- A. Council Summary Header Sheet - Claim for Section 44 Reimbursement.**
- B. Agency Summary Header Sheet – Claim for Section 44 Reimbursement.**



**Council Summary Header Sheet.**  
**Claim for Section 44 Reimbursement**

<b>Council Name:</b>		
<b>Section 44 Name:</b>		
<b>Section 44 Duration:</b>	Declaration Date:	Time:
	Revocation Date:	Time:
<b>Prepared by:</b>		
<b>Telephone number:</b>	BH:	Mobile:

**Dissection of Expenditure**

(As per attached supporting documentation i.e. invoices, receipts etc)

DISSECTION HEADING	AMOUNT CLAIMABLE (excluding GST) \$
Plant, machinery and equipment hire	
Meals & accommodation	
Fuel	
Overtime/ temporary staff	
Other	
<b>TOTAL CLAIM</b>	

**Incident Controller**

Authorised by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**General Manager or Delegate**

Counter Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FORWARD TO FINANCIAL OFFICER**  
**Headquarters**  
**NSW Rural Fire Service**  
**Locked Mail Bag 17**  
**GRANVILLE NSW 2142**



**Agency Summary Header Sheet.**  
**Claim for Section 44 Reimbursement**

<b>Agency Name:</b>		
<b>Section 44 Name:</b>		
<b>Section 44 Duration:</b>	Declaration Date:	Time:
	Revocation Date:	Time:
<b>Prepared by:</b>		
<b>Telephone number:</b>	BH:	Mobile:

**Dissection of Expenditure**

(As per attached supporting documentation i.e. invoices, receipts etc)

DISSECTION HEADING	AMOUNT CLAIMABLE (excluding GST) \$
Plant, machinery and equipment hire	
Meals & accommodation	
Fuel	
Overtime/ temporary staff	
Other	
<b>TOTAL CLAIMS</b>	

**Incident Controller**

Authorised by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Agency Representative**

Counter Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FORWARD TO FINANCIAL OFFICER**

**Headquarters  
NSW Rural Fire Service  
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GRANVILLE NSW 2142**